

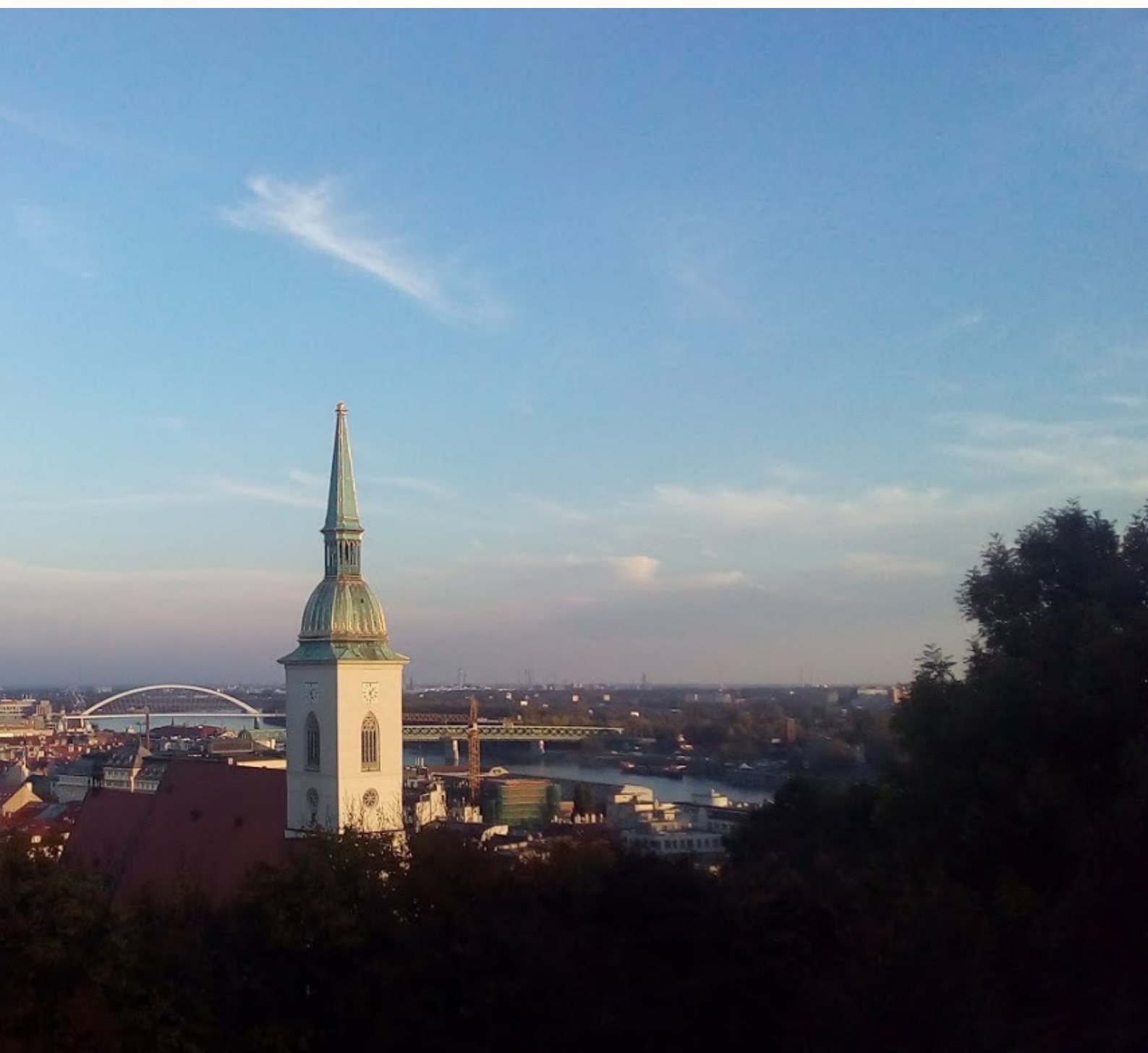
EVŠ

IN BRATISLAVA

Nadia Kadri

Romania

2017



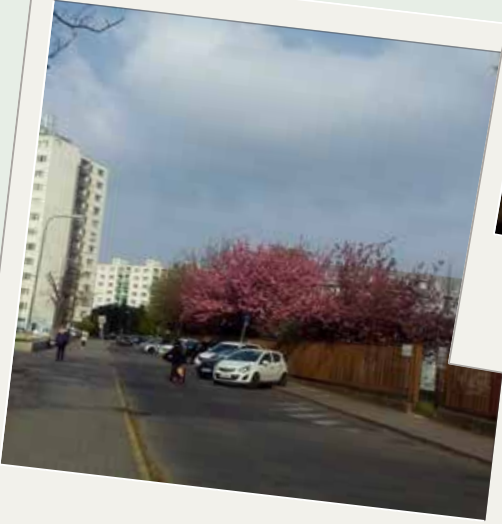




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We are the one who really care

Hello,

My name is Nadia, I am from Romania and I am an EVS volunteer. I spent 11 months in Slovakia in the project "We are the ones who really care" done by INEX Slovakia. My sending organization is "Chance for life" from Bucharest and I started my adventure in February 2017.

In the following pages, you can find more information about the project, about the EVS experience and lots of pictures from our activities. I will try to describe as well the life in Slovakia, what the culture and the new environment meant for me.



Project overview

It was a 2017 with lots of activities, camps, travel, lots of people and many things that I did for the first time in my life. However, I will ask the readers to have in mind that these are my personal experiences and my beliefs, therefore, I might be subjective regarding different aspects.

These being said, enjoy!

Nadia



An aerial photograph of a village nestled in a valley, surrounded by lush green hills. In the foreground, the top of a red brick church tower with a brown tiled roof is visible. The village below is densely packed with houses and buildings, interspersed with trees. The background shows rolling hills under a clear blue sky.

THE SUMMER *CAMPS* *and more*

Our main activity was to lead workcamps this summer. A workcamp is an international volunteering camp that lasts between 2 and 3 weeks. During this time people from all around the world join the local community and work with them for a common cause. The accommodation provided is basic and the volunteers have to cook for themselves.

INEX had 11 camps this year, most of them in remote areas. The causes were different: working with people with disabilities, reconstruct castles, environmental camps, working on a farm or with kids.

As a leader, you have to communicate with the local partner, prepare the infosheet for the volunteers, do all the pre-camp preparations, take care of the good mood in the camp, work together with the volunteers, prepare the free time activities and many more things that can appear in these two weeks.



