



THE VSS

# HERALD

#4

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SUPPORT OF THE EUROPEAN  
YOUTH FOUNDATION OF  
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE.



# WELCOME TO ICELAND!

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Dear participants, team members, enthusiastic readers or anyone else who might be reading this for one reason or other.

VELKOMIN TIL ÍSLANDS, is what I hope to get to say to you in August when you disembark the means of transportation you chose to make your way to Hellishólar in Iceland. I sincerely hope we will get to have a fantastic time together, one of inclusive learning and fun times (of course inclusive fun times as well).

I do feel it is my obligation as an Icelander to give you a fair warning to some things that have plagued tourists and outsiders when coming to Iceland.

**Summer:** Do not be fooled by the label we attach to this season. It is a nice spring at best. Although the weather can reach up to 25ish degrees Celsius on the best of days it is generally around the 15-degree mark for most of summer. I would therefore recommend against packing tank tops and shorts only. I am not your mum though, so I won't tell you what to do. Sunlight: It is not recommended to use the sun as

the only measure of time whilst in Iceland. On June 21st the sun doesn't set, and in August there will be approximately 16-18 hours of sunlight. I would not recommend tying your sleep schedule to the sun nor assume it isn't night cause it's still bright out.

**Water:** Water in Iceland is very pure from the tap. The water you buy at stores will be from the same taps and merely a money-grab scheme. Bring a good bottle and fill it up regularly. You might even get a chance to fill it in nature – who knows...

With those out of the way there is only one major recommendation for your stay in Iceland on behalf of the support team. Enjoy yourselves while here and don't hesitate to ask, whatever your question might be. The VSS is about building bridges and connecting with one another in learning and friendship (as well as equal opportunities). As building a bridge to Iceland might prove troublesome, we will focus on the second one even more.

Sjáumst í ágúst!

*Aron Freyr Jóhannsson*



# WHAT TO DO BEFORE AND AFTER THE VSS:

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If you are a nature lover Iceland is the place for you! Waterfalls, volcanoes, glaciers, and beautiful hikes ending up in a hot springs... Sounds nice, right?

AFS paired up with Guide to Iceland and you have the opportunity book a fun experience in Iceland like a Glacier hiking on Sólheimajökull, a Golden Circle Tour and other offers. Please check the link <https://guidetoiceland.is/book-trips-holiday/vss-2017> for more.

If you are more of a free spirit here are a few things you can do during your stay before and after the VSS.

## **If you are staying in Reykjavík here is what you should try:**

- Panoramic view from Perlan or Hallgrímskirkja
- Visit Harpa and take a selfie at sun voyager sculpture
- Enjoy Nautholsvík, a hot tube by the sea where you can have a nice swim in the sea if you have the courage (sea water is heated up there)
- Take a stroll at Reykjavík Botanical garden
- Go for a hike on the mountain Esja
- Grab an Ice cream
- Walk around Tjornin lake
- Have a look at Raðhusið for free exhibitions and touristic information

## **South of Iceland:**

If you are ready to start your trip from the venue you can visit beautiful waterfalls or stop by some swimming pool up to Jokulsarlon lagoon. Here are some points of interest on the way:

