

**CISSI**

**The Organization**

**of International**

**Social Scientists**

**Blueprint 2016**

Blueprint of CISSI 2016

The Organization of International Social Scientists of

the University of Helsinki

Dear Reader

Two years ago, Jaakko Haarala, the international affairs representative of the Kannunvalajat board in 2014, realized as a fellow student on an international Master’s degree programme that international students were being left out from a lot of student activities outside the realm of studying. He decided to form an international committee for which he recruited a number of international students. CISSI was established in the spring of 2014 with the vision of better integrating international students into Finnish student life. A year later, CISSI left behind its committee status and became the organization for international social scientists and this year, our new milestone will be to register CISSI as an official association during the spring of 2016.

As an international Master’s student in Helsinki, originally from India who has been actively involved with CISSI for a second year in a row, I can personally see how CISSI has improved the student life for internationals studying at the Faculty of Social Sciences. In addition, we have also sensitized other subject organizations at the University of Helsinki to the interests of international students who now communicate about their events and other matters in English which makes it more accessible for non-Finns to take part.

I am grateful for the help we have received from the Faculty of Social Sciences and various subject organizations in making the university more international friendly and for extending cooperation and encouragement for our activities. I was given the honor of carrying on CISSI’s legacy for 2016, a task made easier by the enthusiastic and supportive team I am surrounded by. Coming from all parts of world including India; US; Iran; Germany; China; Ireland; Finland; Brazil; Albania; Russia; Turkey and Morocco, I am confident that we are capable of representing the interests of international students at the Faculty.

CISSI started out as a small group of friends with the big goal of helping international students integrate fully into student life. Our goal today is still the same: to positively influence the kind of experiences new students have. However CISSI has grown immeasurably over these two years and hence we need new ways to achieve our founder’s aim at different levels: academically as we liaise between the department and the students, politically as we try and make sure international students have a voice in the university and access to the same quality of services at university as Finnish students and socially in terms of organizing events that recognize and cater to our diverse student population.

Yours sincerely,

Keshia D’silva

Chairperson of CISSI, 2016

Blueprint of CISSI 2015

The Organization of International Social

Scientists of the University of Helsinki

**Table of Contents**

**Strategy…**………………………………………………………………….....................4

**CISSI Strategy 2016**…………………..………………………......................................4

 Organization & Administration 2015… ……………………………...………....4

 Communication & Representation…….…………………………………...........5

 Integration………….……………………………………………………............6

 Creating an identity………...…………………………………..………..............6

**Projects 2016…**………………..……………………………………………..................7

 Developing Study Affairs………………………………..………………. …......7

 Developing Corporate Affairs………………………………………………........7

 Involving members in creating events…………………………………………...7

**Finance.**………………...……………………………………………….........................8

**Communication**…………………………………………………………….…..............8

 **Integration**….....……….……………………………………………..…………..........9

**Equality and Diversity**………………………………………...…….……………......10

 On Gender...……………………………………………….…………………...10

 On Age, Ethnic or National Origin, Nationality, Language, Religion,

 Conviction, Opinion, Health, Disability, Sexual Orientation,

 Socio-Economic Status and Other Discriminated Characteristics…...…..........11

 Equality Implementation………….….……………………………………… .11

**Environment**………………………………….………… ……….……………..........11

**Study Affairs**………………………………………………………………………………...12

**Corporate Affairs**….…………………………………………………………………………13

 Work Life………………………………………………………………..................13

 Internships…………………………………………………………………............13

 Fundraising…………………………………………………………………...........13

 Other Events and Trips…………………….………………………………............14

**Events**…………………………………………………………………………....…...14

**Cultural Events**……..…………………………………………………………….....15

**Tutoring**………………………………………………………………………..….....17

## CISSI Strategy ~~2014~~ 2016

*This strategy, to be revised in a few years time, is a guideline for the current board of CISSI, as well as any future boards, on the key issues that are relevant for the survival and development of CISSI in the future. The strategy provides broad themes, as well as some concrete examples, so that boards are able to utilize the strategy in their day-to-day planning. The first strategy of CISSI is in essence a description of its initial purpose, so that CISSI is built on a solid basis of core values and goals. Therefore, while many of these points are relevant for even the more distant future of CISSI, a new strategy with new goals should be formulated every once in a while. The current board of ~~2014~~ 2016 suggests that the board of ~~2016~~ 2018 should ~~then~~ discuss the need for a new strategy. The strategy of 2016 does not differ drastically from that of 2014, as the board of 2015 and 2016 deemed it efficient and well formulated.*

