Participant: Elīna Ceriņa

Sending Institution: Luther Academy

Host Country: Slovakia

Host Institution: Department of Theology and Christian Education, Faculty of Education, Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, SK BANSKA 01

Mobility Duration: 19/10/2026 – 23/10/2026

Motivation to participate in Erasmus study mobility

Firstly, my motivation for taking part in the Blended Intensive Programme "Life as Worship in Genesis 1: Creation and the Formation of our Social Imaginary" (BIP ID 2026-1-SK01-KA131-HED-000434890-4) programme was to establish contacts with the host Matej Bel University and with the other universities participating in the programme.
My aim was to find an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of the Matej Bel University, its academic structure, and to learn about the theological education it offers. BIP significantly broaden my international experience and enabled me to strengthen international cooperation.

Secondly, my motivation for participating in the Erasmus+ mobility programme in Slovakia was grounded to gain international academic experience.

Cooperation with the sending and receiving institutions

The mobility was made possible through excellent cooperation between Luther Academy and the receiving institution of Matej Bel University. The cooperation was excellent throughout all stages of the Erasmus+ mobility.

The sending institution, the Luther Academy, provided clear guidance, full administrative and academic support during the planning and implementation of the visit. Likewise, the receiving institution, the Faculty of Education of Matej Bel University offered strong academic and practical support. The receiving institution demonstrated outstanding hospitality, the staff were outstanding welcoming and highly cooperative in facilitating integration into the host's activities.

Academic and personal achievements

The Erasmus+ mobility contributed significantly to both my academic and personal development.

As a representative of the Academy, this week gave me an insight into the nuances, challenges and encouraging aspects of organising a BIP, with a view to organising one at Luther Academy in the future. It made me realise just how important it is to find a specific and topical BIP theme in which Luther Academy could be considered experts.

As a participant in the BIP, it was very beneficial to see just how important it is to discuss what we'd learnt in the lectures in small groups. The group discussions about AI and Generation Z were most valuable.

This helped me both to reflect once again on what I had learnt in the lectures and to hear the interesting insights from the other working groups in which students and staff from different countries and church traditions discussed the texts together, shared their experiences, and discover how social contexts influence our perspectives on these topics.

Most memorable impressions

One of my most memorable impressions from the Erasmus+ mobility was the exceptional hospitality and kindness shown by the host institution and its students. From the very beginning I felt genuinely welcomed, which created an open and supportive atmosphere for academic exchange and personal interaction.

Throughout the programme, coffee was always available, prepared by students from the host institution, and this was complemented by a welcoming atmosphere and shared tables with refreshments.

Another unforgettable experience was Slovakia's beautiful landscape, a tour of the former mining town of Banská Štiavnica and Banská Bystrica itself.

It was very inspiring that each participating country organised a morning devotion.

Practical advice for future Erasmus+ participants

I recommend to actively engage in discussions with both faculty members and fellow participants. Informal conversations during breaks, shared meals, and evening events often provide valuable insights and practical ideas that are not always captured in formal sessions.

I would advise future participants to prepare for a very intensive period of study during the programme.

Additional reflections

I am grateful to the Erasmus+ programme, the Luther Academy and the organisers at Matej Bel University for the valuable week, and I hope that the contacts made there will foster further cooperation.

It is rewarding to see that what we learnt in the lectures broadens our horizons and experience, which we can then apply in our daily lives.