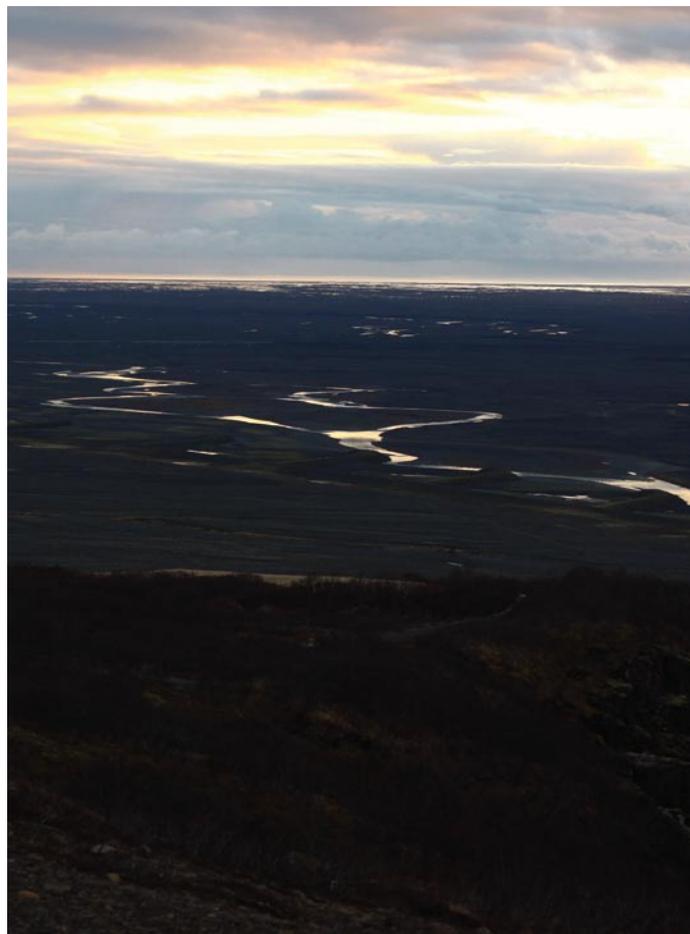
- Skógafoss Waterfall
- Seljalandsfoss Waterfall
- Dyrhólaey
- Vík - Black sand Beach
- Skalafell
- Fjallsárlón Glacial Lagoon
- Diamond Beach
- Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon

Still not enough? Do you want more?

**Snaefellsnes Peninsula:** An hour away from Reykjavík you should stop in Borganes, a very cute small town and then all the way to Snaefellsnes and visit Kirkjufell waterfalls, find a nice hotpot, make a quick stop in Olafsvík and watch seals at Ytri Tunga Beach.

**The North:** How many are too many waterfalls? If you haven't had enough, you can still check out Dettifoss, Goðafoss, drive to Akureyri, relax in the Mývatn hot springs, enjoy the view from Mývatn Lake or from the Volcano Krafla.

## *Have fun in Iceland!*



# LEISURE ACTIVITIE(VS)S!

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We know, we know: you are thinking about the VSS right now and are already getting excited about the enriching workshops you will be taking part to, the amazing people you will meet, and the stunning Icelandic landscapes that will serve as a background to your unforgettable experience.

You think that the programme already sounds great but are kind of wondering what you will be doing in those couple of hours between lunch and the workshops, because you will be sooo full of energy (even after lunch!) and will need something to keep you rolling. Well... do not worry, dear. We got you covered.

Your VSS Support Team is already working on fun stuff to do together to keep you entertained and get you pumped up before you go back to your workshops: the leisure activitie(vs)s!

Are you a sporty participant and would love to play some football, basketball, curling, Icelandic wrestling, or whatever...? We'll make sure you get enough sport to invest aaaaall your energy in! Do you express your creativity through music...? Let's be music together!

Would you much rather engage in a quieter activity, reading something out loud, playing board games, doing some yoga...? That's what we're here for!

Please do not worry: we are planning many activities and we will try our best to have them as diverse and amusing, interesting and relaxing as possible. Signing up will be easy and we will guide you through the whole process – you basically just need to join and enjoy. To enjoy. See you there then. Fun!

The Support Team <3



# WHO IS COMING TO ICELAND?

Participants (short: PAX) of the VSS are extremely diverse. They come from all over the EFIL network and beyond, they have different biological ages, different AFS ages and different roles to play at this amazing event.

The simple statistics we show here encapsulate only a fragment of the mosaic that the VSS participants create and we want your help to look at it closer, find out more and finally to discover, reconstruct and unveil the complete picture of the 2017 VSSers.

We give you...

## The VSS17 PAX challenge!

Once at the volunteer Summer Summit, you will be assigned to a re-group (all will be clear in time). You contribute to the challenge individually or with your re-group members, but this is a group challenge... only one re-group can win.

### Objective:

Throughout the VSS you will have 3 days to collect the following:

At least 1 selfie with or pictures of a member of each VSS teams (Prep, Support, Trainers)

At least 1 selfie with or pictures of a person from each age category (18, 19-20, etc...)

At least 1 selfie with or pictures of someone representing each of the AFS organizations (AUT, BFL...)