*The following strategy has four broad themes: organization & administration, communication & representation, integration, and creating an identity.*

### Organization & Administration 2015

As CISSI has become a freestanding organization ~~is applying for official association status the connection to Kannunvalajat will change but a strong cooperation will still be aimed for~~. In addition the board will aim to register CISSI as an official association ~~as soon as possible~~ during the spring of 2016. ~~This proved to be difficult at the beginning of the year due to time constraint and will be done later during the spring term.~~

CISSI wishes to remain transparent and open about its functioning and accountable to its members at all times. To achieve this end, our meetings our open to all our members and the minutes of the meeting are also shared with our members. Our budget plan, strategy and action plan are also presented to our members at our Spring Annual General Meeting so that they can be a part of the discussion.

### Communication & Representation

One of the primary goals of CISSI is to represent the interests of international students within the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki, a growing population due to the introduction of International Master’s Degree Programmes. Representing international students’ interests in the time of financial cutbacks and implementation of tuition fees is particularly important and hence we have a proposal to develop the position of Study Affairs with this goal in mind that will be detailed under **Projects 2016**, page 6. ~~In the early days of CISSI it is therefore~~ It is also important to communicate with other associations ~~what~~  to maintain connections and make sure CISSI ~~actually is~~ and whom it represents are known. This includes primarily students (both Finnish and international), subject associations as well as other university institutions and administration. Communication is key for getting CISSI’s voice heard – allowing CISSI to represent the voice of international students in the faculty.

Concretely this can mean anything from making sure a CISSI board member with the relevant position represents international student interests at university/association meetings, to reaching out to members of other subject association boards informing them of CISSI’s ~~existence~~ activities. Furthermore, ~~this board would suggest that eventually there would be a CISSI representative/observer in the Kannunvalajat ry board (not official board member status)~~ the board of 2016 aims to keep in close contact with the CISSI correspondent in Kannunvalajat and attend meetings when necessary– this ~~would~~ will enhance representation of international student interests as well as integration.

CISSI has worked hard to ensure that other student organizations, the Faculty and the student union are sensitive to the language barrier that may exist for international students and offer translation in English. We have tried and will continue to try to encourage user training and manuals for student party spaces in English. Our aim is to promote an internationally friendly atmosphere within the student organization body of the university through active communication with other organizations.

### Integration

In addition to making sure international students’ voices are heard; the goal of CISSI is to better integrate these international students into the social sphere of university life in Finland. Creating social networks in Finland, and especially with Finns, can be a valuable asset for any students who wish to stay in Finland as they graduate from the University of Helsinki. In addition, creating more professional links through contact with organizations, companies, etc. outside of the university can also assist international students in integrating into professional networks in Finland. In more practical terms, this integration can be achieved through organizing events together with the subject associations in the faculty, as well as other associations and organizations within and outside of the university. Furthermore, CISSI events should also aim to attract Finnish students in addition to its primary target group of international students.

### Creating an Identity

While integration into the Finnish sphere is important, it is equally important for CISSI to have a solid identity – this makes it easier to promote and inform people about CISSI. Essentially, with a common identity all of the above goals already outlined will be easier to communicate to others. Creating a specific identity within the university will bring international students within the faculty together, but will also allow them to place themselves within the university social life. This does not rule out the ability to identify with the other subjects associations, ~~or Kannunvalajat for that matter,~~ but provides a platform for international students to turn to when they have issues related specifically to their status as international students. ~~Concretely this identity will be formed over time,~~ CISSI has during the past 2 years created a foundation for this identity through communication and the organization of ~~CISSI~~ events ~~that will bring all international students within the faculty into contact with each other~~ – these events ~~should~~ have ~~be~~  been, and should continue to be varied in order to cater for the different interests of different students within the faculty.

