

# The Thorvald Stoltenberg Seminar

12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Utøya

*“Most people believe that individuals who shy away from conflict are poor leaders. But I say, when you meet a person who tries to avoid conflict in order to solve a problem, keep that person, because we need them, they are not so many”*

On 22 July 2011, a right-wing Norwegian extremist killed 69 people at Utøya in Norway, most of them young people attending the Norwegian Labour Party Youth’s summer camp. The terrorist asserted that people with different cultural backgrounds cannot coexist in a society and promoted the conspiracy theory that Europe is slowly taken over by the Arabic world.

Today, Utøya carries a strong testimony of why values such as tolerance, equality and diversity cannot be taken for granted, but need to be promoted and practiced in everyday life. For this to happen there need to be more places for people to meet, not less. The Thorvald Stoltenberg seminar aims to create an international meeting place at Utøya for young people to build a strong network and strengthen intercultural dialogue in Europe.

Since 22 July 2011 Utøya has been rebuilt as a commemoration- and learning center, balancing the need to commemorate and the need for *new life, learning* and *engagement* for a more inclusive, democratic society. Today it is a place for people to meet, learn, exchange experiences, discuss, agree and disagree.

On 12-17 June 2019 the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) and Utøya invite youth workers and youth leaders from across Europe to the Thorvald Stoltenberg Seminar at Utøya for a training course to support and promote ongoing initiatives in Europe to foster co-existence, trust and dialogue among young people in diverse societies.

**More information and application form: [www.theewc.org/](http://www.theewc.org/)**

**Application deadline is 1 April 2019**



## What is the Thorvald Stoltenberg Seminar?

Former Norwegian Minister of Defence, Minister of Foreign Affairs and diplomat Thorvald Stoltenberg was a pioneer for Norwegian peace diplomacy and put great value in dialogue, often exemplified by his “kitchen meetings”, where he would invite state leaders and foreign ministers to his home to enjoy a cup of coffee, relax and have a talk at his kitchen table.

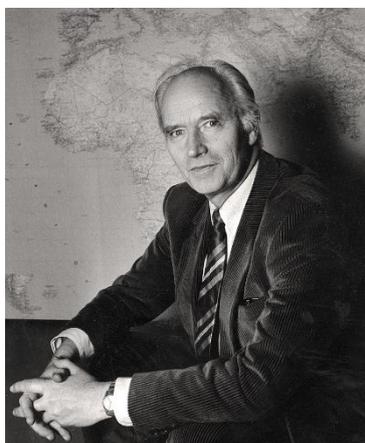
Thorvald Stoltenberg passed away in July 2018. In his memory, and to honour his strong belief that knowledge and tolerance could overcome xenophobia and hate, the Thorvald Stoltenberg seminar at Utøya is an annual international meeting place for young people engaged in democracy and human rights. Utøya has a long history of youth participation and international solidarity. It also holds a strong place in the Stoltenberg family.

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Following the attack 22 July, a commemoration– and learning centre has been built at Utøya offering a unique opportunity for young people to reflect on what democracy means for them, on challenges and threats to democracy, and how they can promote democracy by being active citizens. Today, Utøya carries a strong testimony of why values such as tolerance, equality and diversity cannot be taken for granted. It serves as an example of young people’s response and resilience to terror and violence. The dialogical approach to conflict resolution is very much in line with what Utøya is today: A place for people to meet, learn, exchange experiences, discuss, agree and disagree.

22 July 2011 is not the only example of violent attacks and terrorism in contemporary Europe. Anti-democratic sentiments and actions are growing, while violent protests, hate speech and hate crimes against immigrants, refugees and minorities is prevalent in many European countries. Polarisation and distrust in democratic institutions and between people across and within states seem to be on the rise.

The Thorvald Stoltenberg seminar aims to address these common European challenges by creating an international meeting place at Utøya for youth leaders to build a strong network and strengthen intercultural dialogue in Europe.



## About the training

**The aim** of the training is to support and promote ongoing initiatives in Europe to foster co-existence, trust and dialogue among young people in diverse societies. Through the training course, participants will

- exchange experiences and discuss opportunities and challenges that arise in culturally diverse societies that are influenced by migration or that have national minorities
- explore how stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and historical injustices function in order to find the most efficient ways to challenge them
- be introduced to concrete tools to combat discrimination, facilitate intercultural dialogue and promote inclusion in order to prevent conflicts in their local and national contexts

The training will last for **4 days** (arrival 12<sup>th</sup> June and departure 17<sup>th</sup> June) and bring together participants from all over Europe, selected through an open call for participants. The training will be facilitated by international experts with extensive experience in education for human rights, democratic citizenship and intercultural understanding.

The training is aimed at **youth leaders** who are

- involved in activities promoting diversity and intercultural understanding
- wish to develop competences and work with practical educational tools
- are committed to organize activities to engage others in intercultural dialogue after completing the training.

## Practical information

### Travel expenses

There are no participation fee and travel, meals and accommodation are covered by the organisers. Travel expenses to and from the training venue will be reimbursed by the organisers.

### Working language

The working language is English.

### Venue and accommodation

The training course will take place at the commemoration- and learning centre at Utøya Island, Norway. For many it is a powerful experience to visit Utøya island. Utøya has a long and important history, which is both dark and bright. Today it is the wholeness of Utøya that contributes to it as a special place for learning and as a meeting place for young people and those who work closely with them.

Utøya is situated 50 minutes from Oslo.



*Accommodation*



*Training facilities*

## The organisers

**The European Wergeland Centre (EWC)** is a resource centre on education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding. It was established by the Council of Europe (CoE) and Norway in 2008, with a mandate to support member states implement CoE policies in practice. EWC designs and offers trainings and educational programmes to educational professionals and civil society actors all over Europe. EWC is a partner of Utøya and the 22. July Center on educational programmes on 22.July and education for democratic citizenship and human rights. [www.theewc.org](http://www.theewc.org)

**Utøya** is an open and accessible arena for commemoration, learning and engagement. It is the site of the terror attack on 22 July 2011. As part of the rebuilding of Utøya following 22 July 2011, the new memorial- and learning center, *Hegnhuset*, was completed during the summer of 2016. The learning center at Utøya offers a unique opportunity for young people to reflect on what democracy means for them, what are the challenges and threats to democracy, and how they as active citizens can promote democracy in their everyday lives. Utøya is managed through Utøya AS.

The EWC and Utøya have facilitated several workshops for young people at Utøya since the opening of Hegnhuset in 2016. [www.utoya.no](http://www.utoya.no)

## Contact information

Do you have questions?

Please contact EWC at [i.aspelund@theewc.org](mailto:i.aspelund@theewc.org).

Photo of the Learning Centre Hegnhuset at Utøya © Lars Petter Pettersen

Photo of Thorvald Stoltenberg from Store Norske Leksikon [www.sn.no/Thorvald\\_Stoltenberg](http://www.sn.no/Thorvald_Stoltenberg)