At least 1 selfie with or pictures of a volunteer from each of the AFS experience categories (1 year, 2-5 years...)

### Rules:

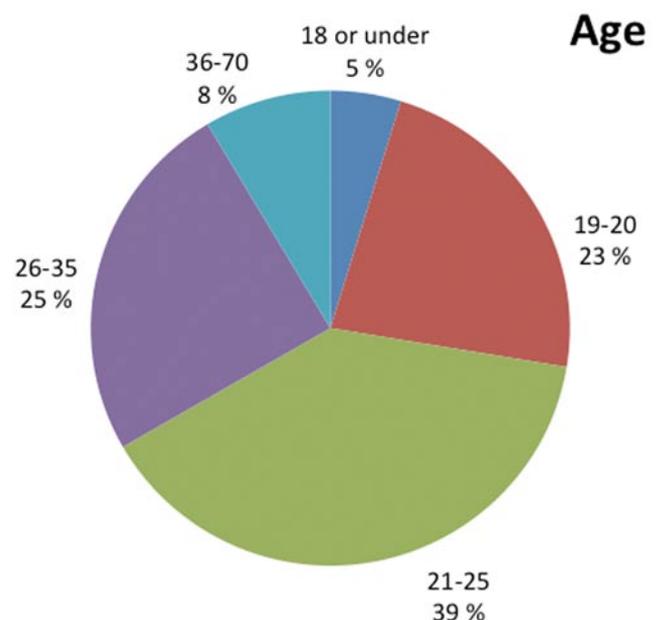
1) The same pax cannot be photographed to represent more than one category. Example: if I photograph Max as a member of the Prep Team he CANNOT also represent a person with 6-10 years experiences or who is aged 26-35.

2) For each pic you take you should collect that pax name and ask them a question. What question is up to you but... go for the deep stuff... or the funny stuff... or the unique and bizarre... well, you know, make it interesting

### Winner:

By the end of the week the Re-group that has collected the more pictures and stories\* helping us discover the real people behind the squares and bars and bubbles below and on the next page, will win an amazing price.

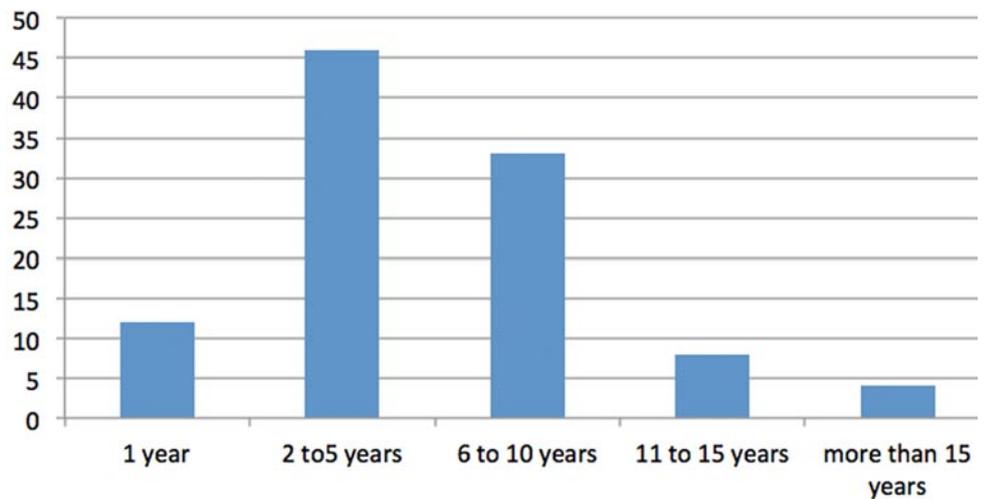
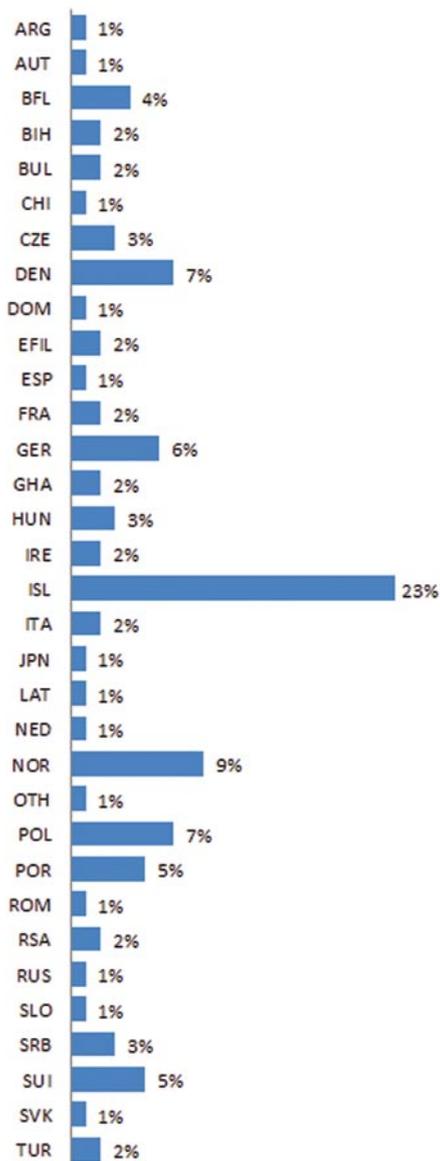
\*At least one per category required.