**Projects 2016**

* **Developing Study Affairs**

One of our aims for 2016 is to develop the position of study affairs and try to establish study affairs committees with representatives from different subject organizations. It is of critical importance to liaise between the Faculty and students and to keep abreast of study related news in different subjects and units. Establishment of the suggested study affairs committees will enable us to do so and work towards representing the interests of international students in these times of austerity cuts.

* **Developing Corporate Affairs**

Previously, this position was titled “University and Corporate Affairs. However this seemed to replicate some of the Study Affairs duties so we decided to devote it exclusively to Corporate Affairs. International students can find the labour market in Finland challenging so it is necessary to offer them adequate support in this area. We aim to network with companies that can offer international students opportunities and arrange visits to the workplace at least twice a year. If relations can be built with an adequate number of companies, we will strive to arrange a careers fair for international students where these companies can represent themselves and this fair could take place in autumn, 2016.

* **Involving members in creating events**

There are a lot of benefits to be obtained from members helping in creating events. An exchange student from Belarus arranged a Belarussian event where the Ambassador of Belarus came and made a speech, traditional snacks were served and unique culture of the country shared. Such events are wonderful, for both those who are able to partake in them as well as those who organize them as they facilitate a sharing of one’s cultural heritage with people who are interested in knowing more about that culture. Some exchange students might be reluctant to get involved with CISSI because they are only here for a short duration so organizing meetings or hangouts devoted to the goal of involving members in creating events will encourage more of our members to get involved and share ideas for future events. Such meetings and hangouts can be advertised and promoted on our facebook page and email list to generate interest.

**Finance**

*By Mohsen Hadianpour*

CISSI aims to be an official organization in spring, 2016. Thereby, the treasurer has more responsibilities in making sure that accounting and bookkeeping is done right. Accounting will be managed in Tilitin - authorized accounting software. CISSI will also open a bank account as soon as possible to make finances easier. The treasurer is responsible for this account.

In the beginning of the year, the treasurer will create a budget plan and income estimates. The budget plan will be made by responsibility, in cooperation with the responsible board member. All board members must then finally approve the budget plan.

During the year, the treasurer will follow up on expenses in order not to exceed the estimated budget plan. The treasurer will update the board members about estimated budget usage on a quarter basis. In the end of the year the treasurer will prepare a report considering incomes, outcomes and all money transactions. The treasurer should also represent the budget and financial situation at the Annual General Meetings held twice a year.

For every purchase for CISSI, the receipt has to be given to the treasurer. The money will be paid back in cash once the treasurer has received the receipt. When a bank account is opened, the money can also be paid back via bank transfer. The treasurer will keep the receipts and scan them, as they have to be kept for a minimum of six years. Before every event, the approximate budget will be made. After every event, the treasurer will make the exact calculation of the actual cost and earnings. The treasurer will count the cash before and after every event.

**Record Keeping and Communication**

*By Mong Han Chau (Secretary) and Svenja Scholz (Communications Representative)*

This year the task of record keeping and communication will be divided into two separate roles, that of secretary and communication. There tasks will be explained respectively below.

 **CISSI’s Secretary**, is mainly responsible for record keeping and the official documents of the organization. The secretary writes down the minutes of each meeting and makes them accessible to all.

It will stored on Google drive so anyone can access them conveniently. It is also the responsibility of the secretary to look after the membership list. The secretary stores all the documents in one place so they are easy to access afterwards. If CISSI gets mail, the secretary will go through it.

**CISSI’s Communications Officer** is responsible for ensuring good information exchange with the board members, CISSI members as well as other organizations.

CISSI’s communication officer manages two email-­lists: CISSI -­board and CISSI -­news. It is the responsibility of CISSI’s communications officer to post a weekly newsletter to the international CISSI-­news mailing list. The officer also uses kaapelin-­‐valajat to inform Finnish students about CISSI’s activities. Emails from the Finnish mailing lists will be translated and forwarded in case they are relevant for international students.