Work, fun, friends and culture

During the summer I led two camps: an archaeological camp, Salt Castle, and an environmental one, EcoSlatinka.

Salt castle was about finding the foundation of the castle in order to be able to rebuild what can be reconstructed.

EcoSlatinka was about ecology, learning to protect the environment, helping the remaining community of a village that was evacuated during communist times due to a dam that was not build yet.

As well, I had the chance to be a volunteer at Integra camp, where we were preparing the program for the clients of the center. And in September I had the opportunity to go as a volunteer in a workcamp in Italy and help the community of Monte Barro National Park.

The camps are not only about work but as well about the people you meet, the friendships you build. It is about the local community and discover more about the culture of that country and sharing about yours. It's about learning from each other.



Work, fun, friends

1. Eco Slatinka Weekend Workcamp - March 2017
2. Integra Camp - June 2017
3. Leading my first camp - Salt Castle July 2017
4. Going to work in our "taxi" - Salt Castle 2017
5. Volunteering footprint workshop - Salt Castle
6. Intercultural exchange - ECO Slatinka - July
7. Trip to Banska Stiavnica -Discovering Slovak culture - Eco Slatinka
8. Traditional picture - Eco Slatinka
9. Being a volunteer in a workcamp in Italy with Legambiente

The background of the page is a collage of various promotional items. At the top, there are several round buttons in different colors (red, teal, blue, silver) with text like "I'm a volunteer" and "All we need is you!". Below these, there are more buttons, some with "INEX POSITIVE" and "I LOVE INEX SLOVAKIA" written on them. There are also green cards with text like "Make a difference" and "Discover the world as a volunteer". At the bottom, there are yellow buttons with "TIME TO VOLUNTEER" and "WWW.INEX.SK" written on them. The overall theme is promoting volunteering and the INEX organization.

