Meeting of European Bhutan Friendship Associations Thimphu and Haa, November 20 – 29, 2019

“EXPLORING THE FUTURE CONTRIBUTIONS AND ROLES OF EUROPEAN BHUTAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATIONS” This topic was the focus of 44 members of 13 European – Bhutan Friendship Associations (EBFA) during a 10 days meeting in Bhutan.

The meeting was opened by a very warm welcome with a reception by the Foreign Secretary Dasho Kinga Singye and his team.

The presentations and discussions with the Ministries of Health, Education and Foreign Affairs gave an insight in the ambitious plans of the government of Bhutan to narrow the gap in the country.

Various Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the CSO Authority Board explained their role and challenges in the fast-developing society.

The members of the associations were especially impressed by the work of the young entrepreneurs, who are supported by the Loden Foundation and the development of the Thimphu Tech Park.

The group could also visit the new not yet officially opened Centre for Bhutan and GNH Studies. Dasho Karma Ura explained the vision and plans to open a space to connect people from Bhutan as well as from outside Bhutan and give young Bhutanese people an opportunity to meet and experience meaningful activities.

The new Director General of the Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) Dasho was briefing the group on the past, present, and future of tourism in Bhutan. Among the topics discussed were new tourism products, the growing number of regional tourists and the growing number of Hotel accommodation in the Western part of Bhutan.

For many members of the EBFA it was the first time to visit the Haa Valley. Dasho Dzongda explained the plans to further develop the Haa Valley without destroying its special charm.

At the end of the 10-days meeting we had the honor to be received by Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bhutan Dr. Lotay Tshering. In an open Q&A session we could address many important topics related to the development of Bhutan and the role of the European Bhutan Friendship Associations.