CISSI’s communications officer is also actively sharing information through various channels. CISSI has its own Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/internationalcissi](http://www.facebook.com/internationalcissi)), Instagram (@instacissi) and blog (<http://blogs.helsinki.fi/internationalcissi/>). The Facebook page is designed for sharing information about CISSI’s events and activities, sharing pictures and publicly communicating with other Facebook pages (such as Kannunvalajat and other subject organizations).All members of the board can post on CISSI’s wall and comment and like as CISSI. Other users can comment posts, tag people on CISSI’s photos and send private messages to CISSI, but they cannot post on CISSI’s wall.

CISSI’s Instagram account is also open for all board members to use, and its main purpose is to document events of CISSI and enhance CISSI’s social media presence. CISSI’s communications officer acts as the moderator of the Facebook group ‘International Students, Faculty of Social Sciences’. The moderator is responsible for adding new members and approving all the posts published in the group. Tutors of the Social Science Faculty have also the right to add new members. The settings of the group are rather restricted in order to avoid spam and to make it more private. Information on CISSI and CISSI’s events will be available in English, Finnish and, if requested, in Swedish.

CISSI’s blog has information on how to join CISSI, our current and previous boards, our past and future events, photos, contact details, minutes and official documents as well as posts by our members and student life in Finland. Our blog is maintained by our Communications Representative.

**Integration**

*By Maria Luhtaniemi*

One of CISSI’s aims is to improve the integration of international students at the faculty and in Finnish student life. Therefore CISSI’s integration specialists are frequently in contact with the board of Kannunvalajat and with the international representatives of the faculty’s subject organizations.

The integration specialist makes sure that information flows smoothly between CISSI and Kannunvalajat. Thus they take part in Kannunvalajat’s board meetings

whenever topics relevant to international students are discussed.

The integration specialist encourages Kannunvalajat and the subject organizations to take international students into consideration in their communication and in their events. The integration specialists also coordinate the cooperation between the international representatives of the subject organizations. A Facebook group for international representatives is used to inform the representatives about issues related to integration and about CISSI’s events.

Integration specialists work as a link between international and Finnish students: the aim is to both make Finnish student life more accessible to international students and to organize events where Finnish and international students can meet and network. From past experience, most people involved in our activities have some sort of international background in the sense that either they have studied abroad, will study abroad, or are just interested in international affairs but there are others who just share the dream of multiculturalism. Our name as an international organization can be a bit misleading and perhaps discourage Finns from getting involved in our activities but our organization is open to all. International does not mean foreign and true internationality can be achieved only when we can make everyone feel included. We hope to co-organize events with Finnish student organizations to reach this vision.

 The international students are an important part of the faculty and the integration specialist, together with the rest of the board of CISSI, make an effort to make them more visible, which we believe benefits everyone. In addition to helping international students get their voices heard, integration and forming networks is important to those who are considering staying in Finland after they have graduated from the university. For Finnish students, CISSI makes it possible to gain new perspectives and to be international at home.

**Equality and Diversity**

*By Marguerite Beattie*

In accordance with the “[University of Helsinki Equality and Diversity Plan 2013-2016](http://www.helsinki.fi/henkos/tasa-arvo/equality_and_diversity-plan.htm)”, the Committee of International Social Scientists (CISSI) emulates its policies to advance equality, trust, and an environment of respect for diversity as well as to preclude discrimination. CISSI strives to be aware of and amend social constructions that produce and reproduce inequality. Furthermore, CISSI agrees that equality and accessibility will facilitate multiculturalism and multilingualism and that these are desirable outcomes for our community.

CISSI recognizes the University of Helsinki’s types of discrimination, i.e., discrimination based on gender, age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, conviction, sexual orientation, health, disability, opinion, socioeconomic status, or other reason relating to personal characteristics.

***On Gender***

 In accordance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the University of Helsinki, CISSI seeks to inhibit gender discrimination, encourage gender equality, and advance the historically lower status of women. In addition, gender equality and social issues with regard to men and masculinity will be addressed, e.g., gay and effeminate bullying. Positions and board membership is evaluated for the achievement of these goals. Board membership and deputyship together are composed of 33% men and 67% women. The higher positions of Chair and Vice-Chair are filled by women. This is an increase in gender inequality since last year favoring women, and recruiting men for next year will be addressed. As the University of Helsinki as a whole includes a greater number of women than men, it is acknowledged that it is a challenge for the board to be gender equal. In addition, stereotypical gender roles and duties will be avoided in the course of meetings, planning, and all other activities. Harassment will not be tolerated. Finally, the binary gender system will be avoided with respect for gender minorities.

