

Participant: Anna Rita Gailīte

Sending Institution: Luther Academy

Host Country: Slovakia

Host Institution: *Catholic University in Ružomberok*

Mobility Duration: 13.02.2026-22.05.2026

### **1. Motivation to participate in Erasmus study mobility**

I chose to participate in the Erasmus+ study mobility because I wanted to challenge myself academically and personally in an international environment. Studying abroad offered the chance to deepen my knowledge in my field, improve my English in a real academic setting, and experience different teaching approaches that could broaden my understanding of the subjects I am studying. I was motivated by the idea of stepping outside my usual routine, meeting students from other countries, and learning to navigate a new cultural and academic context with confidence.

Another important motivation was the opportunity to grow as a person - to become more independent, adaptable, and open-minded. I wanted to experience what it means to live and study in another country, to build new friendships, and to gain perspectives that I could not acquire at home. Erasmus+ mobility felt like a meaningful investment in my future: a chance to strengthen my academic skills, expand my worldview, and develop qualities that will support me both in my studies and in my professional life.

### **2. Cooperation with the Sending and Receiving Institutions**

The cooperation between my home institution and the host university was generally constructive, yet it required a significant amount of preparation from my side. Before the mobility, I had to coordinate several administrative steps, clarify course options, and ensure that all documents were completed correctly. Although the communication was supportive, there were moments where misunderstandings occurred.

One of the challenges was related to student status recognition at the host university. Despite being an Erasmus student, I did not receive the local ISIC student card, which meant I could not access certain discounts that other students normally receive. Additionally, the information regarding course equivalences and the impact of missing or differing credits on my future studies at the home institution could have been communicated more clearly. A more detailed explanation early in the process would have helped avoid uncertainty and ensured smoother academic planning. Overall, the cooperation was positive, but these aspects highlight areas where communication could be improved for future mobilities.

### **3. Academic and Personal Achievements**

One of the most significant achievements during my Erasmus study period was successfully managing a largely self-organised study process. Because the lectures were held in the local language, I had to invest substantial time in independent reading, translating materials, and preparing for classes and exams on my own. This required discipline, consistency, and a high level of personal responsibility, which ultimately strengthened my academic skills and confidence.

The need to adapt to a different academic environment pushed me to approach learning in a new way. Preparing for lectures without relying on full language comprehension transformed the study experience into a deeper, more intentional process. I learned to analyse texts more thoroughly, plan my study schedule carefully, and take initiative whenever clarification or additional resources were needed. This self-directed approach became one of the most valuable outcomes of the mobility, giving me a new dimension of independence and academic maturity.

#### **4. Most Memorable Impressions**

One of the most memorable and impactful aspects of my Erasmus experience was encountering the cultural and religious differences of the host country. The way local communities practice and express their faith stood out immediately, especially the Catholic traditions surrounding Easter. The celebrations were deeply rooted in local identity, rich in symbolism, and carried a strong sense of communal participation that was very different from what I am used to.

Another striking impression was the social heritage connected to church attendance. Faith was not only a private matter but a visible part of everyday life, shaping social habits, public events, and even the rhythm of the week. Observing how naturally and confidently people integrated religious practice into their daily routines gave me a new perspective on cultural diversity and the role of tradition in shaping community life. This experience broadened my understanding of how faith can function within society and left a lasting impression on my time abroad.

#### **5. Practical Advice for Future Erasmus+ Participants**

Looking back at my mobility, I would prepare myself more thoroughly for the level of individual effort required throughout the study period. The experience demanded a high degree of independence, self-discipline, and initiative, and understanding this earlier would have helped me plan my workload more realistically. I would also make sure to communicate my goals more clearly before the mobility and continue doing so during the semester, ensuring that both institutions fully understand my expectations and academic needs.

Another important recommendation is to clarify all practical and academic necessities well in advance. This includes confirming access to student resources such as local discount cards, and receiving precise information about course requirements, credit recognition, and the potential impact of missed or differing courses on future studies at the home institution. More transparent communication at the beginning would have reduced uncertainty and made the academic planning process smoother. These insights can help future students approach their mobility with greater confidence and preparedness.

#### **6. Additional Reflections**

Participating in Erasmus+ mobility is a valuable opportunity that I believe every student should consider. It offers not only academic benefits but also a broader perspective on personal development. Living and studying in a different cultural environment strengthens problem-solving abilities, improves communication skills, and teaches how to navigate unfamiliar situations with confidence. These experiences build resilience and independence in a way that traditional studies at home cannot fully provide.

The mobility also gave me a deeper understanding of relationships with people and how to function in a diverse world. Meeting individuals from different backgrounds, adapting to new social norms, and learning to collaborate across cultural differences helped me grow both personally and socially. It provided insight into how communities operate, how people connect, and how to find one's place in a new environment. Overall, the experience offered a meaningful perspective on life beyond academics - on how to survive, adapt, and thrive in the wider world.



Dean of the Faculty of Theology Radoslav Lojan and OT Professor Robert Lapko. The event is dedicated to the new study programmes at the Faculty of Theology.



Palm Sunday at St. Elizabeth's Cathedral in Košice. Photo from the *Farnost sv. Alžbety Košice* Instagram account.



International seminar "Religion As a Special Condition For Establishing An Employment Relationship", attended by a law professor from Bosnia and Herzegovina.