



Name, Surname: Uģis Sildegs

Sending Institution: Luther Academy

Field of Activity: Church History

Mobility Country: Lithuania

Host Institution: Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Faculty of Catholic Theology; Address: V. Putvinskio g. 23, Kaunas, Lithuania.

Type of Staff Mobility: Teaching Mobility (Erasmus+ Teaching Week), academic cooperation, and exchange of experience.

Duration of Mobility: April 20–24, 2026.

Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Experience Story: Shared Roots in Kaunas

As a faculty member at Luther Academy specializing in Church History, I find it essential to view our region's historical processes within a broader Baltic context. Participating in the Erasmus+ Teaching Week at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) was a strategic choice—not only to deliver lectures on the Christianization of Livonia but also to deepen the dialogue with theologians and historians from our neighboring country. This program served as an excellent platform for academic internationalization, allowing for the integration of our local historical research into the wider European academic sphere.

The mobility week in Kaunas was a large-scale and well-organized event with broad international representation. The program of activities was intensive: from the traditional "food fair" on the first day, which facilitated informal networking, to high-level academic discussions. The excursions were particularly valuable, offering a chance to explore the historical architecture of Kaunas and the university museum's exhibition, providing profound insights into Lithuanian academic traditions. This cultural program helped me better understand the environment in which the theological thought of our neighboring country has evolved.

The teaching process at the VMU Faculty of Catholic Theology developed into a competent and friendly exchange of ideas. In the lectures regarding the Christianization of Livonia, students, colleagues, and I analyzed both our common roots and the "shared differences" that characterize the paths of Latvian and Lithuanian church history. The discussions were fruitful and mutually enriching, emphasizing the need for regular inter-confessional and international academic dialogue.

The cooperation with the host institution was excellent. Special thanks and compliments go to the faculty coordinator, Benas Ulevičius, for his exceptionally warm welcome, personal support, and logistical coordination. Thanks to his care, the visit was not only productive but also made me feel like a welcomed colleague. Benas's professional approach and hospitality created a solid foundation for further cooperation between Luther Academy and VMU.

The professional benefits are immediate and lasting. I have gained new insights into how themes of Livonian history are interpreted within the Lithuanian academic environment, which will provide fresh momentum for my future research and lecture courses at Luther Academy. Personally, this visit strengthened my conviction regarding the importance of Baltic unity in academic work and provided inspiration for new projects.

For Luther Academy as the sending institution, this mobility signifies strengthened ties with one of Lithuania's leading universities. We have established contacts that will allow us to organize joint seminars in the future or invite VMU faculty members for guest lectures in Riga. This is a significant step in our institution's internationalization strategy.

To colleagues who are still hesitant about participating in the Erasmus+ program, I can only confirm: such an experience is invaluable. It allows one to step out of their usual environment, look at their field from a different perspective, and return with new energy and knowledge. The visit to Kaunas is a vivid example of how much we can learn from our neighbors if we remain open to cooperation.

Overall, this mobility was an outstanding stage of professional development, reaffirming that Church History is not merely the study of the past, but a living bridge between nations and cultures.