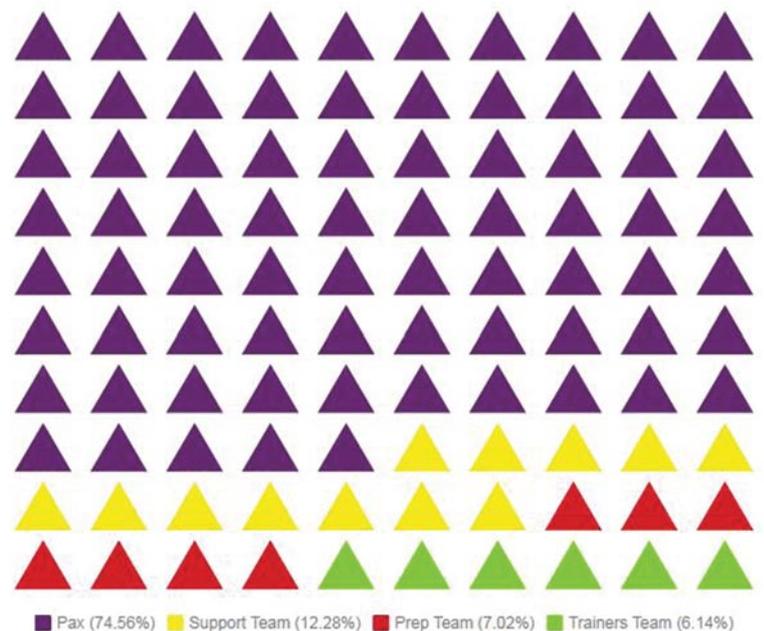
# ARE YOU READY?

WE HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERING FOR...

WE CURRENTLY LIVE IN:



OUR ROLE AT THE VSS IS:



# THE GOODBYE PARTY

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The biggest and most anticipated event of every VSS (or at least one of the top four) is without doubt the goodbye party. Yes, it can be sad saying goodbye to old friends and new ones; but it is also a celebration of all the things that we as a group have achieved in these days and of all the new friendships we made and projects we started.

But now it is time for the big revelation which is also the answer to the question you all probably have: what is the theme of this year's good-bye party?

Before I reveal the theme I'm going to list the reasons for choosing this particular theme. Iceland's most famous attraction is probably its rough yet so beautiful nature, the midnight sun and the dark winters, all of which has influenced the imagination of Icelanders for a long time. Belief in elves and trolls has been a part of the Icelandic nation for as long as we know, and there are still people nowadays who believe in them.

The second reason is that we wanted to choose a theme which could be rather easy for everyone to find an appropriate costume for. Something not really narrow so that even the person with the smallest imagination would find it easy to come up with an outfit matching with the theme of the party. Therefore we, the support team, thought that the theme **mythological party** would be an amazing choice!

Costume parties and theme parties are really important to Icelanders and we usually like to be as extreme as it can get. So of course we encourage you to do the same. Let's make this year's goodbye party the best and the most mythical one yet!