THE 2017 *PROMO* *activities*

We have various promotional activities in order to inform as many people as we can regarding the volunteering activities and other opportunities.

At the beginning, we were doing a workshop in the schools to let the kids know more things regarding the volunteering. Then we started the promotion among to various targets, most of them youths. We went twice to the Economic University during the spring and autumn fair where we were having a stand and interacting with the students that were passing by.

At "Europe under the castle" I was representing my country, Romania. As well I was sharing my experience in Slovakia and about my EVS with INEX to people from Spišské Podhradie

During the "First timers" we were helping the girls from the office with the presentation of the workcamps to the volunteers who were about to go for the first time to a workcamp abroad

Doing all the promotional activities I was able to improve my public speaking by talking with people from different ages and to share about me, my country, about the volunteering and the reasons why to join an NGO, a volunteering camp or to do an EVS.



Promoting INEX activities

1. Our first Promo Action - February
2. Playing with kids at SZŠ Bajkalská - February
3. Economic University - March
4. First timers activity - June
5. Participating at the "Europe under the castle" Festival - August
6. In Turčianske Teplice with Martinka - Promo time - September
7. In Bratislava at Iuventa - October
8. At Iuventa with Martinka and Ilmari - October
9. Going again to the Economic University with Ilmari and Iuliana - October



Tea meetings

Once or twice a month we organized a thematic evening where we invited different guests to our office in Petržalka and discussed various topics in a nonformal frame. The events are free and open to the public.

This year we talked with our guest about the experience of an EVS in Norway or how you can discover another culture in Nepal while you are a volunteer in a workcamp. We participated with an interactive "*Tea Meeting*" about discrimination and stereotypes to the 2017 European Action Week Against Racism.



Tea, coffee, guest and stories

1. The first Tea meeting was about us the EVS volunteers - February
2. Presenting Romania - February
3. Stay UNITED - March
4. Interacting with the people during the "Tea Meeting" - March
5. Talking about Nepal and doing a workcamp there - April
6. Our audience at "tea meetings"
7. Doing an EVS in Norway - May
8. Spend your summer volunteering in UK - September
9. Three weeks in Iceland doing a workcamp and traveling - October



CAMP *preparations*

In order to get ready to lead a camp we trained. Well... actually INEX organized the training for us and other future leaders. There were three parts: one where we learn about the camps, the leader's duties - let's say it was more the theoretical part. The second was a small democamp where we had the chance to see exactly how a day of a workcamp is. The last part, after the camps season, was for evaluation and feedback.

As an EVS volunteer I had, besides the leader part, the role of being the INEX messenger; Therefore I prepared for the participants of the camps a small workshop about social issues. I started the preparation of my workshop in March and I had the chance to tested in the Democamp with the other leaders.



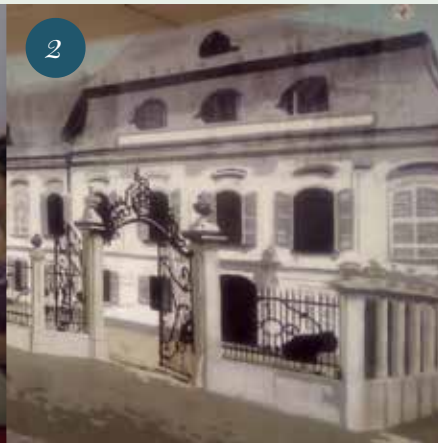
Trainings and Inex messenger

1. First workshop about social issues - Trenčín - March
2. Starting the training sessions - Senec, March
3. Preparing to become camp leaders - Senec - March
4. Democamp - second session of the leaders Training - Banská Štiavnica - May
5. Testing the INEX Messenger workshop in the Demo Camp - Banská Štiavnica - May
6. Being INEX Messenger in Integra Camp - Bratislava - June
7. INEX Messenger in Salt Castle Camp - Ruská Nová Ves - July
8. INEX Messenger in Eco Slatinka Camp- Slatinka - July
9. Potaborka - Ending the camps season - Bratislava - September



