

Slovak national activity - Excursion to Zvolen

Nowadays, globalization blurs local traditions and regional disparities and creates a homogenized world culture. Moreover, Europe is currently facing an influx of refugees, who are not familiar with and sometimes do not respect European culture, customs and traditions. For that reason, it is essential that each nation should know and preserve its national heritage. Through this project we want to make young people become more familiar, interested and proud of the national and even global history. To reach this goal we use new innovative methods of education. Our intention is to bring students closer to the subject through excursions, exhibitions and seminars combined with usage of up to date modern digital technologies.

In order to strengthen students' knowledge in the field of Slovak history, we organized an excursion to historical town Zvolen. Students and teachers under the guidance of professional historian, took part in guided tour to Zvolen Castle.

Zvolen Castle is a medieval castle located on a hill near the center of Zvolen, in central Slovakia. A tourist guide provided general information on cultural, historical and contemporary heritage. He explained that the original seat of the region was above the confluence of Slatina and Hron rivers, on a steep cliff, in a castle from the 12th century, known today as Pustýhrad (meaning "Deserted castle"). Its difficult access was a reason for the relocation of the seat to the newly-built Zvolen castle, which was ordered by Louis I the Great, which originally served as a hunting residence of Hungarian kings.

The future queen regent Mary of Hungary and emperor Sigismund celebrated their wedding there in 1385. Gothic architecture of the castle built between 1360 and 1382 was inspired by Italian castles of the fourteenth century. Italian masons also contributed to a Renaissance reconstruction in 1548.

The last major reconstruction occurred in 1784, when the chapel was rebuilt into the baroque style. Zvolen Castle hosts a regional branch of the Slovak National Gallery with an exposition of old European masters, including works by P. P. Rubens, Paolo Veronese, and William Hogarth. There is also a popular tea room located in the castle.

Further attraction worth to visit was Wooden Articular Church of Hronsek. It is a Lutheran church situated in the village of Hronsek. On July 7, 2008, the church along with seven other monuments was declared UNESCO world heritage site, under the name "Wooden Churches

of the Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountain Area". The church is in the form of a cross with the longer arm measuring 23 m and the shorter arm measuring 18 m. The height of the church is 8 m. Construction of the church started on October 23, 1725 and finished in the autumn of 1726.

Through this project activity teachers had a great opportunity to talk with students individually in informal way, build their social awareness and show them the right way how to be proud of their national cultural heritage.

Moreover, they encouraged pupils to achieve deeper and long-term knowledge of Slovak history and traditions and students took chance to gain information in a friendly atmosphere.