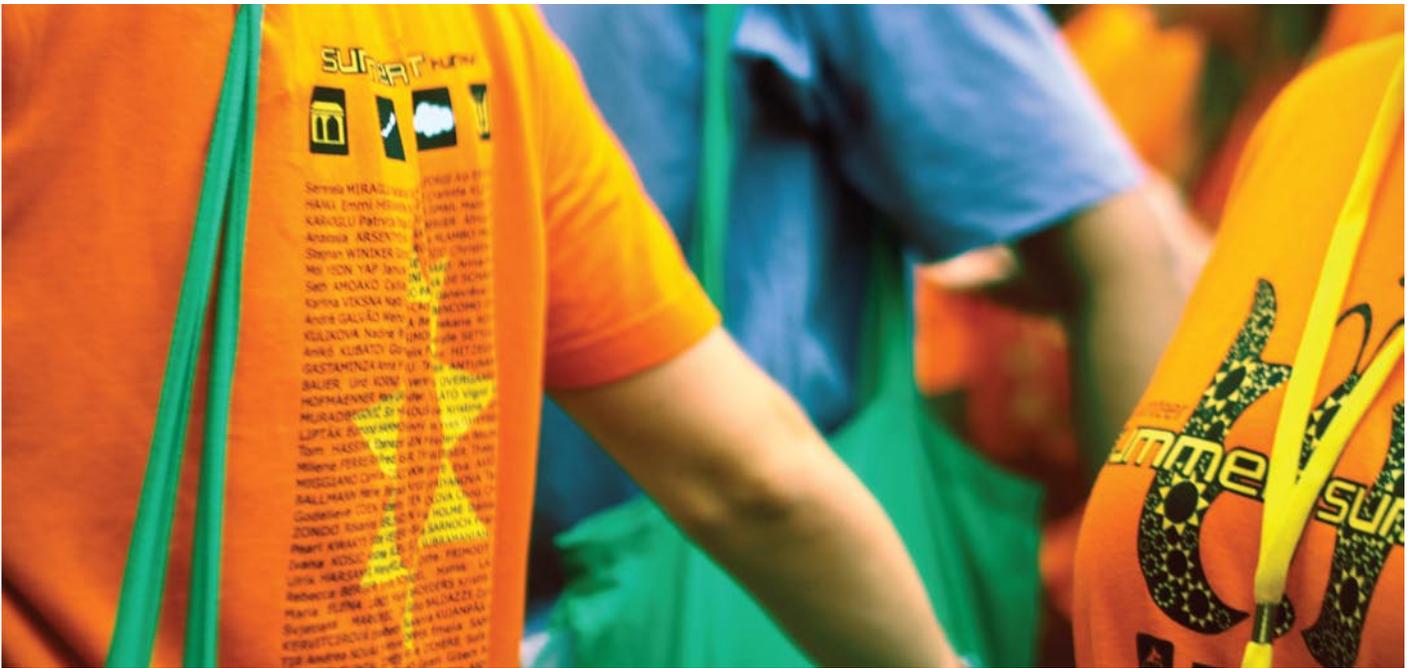
Team Iceland taking the theme all the way at the goodbye party at the VSS in Germany.

So now we would like to formally invite you all to join us in the VSS 2017 goodbye party. You will come dressed up as a mythological creature, story, or anything else myth-related.



# VSS 2017 EXHIBITIONS

Space for nostalgia and life-changing information – the exhibitions at the VSS 2017



It has been tradition from past VSSs to feature an exhibition related to either the topic or the hosting country. This year will be special since we will not have one, but two exhibitions for you to enjoy, one of which you can actively participate in it.

One of the exhibitions is called **“10 Years of Summer”**, because this year is the 10th VSS. We took this opportunity to look back to what has happened so far in a fun and interactive way. Can you remember what t-shirts from the VSS in Latvia looked like? And what year did the VSS in Bosnia take place? How many participants were there in Italy? Answers to these and other questions can be found in this exhibition. Photos and facts, along with original VSS items, will be the main elements of this exhibition. You will be asked to be part of it by assigning yourself to the years you attended the VSS in, and we will ask you to bring your items from previous VSSs to add to the exhibition. You can bring a t-shirt, bag, name-tag, costume from the

final party – anything you connect with those memorable moments. Of course, you will get them back, just make sure to have your name on it.

