

- Daily reports on the Slovenia mobility

Report: Monday, September 19th, 2022 – Jette Konerding, Antonia Müller-Glunz, Mathilde Wesselmann

The first day in Koper started at 8 o'clock with a meeting in the St. Francis Hall where we were warmly welcomed by the different teachers.

The slovene teacher gave us a quick overview of the week laying ahead of us which was followed by some fun introductory games to learn each other's names. While we were throwing balls and naming important features about one another Mr. Y got ready to give us a few information about the region of Karst that we were about to visit in the following days.



We got numerous insights in the culture and the special characteristics of this of limestone existing region. In order to remember all these details and start with critical thinking and comparing what we just learned, the group was presented with the task of creating an artwork, such as paintings or sculptures about Karst and the discrepancy regarding

modernity and history.

Some groups visualized their ideas via collages, while others worked with poems of national poets or discussed the pollution of this rare region/ landsite.

Before we were able to present our ideas the bell rang for the big break that is common in Slovene schools at 10:25 a.m.

The Slovenian students introduced us to their friends and habits during mentioned pause and everybody got something to eat in the shops and bakeries surrounding the school area, such as relatively cheap (but good!) pizza, poppyseed rolls, or the famous “burek”, a roll made out of thin dough which is filled with either cheese, meat or spinach.

After 35 minutes of getting to know each other and exploring the beautiful small paths with local vendors and shops we returned to our work and got back together in our groups.

We then presented our concepts and what had inspired us and proceeded in the chemistry room where we were instructed to create a lavender salt-bath. This marked one of the many souvenirs we were able to take with us during our stay.

After a fulminant lunch break we got back together at around 4 p.m. to partake in a tour through Koper guided by a few of the Slovenian exchange students. What was formerly planned to happen in little groups later on resulted in all of us strolling together around the beautiful town while listening to the short presentations about its different locations.

Our tour ended at the “University of Primorska”, where we were given an insight in the building and some statistics about the university’s exchange offers.

All of us were gifted a mug and us leaving the building marked the end of the official program.

We continued our day with a few of us playing beach volleyball while the others rested in the shadow of a tree nearby or explored the sea.

To finish the day of, we all got delicious ice cream from one of Koper’s most famous ice cream shops and some of our group went to the cinema and watched “Top Gun 2” where they endured a cultural shock: Slovenian cinemas do not sell sweet popcorn and the concept of it is generally not popular in Slovenia.

Overall, the day was quite eventful, and we went to bed with our mind processing a lot of interesting new impressions and encounters.



Tuesday

On Tuesday, the 20th September and our second day in Koper, we started our first excursion. The destination were the Salt-pans in Piran, where we went by bus. After our arrival we met a ranger, who lead us through the pans. In the beginning he told us some facts about the pans. After that, we started our walk. The way lead us over wooden paths next to shallow water to some benches next to little wooden houses. This, so the ranger told us, is where the workers nowadays spend their breaks, while in the earlier days this used to be their home. We also saw the tools used to harvest the salt, including a traditional wagon used to transport the salt through the area. After this, the ranger led us to a museum, where we first watched a movie on the traditional way of salt making, that is mostly still being practiced today. It showed impressive drone shots of the area and people working there, which was not given when were there. When the movie was over we continued our way to the show room of the museum, where we encountered a 3D model of the Salt-pans and models of different salt crystals. They explained the difference between the „normal“ sea salt and the salt flower (fleur de sel) which is a thin layer of salt on top of the water, that looks a little like ice. It is not used while cooking but to decorate and sprinkle on top of the finished product. We were given further information about the production of salt and the patina, which prevents the salt from mixing with the mud beneath it. Some time later we had a great view over the pans from a rooftop. On our way back we stopped at the shop, where you can buy the salt produced in Piran in different products. Especially popular is the salt-chocolate, which we were able to try in little samples. The shop, the museum and the little cinema are all part of a tourism concept, to show people how slovene tradition is being continued today and to open a place to the public, where nature and humans live in harmony. This was the end of the official tour through the pans and we went to the city Piran, where some students presented the historically most important buildings in a tour. When they were done, we enjoyed some free time in the city and were blown away by the beautiful view over the city, the ocean and the specific architecture. There was also a film set in Piran that day, so some of us watched the making of a scene.