***On Age, Ethnic or National Origin, Nationality, Language, Religion, Conviction, Opinion, Health, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Socioeconomic Status and Other Discriminated Personal Characteristics***

In accordance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the University of Helsinki, CISSI will strive for equal opportunities for all taking the steps necessary to meet special needs. Equality is a transparent goal to be actively taken into account in all decision-making. Discrimination can be difficult to recognize as it can take many subtle forms including verbal belittlement, exclusion, and neglect. Instructions and orders to discriminate are also a type of discrimination. For these reasons, it is requisite to be continually conscious of different forms of discrimination.

As CISSI is an international committee, it is all the more important for its activities and actions to promote multiculturism and multilingualism at the University of Helsinki and particularly in the Faculty of the Social Sciences. This includes an exchange between the international and Finnish students as well as increased integration of international students into the faculty, university, and society.

***Equality Implementation***

* Meeting agenda will include a review of all issues discussed and plans made from an equality perspective.
* CISSI will reach out to new students to make them aware of resources available to them in the event they encounter discrimination.
* Communication will be in English; Finnish or Swedish translation will be provided upon request.
* Attention will be directed toward ways in which some may be discriminated against and ways to make opportunities and activities more equal and accessible to all.

**Environment**

*By Marguerite Beattie*

Being composed of social scientists who question social norms, CISSI is concerned about the current human impact on the environment. Humans’ behavior affects the health of the ecosystem and of the biosphere, and human behavior, especially in industrially developed countries, is currently unsustainable. Consequently, CISSI will be environmentally conscious in all its activities and events and promote awareness of environmental issues.

*Implementation[[1]](#footnote-1)*

* As a United Nations report among others have stated, animal diets contribute more to greenhouse gases than transportation.[[2]](#footnote-2) Therefore, CISSI will favor vegetarian and optimally vegan food at activities and events.
* Wastefulness will be minimized.
* Reusable tableware will be preferred.
* Bio-waste and recyclables will be sorted out from waste generated from activities and events.
* Private motor vehicle usage will be minimized.
* Meeting agenda will include a review of all issues discussed and plans made from an environmental perspective.

**Study Affairs**

*By André Buscariolli*

The study affairs representative is mainly in charge of the following responsibilities: informing international students about study related matters such as traineeship grants, changes in degree programmes and courses etc. and identifying any problems that will interfere with the accomplishment of students' educational goals and developing appropriate interventions.

Conducting research among student on their learning needs and satisfaction or by having a round table discussion with the international students of the Faculty of Social Sciences is the first step in this process. It is then important for this feedback to reach the faculty. For example, if the students are in need of something, which is not yet provided by the university, this topic can be taken up with the representatives of the university. Therefore it is important for the study affairs representative to:

• Work as a link between the students and the faculty

 • Make sure students are informed of what is happening in degree structures

• Plan and arrange workshops and seminars, which enhance students’ personal development

• to regularly contact the faculty and study staff

• to try to organize a study committee consisting of students from different programs and organize meetings (once every 2 months for example) with the committee.

Such activities are especially important in the current context of the university, given the on-going structural changes promoted by the ‘Big Wheel’ project. The study affairs should be one of the main channels to inform international students about such changes, ensuring communication transparency and student participation.

In general, strengthening the connection between students and faculty is important. Meeting regularly with other student affairs representatives from different social sciences student organizations is important in order to keep up to date with general study matters in the Faculty of Social Sciences. This also acts as an important link between Finnish students and international students and is a great way to exchange views and also keep Finnish students aware of the international programmes. The study representative will also regularly meet the people from the faculty with other student affairs representatives in order to exchange information and views on current news about studies. Providing guidance to students in study related matter or directing them where the required help can be found is also an essential task of the study affairs representative.