TEAM building

EVS was as well about the people from INEX and all the activities we did together. From playing games in the office to organize a game night for people to come and meet us; From cooking sweets and painting Easter eggs in April to having ice creams in the city centers after events. We spent many hours together due to the training for leaders, weekend workcamp, demo camp, Tea Meetings, Potaborka and of course Miki Viki, a three days team building in Banská Štiavnica.



Activities with people from the office

1. Playing games at the office in our breaks
2. Treasure hunt in Bratislava in our first weekend in Slovakia - February
3. Cooking and baking before Easter - Barbi's house - April
4. Lunchtime - Barbi's House - April
5. Game night at the office - April
6. BBQ weekend - Office - June
7. After Naše Mesto activity - Bratislava - June
8. Cleaning the office - September
9. MikiViki weekend - Banská Štiavnica - December



MORE activities

As EVS volunteers we had lots of activities in the office preparing the camps or the promotional activities. These are just several activities that we did: we were updating the database of the international workcamps of INEX partners which took us a lot of time at the beginning; I was most of the time the photographer at the "Tea Meeting" events and I did the promo materials for the camps abroad. It implied creativity and learning how to combine different tools like Photoshop, Canva, etc.



We had lots of activities with INTEGRA, a center that takes care of people with physical and mental disabilities. We prepare for their clients the program for the Fools day and Saint Nicolas; helped during Valentine's Day and went with them on a trip to a horse farm. For "*Naše mesto*" we went as well at INTEGRA. I was on the team that took the clients for a trip to Kuhaida. I never believed how much strength a wheelchair requires and how difficult it is to push it on a bad road.

"*Mil'a pre mamu*" event is a one mile walk in the park that children are doing for their mums, they have to stop at checkpoints where different NGOs prepared for them some games. During this, I had the chance to interact with lots of children of different ages and to learn the word "*skakat*"(jump) in Slovak.

One last activity was cooking for an event with UPC, MladilInfo Sk and ESN. Again it was a good opportunity to be in an international context, sharing food from our countries and learning from each other.



Volunteering around

1. Valentine's Day at INTEGRA - February
2. Being the clowns for Fools Day - INTEGRA - April
3. Mila pre mamu - activities - Bratislava - May
4. Trip with INTEGRA's clients - May
5. Going for a small walk with clients from Integra during the Nase Mesto's Activities - June
6. The Nase Mesto volunteers at INTEGRA - June
7. Cooking Romanian dish for the international Evening at UPC - October
8. Preparing for Mikuláš
9. Mikuláš at INTEGRA



EVS *volunteers*

Being an EVS means you always find more EVS around you. The On Arrival Training provided by the trainers of the National Agency was the perfect moment to find out more about the EVS experience and meet others EVS volunteers who are in Slovakia. Of course, there are more than the ones I met in Zilina but these ones were the ones with whom I connected and spent time together even if we were doing our volunteering in different cities. We visited each other, participated in each other's projects, cooked and went to events together. Besides the On Arrival Training, we had the Mid Term Training and it was the perfect occasion to reunite with the trainers and see how our projects are doing and how is our experience so far in Slovakia.

