



## *My first time at EUMA Conference*

### **Thursday**

Icy winds, lunar landscape, oh look there is a house! And over there in the distance can it be a city? Oh, how beautiful, look at the horses!!!

We are on a bus heading for Reykjavik from the airport. My first trip with EUMA, we are on our way to attend the 38<sup>th</sup> International Conference for EUMA, held in Iceland.

My first trip with EUMA but also my first time in Iceland, this mythical country with its strong and magnificent inhabitants.

We check in at the Hilton Nordica and get a short rest before the welcome reception. We are heading down towards the harbor of Reykjavik and to the Concert and Conference Hall of Harpa, an incredibly beautiful building which stood ready for use in May 2011 and is designed based on a geometric principal in multiple dimensions that are found in the crystalized salt formations which you can find in Iceland. Wow!

Met by a crowd of buzzing women (some men also actually) all with a glass in their hands. Kissing on cheeks, saying hello to earlier acquaintances, mingling, new faces, all in a soft hum swirling through the arched ceiling in this marvelous building. It's on!

### **Friday and conference day**

Moderator Asta Bjarnardottir presents the program and the initial speech is held by nobody else than Madame Vigdis Finnbogadottir, how great! She was the first female President in the world and she is also a patron of EUMA. Vigdis tells her story and you are acutely aware of that this land breeds some irrepressible people.

The theme of the conference is Culture and Values, a stream of exiting speakers follow before we move on to the first workshop of the day. I have decided to join a group about Personal Values and Goals lead by a speaker called Arelia Eydis Gudmundsdottir, I can assure you the names here in Iceland are no easy task for the layman. Arelia is a professor at the School of Business at the University of Iceland. She is most fascinating and talks about the leadership of oneself as the biggest strength of your development both personally and professionally.

Lunch! A buffet with delicious food, sushi, fresh salads and other delicacies.

In the afternoon I join a workshop about sustainability, and preserving the world's resources. We share experiences and thoughts with each other. Very interactive!

The conference day ends with two more speakers, one of them is Magnus Scheving, a super-inspiring man who has started a health show for children, (LazyTown [www.lazytown.com](http://www.lazytown.com)), and is spreading it across the world. He talks about never giving up your passion for what you truly believe in, so great!!!



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The dinner is at restaurant Lava at the Blue Lagoon, a short bus ride from Reykjavik. Here we meet a magical setting. The Lagoon is lit up at night and it is incredibly beautiful. The food is so tasty and of course with Icelandic inspiration. Entertainment and speeches follow and that night back in my bed I fall asleep instantly.

### **Saturday**

Three cups of coffee and a yummy hotel breakfast later we all sit down to the Annual General Meeting. We are 17 from the Swedish delegation. We are guided through the agenda point by point, hands in the air to approve every decision made. And then we win a prize! Sweden is the country that has increased the number of members the most during last year and we win the STAR award. How fun, how good we are!

Golden Circle is the name of the sightseeing tour I have chosen to join, now we are about to see all the exiting places we up until now only heard about. Pingvellir (Thingvally) is our first stop, it is a UNESCO world heritage site. This is a sight just on top of the crack between the two continental plates, the east and the west, and has history as far back as you can imagine. Unbelievably beautiful!

On we go to Gullfoss and its spectacular waterfall and after to Geysir with spurting and boiling springs – it's magical! We have a most dedicated and inspiring tour guide, can't remember his name...was it Tryggvur?

Tired after the trip? Yes, a little, but happy and hungry, and now eating is next! Icelandic tapas it is, a parade of small fun dishes come our way - how about puffin and whale? On top of that georgeous fish, seafood and lamb that melt in my mouth. We roll back to the hotel and slam dunk into bed.

### **Sunday**

Today is "going home day" but first a final trip back to Blue Lagoon, this time for swimming. Rotten smell, like sulphur, you just have to get over it... guess it is healthy. The water is bluish white, like skimmed milk, soft and warm 38-40 degrees, we smear ourselves with white mud and relaxe and drift away. Wonderfully relaxing and a perfect ending of my first trip with EUMA!!!!

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