**University & Corporate**

*By Valeriya Kushchuk*

The main responsibility of the Corporate affairs officer is to keep in contact with other organizations within and outside the university to provide international students with the best possible links to the Finnish labour market and knowledge on the skills needed to succeed in it. These can include private companies, NGOs, different student organizations, other universities etc.

The officer should help the chairperson make sure that CISSI is represented, when relevant, and by the relevant officer, at any meetings, events or trainings both outside and within the university. When being present, she or he makes sure that the interests of CISSI are represented there.

***Work life***

The officer attempts to organize excursions to the potential employers (corporations, governmental institutions, and NGOs). Additionally, the officer works in collaboration with various social scientist organizations and unions in order to make them known among CISSI members who are willing to work in Finland. In addition, the goal of this collaboration is to give the students the opportunity to see the benefits of joining such organizations. The officer may also prepare the set of materials on job-hunting in Finland (i.e. relevant university courses, online toolbox, media publications, alumni interviews) which could be distributed through CISSI blog, social media pages, email subscription list.

***Internships***

The officer has the responsibility to network with potential internship places for social science students. These could be (but are not limited to), NGOs, and private companies that typically hire international students i.e. for internships.

***Fundraising***

Together with the Chair, the Vice‐Chair, and the Treasurer, as well as with any other interested CISSI board member, the officer looks for sources of funding and sponsorship. Sponsorship will be looked for when needed and especially for bigger events such as an annual ball.

***Other Events & Trips***

Within the university, the officer, together with the event managers, makes sure that there is cooperation with other student organizations. In conjunction with the university, the officer will attempt to organize an info session in English about internship opportunities, the labor market in Finland, as well as an alumni evening. Outside the university, beyond the NGOs, institutions, and corporations, the officer attempts to create connections with universities and other organizations both within Finland and abroad. These connections may include joint events and even visits to these organizations.

**Events**

*By Huishan Guo*

The Events Management position at CISSI is responsible for creating, managing and facilitating CISSI events aimed to enrich the diversity of student life. In this capacity, the event manager not only oversees, schedules and completes events throughout the year, acting as the main line of communication between all key event personnel but also brings together students, CISSI members and the board under the umbrella of CISSI as a group.

The event manager should also encourage the exchange of ideas for new events at meetings and organize hangouts aimed at getting members of CISSI more involved in the creation of events. The event manager must be able to assess the viability of the proposed events and further develop the ideas. The event manager must also provide comments about previous events so that the board can learn from past mistakes and successes. Up to date plans of all events conducted during the year must be uploaded at the end of the year to give the next board clear guidelines.

For this calendar year, we at CISSI have already had a nineties themed sitsit co-hosted with the International students of history association (ISHA) on the 15th of January, a Chinese New Year Event on the 6th of February and are scheduled to have a Winter Sports and Pub Quiz Night with CILLI (Organisation of international law students) at the end of February, a St Patricks Day Event in March, an International Food event and partnering student organization TSEMPII in hosting an event on Ravintola Päivä. We hope to also collaborate with Kannunvalajat’s Equality and Environment committee to co-host events such as an outdoor flea-market where we will contact exchange students moving from Finland who need to dispose off their possessions and arrange to pick these up and sell them to new students who need them.

A bigger and efficient CISSI will be able to bring forward numerous other events in the future. The students studying at the University, both local and international will benefit from it. The events at CISSI provide a platform for students to meet each other, share experiences and form a closer connection with the Finnish society and the university. It directly helps in the internationalization aims of the University.

**Cultural Events**

 *By Sarah Ní Mháirtín*

The aim of CISSI’s Cultural Events Representative is to introduce ethnically diverse events and celebrations to the students of the University of Helsinki, whilst assisting international students of social science with their adaptation to Finnish society and university life here in Helsinki. As such, the events organised typically represent a certain aspect of a particular culture or are multicultural in nature. By doing so, our goal is to represent the ethnic diversity of the faculty of social science and encourage participation in cultural exchange.