The second exhibition goes hand in hand with this year’s topic – Equal Opportunities. It’s called **The fight for women’s rights**: The history of gender equality in Iceland through the years. This exhibition will give you an insight into Iceland’s history and battle for gender equality. Do you know who the world’s first democratically elected female president was? Have you ever wondered about Women’s suffrage in Iceland? What about the Free the Nipple campaign? Don’t worry – the exhibition will feature all of this, together with other interesting moments about how gender equality developed in Iceland, from the beginning of the 20th century to nowadays.

We look forward to seeing you, sharing and making new memories! See you in August!

- *The Support Team*



# 6 MONTHS WORTH OF SHOWERS OR MEAT FOR A WEEK?

## Veggie days at the VSS

While the specific focus of each VSS changes every year, a recurrent goal of the Summit is raising awareness on sustainability issues. Participants are encouraged to choose greener means of transport to reach the venue and to give up eating meat for one day while at the event. As scope for the former is limited this year, we will try to make up for less sustainable travels with an extra vegetarian day. Of course, no one in the prep-team aims at turning VSS participants into full-fledged vegetarians, however by not serving meat at breakfast, lunch and dinner we want to raise awareness about how important it is to consume meat responsibly.

Meat production is considered the second biggest cause of climate change (no. 1 is fossil-fuelled transportation) and it has a significant effect on each of the categories of environmental impact that are putting the sustainability of mankind at stake. Current arable lands are able to feed 6 billion vegetarians, but only 2.5 billion of the average meat-eater in wealthier countries – therefore to keep feeding an increasing population many forests are to be given up to free up land for animal feed.

Producing meat also requires a lot of water. The standard diet of a vegan requires just over 1,000 litres of water a day – that's already a lot, right? – but that of the average western person takes 16 times as much. And did you know that producing half a kilo of red meat takes as much water as showering daily for six months? In case you are wondering, that's 10,000 litres. The meat industry requires, of course, energy – it is estimated that for each kilo of meat the equivalent of ten litres of gasoline is needed to fertilise land for animal feed, transport animals to slaughter houses, and to export the final product. Put it differently, it takes 28 calories of fossil-fuel energy to produce one calorie of meat protein – that's 8 times more than what's needed to produce one calorie of protein from grain for human consumption.

There are many more reasons why consuming less meat than we do now would do good for our planet. But this should be enough for you to be happy to put up with meat for some time during the VSS.

Source: <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/549>



# WHILE WE'RE WAITING...

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Welcome to the last page of the 4th and last VSS Herald of 2017. What, no more information? Don't worry! A couple of weeks before the VSS starts we'll publish an info booklet containing a wide collection of practical information for those of you who are joining us in Iceland and not just reading the Heralds while daydreaming of past VSS'. We'll let you know when it is out!

Until then, follow us on...

Snapchat: **efilvss**

Instagram: **efilvss**

Facebook: **[www.facebook.com/efilvss](http://www.facebook.com/efilvss)**

You should also start to think about...

## FOLLOW UP PROJECTS

Thanks to the Council of Europe sponsorship, we are once again able to offer a contribution in money to great ideas presented by volunteers for follow up project. The projects can be almost anything but should obviously help the promotion of the AFS mission and message, and the diffusion of Intercultural Learning linked to this year's topic of the VSS. All projects will be presented at the end of the 4 days event and participants will be able to vote on their favourite.

Do you have an amazing idea for a project? Present it at the VSS and you could get seed money to help you implement it. No idea yet? Wait for the VSS – maybe some of the workshops will inspire you! You can use the time at the VSS to explore new ideas and to find partners to implement them.

To see which projects were funded last year and maybe get inspired, click here <http://www.efilsummersummit.org/2016/> and look for the section **"Follow up projects"** on the Outcome page. More information on how to present projects will come but if you have any question write to **[info@efilsummersummit.org](mailto:info@efilsummersummit.org)** .

# SEE YOU SOON!