HERE THEY ARE

Meet the EVS volunteers who made my incredible year



Ilmari



Quentin



Aphroditi and Giulia



Paula



Pauline



Oscar



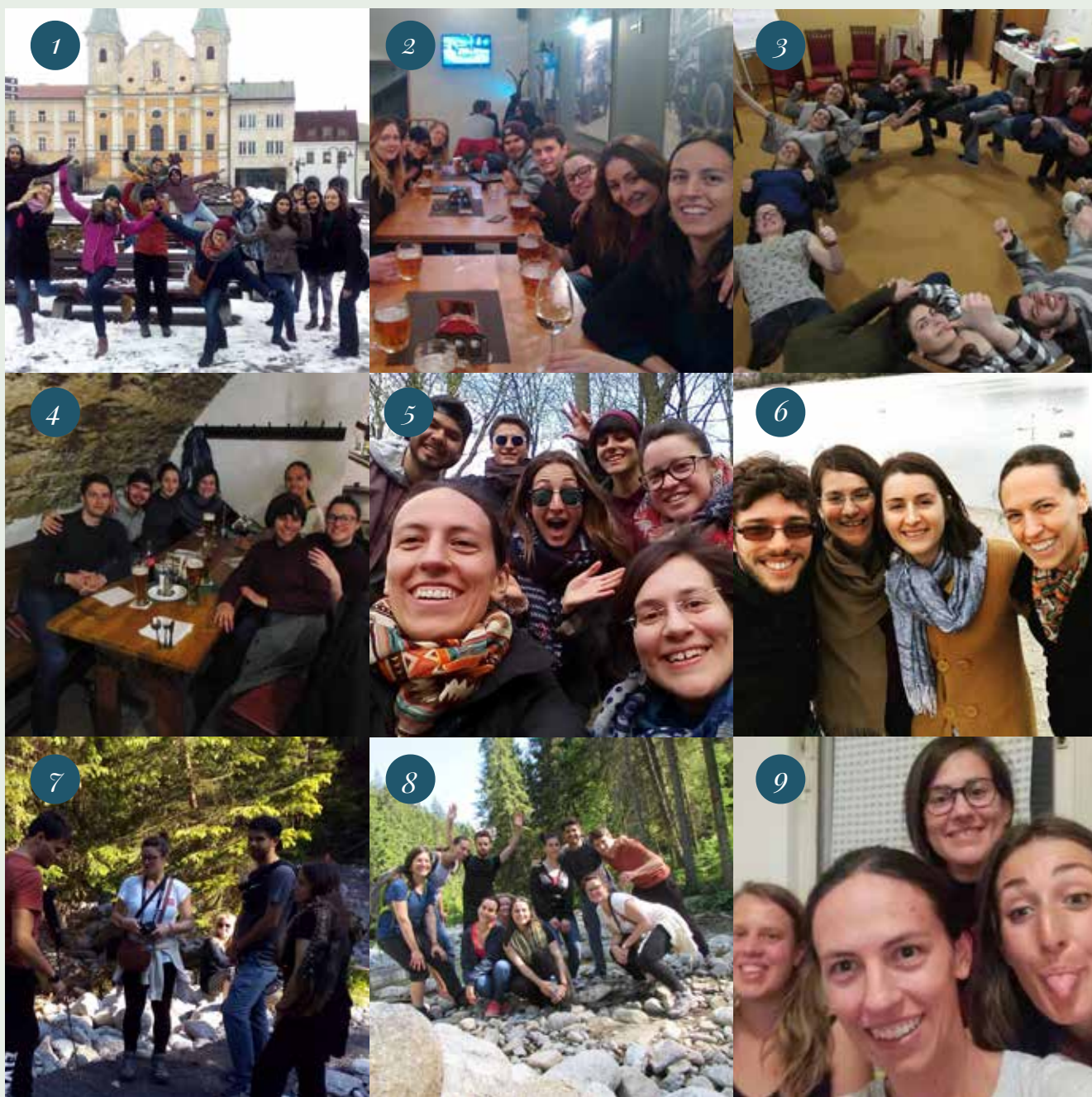
Valentina and Svetlana



Chiara



The gang



EVS stuff

1. The EVS volunteers I met at the On Arrival Training - Žilina - February
2. Getting to know these wonderful EVS volunteers - Žilina -February
3. On Arrival Training activities - Žilina - February
4. The gang reunited - Banská Bystrica - April
5. Fooling around - Banská Bystrica - April
6. Spending Easter together and learning about our cultures - Bratislava - April
7. Mid Term Training - in the woods - Demänová - June
8. Having fun - Midterm training - Demänová - June
9. Every time we were in town we didn't lose the occasion of dinning together - Bratislava - July