In the past, CISSI has organised numerous events of this nature such as the International Food Event and the Dia de los Muertos celebration. It is the intention of the board to build on such previous events and also to introduce new celebrations. Having successful organised a Lunar New Year party on February 6 (which we hope will become an annual occurrence) that included sharing traditional Chinese food, brewing various teas, creating lucky couplets and dancing along to a mixture of Chinese music, we have several other cultural events planned for the spring semester.

Planning for a German Karneval festival is currently underway and will include traditional songs, foods (especially sweets, which are typically given out during parades), beers, colourful decorations (such as balloons, Glitter, paper streamers, confetti, etc.) The Karneval procession in every Karnival city has usually slogan which changes every year and it has been suggested that CISSI create their own slogan, relevant to international students. We will encourage students to come in costume as although most celebrations feature parody of local, national and international politicians as well as the past year’s news events, the emphasis in many regions is on traditional masks, and dressing up as devils, fools and wild beasts.

 As with all of CISSI’s celebrations, we do not wish to exclude anyone, especially those who do not wish to drink alcohol. This event will be no exception as Karneval does not mean that everyone needs to drink e.g. in Germany children also celebrate! A St Patrick’s Day party is planned for the weekend of March 18/19. Here students will be encouraged to dress in green/ the colours of the Irish flag, try some traditional Irish dancing, participate in a “bring your own potato” competition (e.g. with spot prizes for celebrity lookalike potatoes) and sample some Irish snacks and drinks. CISSI also wishes to participate in Ravintolapäivä, showcasing foods from the various cultures represented in our organisation. We also wish to host a ‘sewing circle’ prior to Vappu. At this event we will explain the history of the Finnish celebration and keep each other company as we sew patches onto our overalls in preparation for the occasion. Along with these new events, we also intend to continue to the tradition of the bi-annual International Food Event. All international and internationally-minded students are invited to bring their favourite dish from either their native country or from a country that has a special meaning to them. The International Food Event is more than just an occasion to bring everybody together; it is an excellent way to learn about other cultures.

During the Autumn semester, the Cultural Events Representative would like to focus on introducing novel aspects of Finnish culture which may be unfamiliar to international students, especially those who have just arrived. This will include an introductory sit-sit wherein the rules and customs of the event will be explained throughout the evening. Other activities suggested are a trip to an ice hockey game, a sauna evening, Pikkujoulu party, attending the Independence Day concert in front of Helsingin tuomiokirkko and visiting the Christmas market afterwards. Following the success of last November’s Culture Month (which included events such as an Irish dancing workshop and a documentary screening) we will once again encourage CISSI’s members to work with our board in arranging cultural workshops or celebrations from their native country or one that has a special meaning to them. An Autumn food event will also be hosted.

The emphasis of all events proposed is assist in the integration of international students and in the case of Finnish events, to provide an opportunity to celebrate and participate in Finnish society in a comfortable environment with the support of friends (both Finnish and international!). The sharing of international cultures aims to promote positive diversity within our university and allow students of all ethnicities to celebrate their backgrounds. In this way we hope to encourage interaction between international and local students.

**Tutoring**

*By Jola Llozhi*

The main duty for tutor representative is to help new international students to get accustomed to their new study environment and student life at the University of Helsinki. Since the new beginning sets its challenges, CISSI tries to be as accessible as possible to all new international social science students, especially by arranging events, aiming to help them integrate into the Finnish culture and student life. Our main duty is to help all international students, let them be degree or exchange students.

CISSI also aims to keep the tradition of organizing events as a way that helps students to get acquainted with each other and ease their transition to new student life. As previous fall, we will organize CISSI's stall at the welcome fair during the orientation week where we will try to spread more awareness about CISSI as an international organization and try to recruit many new members.

This year CISSI's tutor representative has attended a meeting with other organizations’ tutor representatives who are aiming in creating a committee for tutor representatives in order to be helpful to each other, share their experiences and find new ways to help new coming students.

With this goal in mind, we will be available throughout the academic year in general and at the beginning of the autumn term in particular to provide support to new international students.

1. Greenpeace and Sierra Club recommendations were consulted in the writing of this section. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?newsID=20772&CR1=warning#.Uy8pvBAiywE [↑](#footnote-ref-2)