

Erasmus+ Practical Training

Austria, Organic Farm Najek

In mid-November, we set off for a ten-day practical training in Austria, hosted by Mrs Marinka Mader-Tschertou in the Bodental valley. On the very day of our arrival, the snow began to fall, so it quickly became clear that most of our tasks during the stay would be winter-related. Our main responsibilities included the morning and evening care of the barn—the farm keeps six cows, one bull and three calves — and throughout the day we carried out various assigned tasks.

On our first day, we were responsible for bottling honey. Mrs Marinka also keeps 15 beehives, which produce around 15 kg of organic honey per year. Our job was to transfer the honey from large containers into small and large jars, label them properly, and store them in the pantry. On the second day, we helped dismantle the pasture fence and took part in winter transplanting and storing of ornamental and medicinal plants. These were moved into shared pots, watered and placed in the cellar. During days of poor weather, we cooked various jams, jelly candies, and prepared traditional Austrian dishes, including one similar to Slovenian *štruklji*, filled with a mixture made from dried pear variety *tepka*, which impressed us both. In this region, *tepka* pears are not used only for distillation — they are carefully sorted, dried, and some are frozen. They are then used to prepare fillings for dumplings and *štruklji*, or eaten on their own.

As part of our training, we also took part in preparing the Traditional Slovenian Breakfast at the Consulate in Klagenfurt, where we assisted with tasting sessions of different types of honey, cheeses, homemade bread, yoghurts and other local foods. We also learned many interesting insights about beekeeping. Mrs Marinka also took us to visit the larger Baumgartner farm in the Rosental valley, where we had the opportunity to see their self-service shop offering home-grown and local products.

In our free time, we visited the towns of Ferlach and Klagenfurt, the *Krampuslauf* event and the Christmas markets. Nina and Marinka also hiked up Mount Žingerca, which offers a beautiful view across Carinthia.

On our last day, at Mrs Marinka's invitation, we visited the Chamber of Agriculture in Klagenfurt. We concluded the training with a friendly gathering at a tourist farm in Bodental, where we were treated to excellent *ričet*. At the end, we received certificates and returned home enriched by an experience that brought together work, nature, local traditions, and the remarkable hospitality and simplicity of our hosts and their friends — something for which we are deeply grateful.

Nina and Nikita