Participant: Gints Graudins

Sending Institution: Luther Academy

Host Country: Slovakia

Host Institution: Matej Bel University

Mobility Duration: 5 days.

Motivation to participate in Erasmus study mobility

I would like to participate in the Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica because the programme's themes are closely related to my academic and teaching work in the fields of Biblical Studies and Systematic Theology. Participation in this programme would provide an opportunity to deepen my knowledge of biblical exegesis and systematic theology. It would be particularly valuable to explore how biblical theology can contribute to shaping a Christian perspective on human life, education, technology, creation and other contemporary issues.

Another important motivation for my participation is the international academic environment. Cooperation with faculty members and students from other theological institutions in Central Europe would provide opportunities to exchange experiences and establish contacts for future academic collaboration. I see participation in this BIP programme not only as an opportunity for my own professional development but also as a way to gain new insights and experiences that I can share with students and colleagues at the Luther Academy.

Cooperation with the sending and receiving institutions

The cooperation between the sending and receiving institutions was very positive throughout the Erasmus+ mobility. The Luther Academy ensured effective communication and clear instructions during the preparation and implementation of the mobility. The host institution, Matej Bel University, provided a welcoming and supportive academic environment. The programme was carefully planned and the university staff demonstrated openness and a genuine willingness to facilitate academic exchange and cooperation.

Academic and personal achievements

The Erasmus+ mobility provided valuable opportunities for both, my academic and personal development. From an academic perspective, the programme broadened my understanding of biblical exegesis and its relationship with systematic theology, particularly through the study of Genesis 1 and the theological significance of Creation. The lectures and discussions offered new perspectives on how biblical texts shape Christian worldview. Participation in seminars, group discussions and collaborative activities also introduced me to different approaches to teaching and interpreting Scripture. Particularly valuable were the opportunities to explore the relationship between biblical exegesis and contemporary questions. These experiences provided useful insights and practical ideas that can be incorporated into my teaching work at the Luther Academy.

Most memorable impressions

One of the most memorable aspects of the mobility was the beautiful historic city of Banská Bystrica, with its rich mining heritage and charming old town. I particularly appreciated the guided tour of the historic city centre, organized by the Department of Theology and Christian Education, which provided an opportunity to learn more about the city's history and cultural heritage. I also enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere and the pleasant facilities where the lectures and seminars took place. The setting contributed to a inspiring learning experience.

Practical advice for future Erasmus+ participants

I would recommend paying particular attention when booking accommodation in the historic centre of Banská Bystrica. Many buildings in the old town are centuries old, and although their historic architecture and Gothic-style vaulted ceilings may look very attractive in photographs, the rooms can be surprisingly cold during autumn, especially when nighttime temperatures approach freezing. It is therefore advisable to check whether the accommodation has adequate heating before making a reservation.

Additional reflections

I would also like to highlight the exceptional kindness and helpfulness of the academic staff at Matej Bel University. I mentioned that I needed a book published in Slovak for my dissertation, and one of the faculty members kindly offered to find it, purchase it, and send it to me in Latvia. This thoughtful gesture reflected not only genuine hospitality but also a sincere interest in supporting international academic cooperation.