

Report

Site visit of Tallinn University of Technology to Comenius university, Bratislava
30.01.2010-2.02.2010

The participants of site visit from the Tallinn University of Technology:

- Sven Kõllamets, student of TUT with mobility impairment
- Kadi Särgava, student of TUT with hearing impairment
- Christel Sogenbits, TUT student with visual impairment
- Annika Kokk, stakeholder from the Estonian Union of persons with mobility impairment
- Anu Johannes, TUT
- Katri Kadakas, TUT
- Ivo Lillemaa, TUT ESN IC

Both partners of the site-visit had time constraints while organising the visit (eg Christmas holidays, examination period of students etc) which left limited time for solving organizational issues. Comenius university did a good job in organizing the visit.

Accommodation

Accommodation in Druzba hotel was fine. The living conditions for the students with special needs were excellent. Mostly all the participants including from ESN and UNICA stayed at the same place. This made the overall communication and logistics smooth.

Transport

There was special transport organised for the wheelchair users, other members of the group were guided by local students using public transport which gave the participants a good overview about the transport system of Bratislava.

Program

The program of the site visit was a bit too intensive. As the site visit lasted 2 full days, the intensive program is understandable. It was interesting to visit different faculties of Comenius university and compare the accessibility levels, meet relevant people and discuss with them about the problems and possibilities that the disabled students face while accessing the university. For our students it was a good experience to compare their everyday study possibilities in Estonia with the situation in Slovakia. Lot of new information was received: different study aids and special programs for blind persons, support systems for disabled students, different grant possibilities for students accessing Comenius university. The favorable infrastructure of the university gave our students the feeling that Comenius university is a safe and accessible university where to consider possible future studies abroad.

The city tour gave a good look to Bratislava, despite of the cold weather it was enjoyable. The small amendments that were made into the program showed the flexibility of the hosts in taking into account the requests of the guests.

Meetings

The meetings with different people were very interesting. The students pointed out the ability of Mrs Mendelova to bring together and introduce to each other the students with similar impairments. Direct discussions between the students from Slovakia and Estonia were highly appreciated.

The international seminar was informative and well organized. The different speakers gave an overview about the situation of disabled people in Bratislava. The students with disabilities talking about their own experience gave courage to others to continue studies also abroad.

The meeting with the paralympionists gave the impression that nothing is impossible. Their example of how to reach the high goals despite of the disabilities gave lot of thoughts and admiration for everyone.

The Slovak party with activities and music at the end of the visit was fantastic. The students with and without disabilities enjoying themselves together was a nice closure for the whole site-visit.

The overall impression of the site-visit to Bratislava was very positive. The whole group felt the warm caretaking by the hosts, especially by Mrs Mendelova, whose work before and during the visit was highly appreciated. The accompanying local ESN students were kind and friendly, their positive attitude gave a good impact for the activities of the whole visit.