



Name, Surname: Uģis Sildegs

Sending Higher Education Institution: Lutera akadēmija (Luther Academy)

Field of Activity at the HEI: Church History

Mobility Country: Croatia

Receiving Institution: Evanđeosko teološko veleučilište / Evangelical Theological Seminary / Osijek Theological Seminary, **Address:** Cvjetkova 32, HR-31000 Osijek, Hrvatska / Croatia

Type of Staff Mobility: Staff Training Mobility, Self-Education and Experience Exchange,

Internationalization and Academic Cooperation

Mobility Period Duration: October 6–10, 2025

Erasmus+ Staff Training Mobility Experience Story:

A Journey to Osijek

As a faculty member in Church History at the Luther Academy, I have always believed that academic knowledge must be supplemented with an international perspective to ensure the highest quality in both my work and the education of our students. I therefore chose to participate in the Erasmus+ staff training mobility, as it provides an opportunity to deepen and broaden my understanding of biblical research—a topic fundamental to my professional activity. This program not only allows for the acquisition of new knowledge but also for establishing international contacts that enrich both personal and institutional development.

The mobility period from October 6 to 10, 2025, in Osijek, Croatia, at the Evanđeosko teološko veleučilište (Evangelical Theological Seminary), was intensive and versatile. I carried out various activities, including attending lectures on theological and biblical research topics, exploring the city of Osijek through tourist excursions and cultural research, and actively establishing contacts and collaboration opportunities. Meetings with the faculty and administration were particularly valuable, allowing for an exchange of experience, while open discussions with guests and other participants fostered international exchange. These activities not only strengthened my academic horizon but also allowed me to experience the specifics of the Croatian cultural and academic environment.

The cooperation with the sending institution-the Luther Academy-and the receiving institution-the Osijek Theological Seminary-was excellently coordinated at all stages. Before the mobility, all necessary information about the visit was prepared, including logistics and the program, which allowed for efficient trip planning. I was received on site with great hospitality: the program was intensive, yet it included everything essential, and I was given the freedom to choose which activities to participate in. The Seminary staff provided comprehensive support-from practical advice to

technical assistance-which made the stay productive and pleasant. Following the mobility, we have gained lasting cooperation partners, exchanged experiences, and developed ideas for future projects, including further exchanges.

The professional and personal benefits of this mobility are significant. Academically, I have broadened my outlook not only in Old Testament (OT) research but also in related fields, such as the intersection of theology and humanities. I met new, interesting academics with remarkable achievements who inspired new ideas for my research. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to popularize my research and offer my services for future Erasmus+ programs, thus strengthening my role in the international academic environment. Personally, this experience enriched my understanding of different cultures and fostered personal growth through new contacts and perspectives.

The Luther Academy as the sending institution has gained several tangible benefits from my experience. We have initiated cooperation not only in Osijek (Julijana Mladenovska-Tešija, MTh/drs, Vice Dean for International Co-operation and Projects) but also in other places, such as Klaipėda, where future collaboration could develop with specialists like Travis L. Myers (M.Div., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Humanities, Theology Department Chair). This opens up opportunities for Erasmus+ exchanges, including inviting guest lecturers or organizing academic lectures and visits. Such contacts strengthen our institution's internationalization and promote the implementation of joint projects.

Although the mobility was successful, preparation and implementation were not without challenges. As a first-time participant, I had to learn all the nuances related to travel, documentation, and reporting, which initially presented some difficulties. However, with the support of the sending and receiving institutions, these obstacles were overcome, which only intensified the learning process.

To colleagues considering participation in Erasmus+ staff training mobility, I would recommend actively utilizing these opportunities. They are extremely useful for academic development, networking, and the creation of new projects. It is important to find the time, opportunity, and interest, as the investment pays off with improved work quality and a broader perspective. Do not be afraid of initial difficulties-support is available, and the benefits are long-lasting.

Overall, this mobility was not only a professional step forward but also an inspiring experience that emphasized the importance of internationalization in the field of theology and church history. It affirms the value of the Erasmus+ program in strengthening the academic community.

Pictures