After another trip on our bus, we arrived at an olive plantation. We were welcomed by the owners, who do olive farming as a hobby. In the following presentation we were introduced to the world of olives. First, and most importantly, we learned about the different ways of picking the olives. The traditional way is picking olives by hand, using an apron with a pocket where you collect the olives. The other methods in contrast use a net, which is spread under

the tree. For these methods you can pick the olives with a manual or an electric rake and later collect them from the net. While picking, you have to be very careful not to step on any, if you do those olives have to be thrown out. After the theoretical part we went to work and tried what we learned. Even though it wasn't the perfect time to pick olives yet, the owners still let us do it. They told us the earlier the olives are picked, the better the quality of the oil, so the oil from our olives must have been quite amazing. Historically, the oil from the olives picked the latest was used in oil lamps and to nourish slaves, which horrified all of us. We divided into two groups: one picked by hand, the other with the rakes. We also had the chance to try the electric rake if we wanted to, which harvests the olives quicker but is also more tiring. It is mostly used on trees with a lot of olives and might miss single ones. With the rakes and by hand the harvesting was quite a joyous experience. With multiple people working on one tree we got to chat with each other. Also, the feeling of freeing a whole branch from olives or even the little „plop“ when picking one were quite satisfying. We still wondered how people could do this all day long, maybe even for multiple days in a row – you might run out of topics to talk about. The owners of the plantation told us how they do the harvesting: They invite all their friends, family and other people, who come and pick olives all day long. Mid day there is a pause with food for everyone, as well as in the evening. It's a much loved event, where everyone likes to participate. Still, even some of our slovene hosts had never picked olives before that day, which was surprising to us. Of course, we didn't pick all day long and were rather quickly distracted when a whole table was being filled with food. Alongside other edibles we got the chance to try some of the olives from this plantation. They were made ready in olive oil and salt and might have been the most delicious olives in the whole entire world. Even the students who normally hate olives at least noticed them to be better than the store bought ones. One type of olive was definitely better than the ones straight from the tree. Regardless of warnings from our hosts and the owners, we tried them – and spit them out. We can now proudly agree, that tasting fresh olives is not an experience you need in your life. While enjoying the food, we got to experience a little bit of the togetherness from the real olive picking events. The owners also continued to teach us about the history and usage of olives. One useful life hack we learned: If you massage olive oil in your hair two to three hours before washing it, it will be silky smooth afterwards. One of the owners was speaking from experience. Another fact that grossed all of us out was historical: In ancient times famous athletes used to rub their skin

with olive oil. After the competition, the fat from the winning performer was collected off their skin and sold as a souvenir.

During this time some of us also got the chance to interview the owners. Throughout the day we had been working on collecting information, pictures, videos and notes about what we learned, so we would be prepared for our work the next day.

ERASMUS exchange in Slovenia, September 2022

Daily report (Carl, Julina Kurze, Elisa Koenigs)
Wednesday, 21st of September



On Wednesday, we worked in groups on presentations about the excursions to the Soline Piran and to an olive plantation we had taken the day before. Therefore, everyone had to be at school at 8:45 a.m. We gathered in our fixed groups, which had been arranged by the teachers beforehand and started our projects directly.

There was no real introduction, because everyone knew what they had to do. The workshop phase itself was structured differently, depending on how the group organized their work. At first everyone had to decide whether they wanted to write an article or create a short video presentation about their topic. Two groups started creating articles, while the other three collected their videos and photos to be able to arrange them in a video reportage.

The difficulty at the start was that the group members were picked randomly; a mix of Germans and Slovenes, who had never worked together before. That's why the constellations had to find a way to do things properly. For example in my group there was a discussion, which approach was the right one to produce a great result. Additionally, there were brain storming phases to collect different ideas about the contents. However, every group distributed their tasks after some time, and the process ran up.

Then there was a break from 10:25-11:00 o'clock. Most of us went to the square to eat breakfast, either something they brought from home or bought at the bakery or the supermarket, which was located there. We all mixed, chatting with german friends, such as with Slovenes we wanted to get to know better.

At 11 am, the groups met again to finish their projects. Texts were finalized, recordings for the video reportages were produced, everyone's work was put together to be able to present a result at the end. Which then happened at 12:30 am.

After five wonderfully presented results from knowledge, everyone had gained the day before at our excursion, the daily program was finished. Everyone left at 2 pm to spend time with the host families, because the afternoon was free.