Discovering the
SLOVAK
culture

I've started learning about Slovakia from the first moment I arrived here. The transport system is very good and they have apps telling you at what time the bus should come and when you will arrive, which combinations of buses you can take in order to reach your destination. I was surprised to see that the buses are really coming when they are supposed to, The funny thing is that even though for me it seems very easy to travel in Bratislava and quite fast even in rush hours the local people will always complain about it.

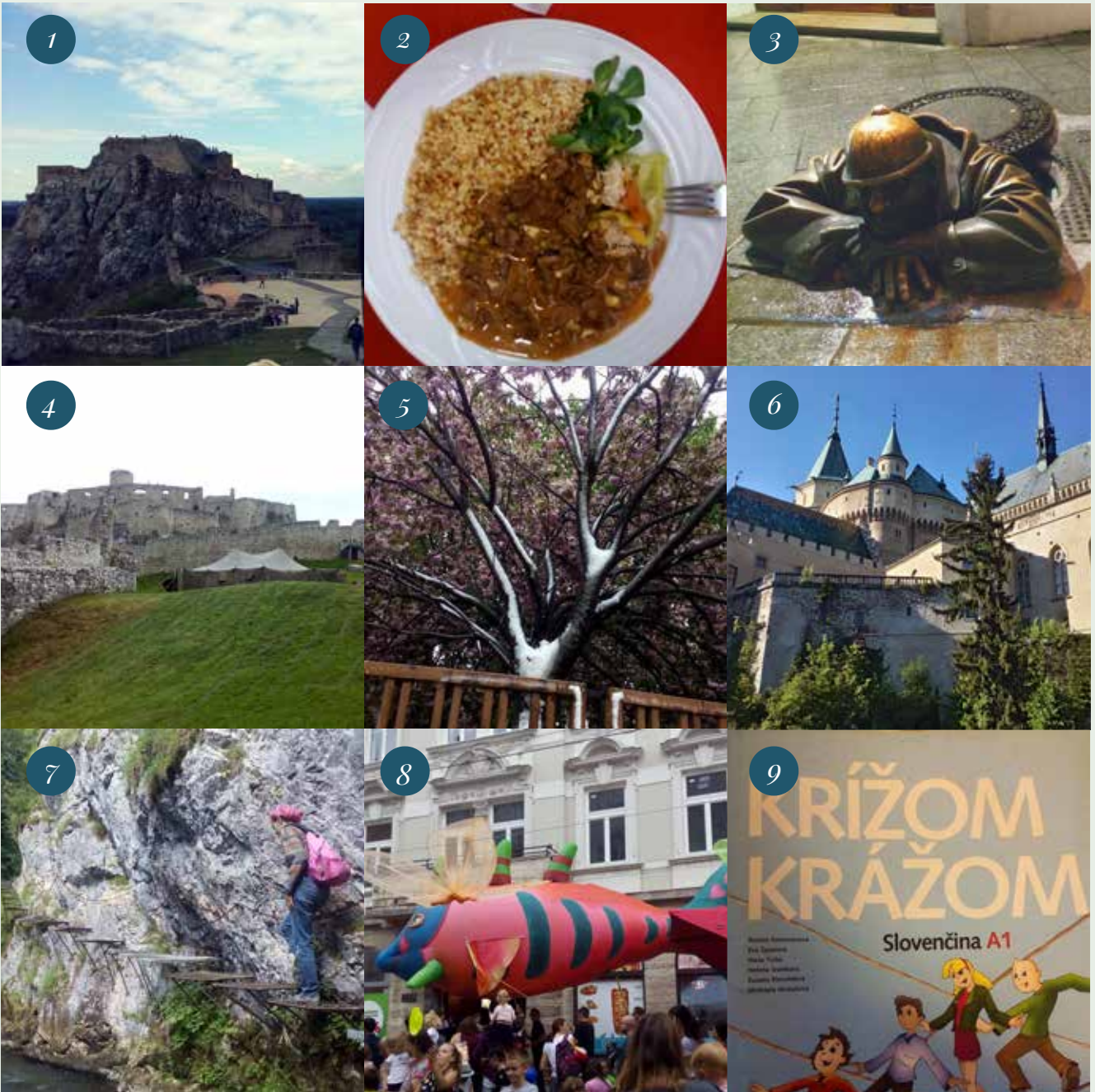
In the first week, we went with people from INEX and our mentors to a lunch together, and they organized for us a treasure hunt in Bratislava. It was the perfect occasion to learn more about the new country that was my home for the next eleven months