Now there will be a short overview of the group works:

Group one had the topic „Soline Piran: entrepreneurship, tourism, nature park and spa“. During the workshop phase they created a video reportage, containing pictures that matched the content, which was presented through the voice recordings in the background. Chilling music made the mix perfect. Now everyone has knowledge about for example the shop, selling products of the Soline Piran, the spa, where tourists can relax in the salt water or the museum, which explains various topics connected to the salt pans like the flora and fauna or the salt production.

Group two produced articles, designed like a newspaper, showing the types of salt such as the products made out of them. Besides a short summary about the salt production in history, in another text the present day production, which is similar to the traditional one, is explained. Supported by the fitting pictures, it was easy to follow their presentation and to remember their content, under the topic „Soline Piran: salt pans and the production of salt“.

The third group was also working on a video reportage about Soline Piran. However, their topic differed from the others, as they took a look on the flora and fauna. Throughout a filmed interview with a ranger they presented various animal and plant species like special birds or the popular Spiral Ditchgrass, which grows underneath the water surface. Not only did they inform about the living conditions of many endangered animals, but also asked the ranger some personal questions, regarding his work with e.g. the birds.

The other two groups worked on projects about the olive plantations. They both had the same topic: „Farm: olive oil production“. But that was no problem, since their results were structured differently: One of the groups developed another video reportage, containing information about the development of olive picking: It all started with picking them by hands, and collecting them in an apron, some kind of traditional skirt. The technique improved over time and nowadays electric rakes are used.

In comparison to that, the other group worked out an article focused on other topics, such as the history of olive plantation, the different olive species and the usage of olive oil in the industry. That's why there was no doubling.

All in all the day was very productive and all the results showed a great range of the topics we learned about on our excursion. But the projects themselves are not everything: The day was also good for team work. We had to cope with people we had never talked to before and it had a positive impact of the dynamic between the students, as some people got to know each other better. Furthermore, it was a new experience to speak English throughout the whole process. Of course, we are used to English projects, but there is a difference: In Germany we can just switch the language if there is a misunderstanding. But in Slovenia it was needed to communicate in english. Which was a challenge, but one we mastered!

Liah Voss, Ida Engelke:

Thursday, 22nd, Friday, September 23rd

On Friday, the 23rd of September, we met in the Hall of St. Francis to produce our results about the different topics we learned about the day before.

We were therefore divided into five different groups and given the task to create a video reportage or to write an article about our topic. The groups either focused on different aspects of Lipica or on different information concerning the Carst and the small town Štanjel and its castle. We visited both of these places on Thursday.

We started working on our projects at around 8.45 am and after at about 10:30 am, during which most of us went to a bakery nearby to get breakfast, we finished working in our groups at about 1pm. Then we presented our results to all the students and teachers.

The first group focused on the tradition of Lipica and the Lipizzan horses, as well as on the tourism on the Lipica Stud Farm.

The second group informed us about the challenges, development and profit in Lipica. They also included the quarry in their presentation, which is an integral part of the Carst, and the golf course in Lipica, which is the only golf course that is open all year.

The other three groups each focused on different aspects we learned about visiting the newly renovated castle of Štanjel: The third group presented their work about the traditional craftsmanship and the future of the castle, the fourth group told us about the advantages, challenges and general information about the Carst and the fifth group informed us about the different views on the sustainable yet progressive development for the local community in Štanjel.

After the presentation of our work, the official part was over and all the students had free time to enjoy Koper and to do activities within their host families.

As Friday was our last day in Slovenia, everyone including the students, teachers and some parents came to the school at 6 pm for a little get together to look back on all the activities we did and the experiences we made over the week.

Some students prepared a photo slide and guided us through the evening.

To get a last bit of the slovene culture everyone brought some typical slovene food, prepared by the slovene students and their families. All of us really enjoyed the food and we even asked some students to send us their recipes.

To let the evening fade out a few students prepared a game where everyone got split up into the groups we previously worked in together for the projects, as well as the teachers in one group.

After the energetic game it was time to leave and go to bed early, because the next day we had to catch the flight back to Germany. It was already time to say goodbye to some of the students that evening, but even though goodbyes are never easy, especially after all that we have done together, it will not be too long until we see each other again in march in Germany.

- historic city, economy, tourism

Erasmus: European Future(s) – Regional Development

By Greta Bergner, Liah Voß, Antonia Wendt