I had the opportunity to discover more about this country, its people, their habits and traditions, in two words "their culture" .

In Slovakia there are around 5 million inhabitants and the country has lots of mountains and beautiful landscapes. The language, Slovak, is part of the Slavic languages families, which for me was very difficult to learn. Even if we had Slovak lessons I had difficulties remembering the words therefore even my basic is bad.

One thing that I really liked here is that people are a lot into sports; they like to hike, bike, run. I was surprised by the number of people who are running or biking in a normal week afternoon. And as I told you they have a lot of mountains, the European Long Distance E8 is crossing Slovakia from West to East - 740 Km hiking only on the Slovak territory. The trail, that starts in Ireland and finishes in Turkey, it is known in Slovakia as Cesta hrdinov SNP (The trail of the Slovak National Uprising heroes)



Food, castles, nature and weather

1. Devin Castle - multiple trips
2. Second interaction with Slovak food - On Arrival training - Žilina - February
3. Kumil statue in Bratislava
4. Spiš Castle - Spišské Podhradie - July
5. In winter is never snowing in Bratislava but it does in April
- 6 the fairy tale castle - Bojnice - June
7. Nature is lovely and wild - Slovak Paradise
8. Autumn festivals - Bratislava - September
- 9 Slovak Language Classes - From February to June.

Discover more by

TRAVELING *around*

I had the chance to discover Slovakia during the project, the multiple training, the camps and workcamps or by myself. During the times, Slovakia was part of different empires or structures like the Austro-Hungarian Empire or Czechoslovakia, therefore in order to have a better understanding of my new environment I explored a bit of the neighboring countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland

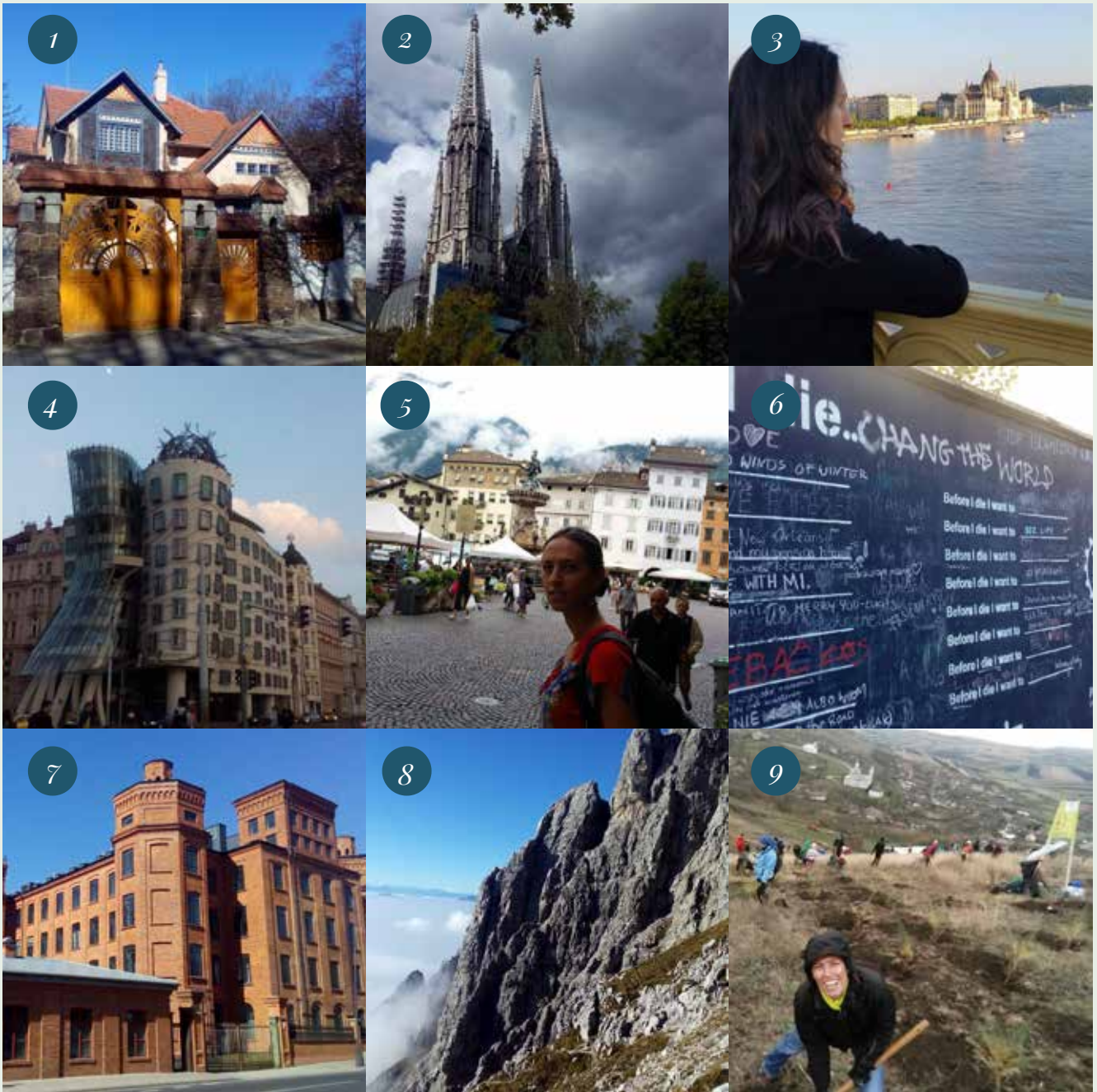


Traveling is the best way to discover a culture and its people. Most of the time I was exploring alone, with other volunteers or with friends and family members that decided to visit me in Slovakia.

But by going alone I had more opportunities to interact with local people and to find out things and places that otherwise I probably wouldn't discover.

The central position of Slovakia and the good connections of the transport system made it very easy to travel to the neighboring countries. As I already mentioned most of these countries were, at a point in history, connected therefore it was interesting to see and learn about their similarities and differences.

But is always good to keep in mind to not generalize. You can discover differences even between the same country so is just better to stay open and curious about what you will find.



Around Slovakia and more

1. Wondering around Brno - March
2. Vienna in a Sunday - April
3. Budapest and the Danube - April
4. Prague - May
5. Little escapade in Italy
6. Lodz - and "Before I die I want to " Wall - August
7. Manufaktura - normal buildings in Poland - Lodz - August
8. Hiking in Italy while in a workcamp - October
9. Planting trees during my holiday in Romania - October



It is difficult to summarize an eleven months experience in several pages therefore there might be more things to be added but I will stop here.

Now is your turn to create your own adventure and to go in an EVS experience.

Thank you!



This project was possible thanks to:



Erasmus+



INEX
Slovakia

 **Chance for Life**



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVA,
VEDY, VÝSKUMU A ŠPORTU
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

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*Leave your mark
Do an EVS*