

CHRONICLE

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PATHWAYS: HISTORICAL TOURISM AND MOBILITY STUDIES
BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAMME ERASMUS+ (BIP)
KOŠICE, 13–17 OCTOBER 2025

From 13 to 17 October 2025, the Department of History at the Faculty of Arts, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, played host to an international Blended Intensive Programme Erasmus+ bearing the title Pathways: Historical Tourism and Mobility Studies. The five-day event saw the convergence of students and several lecturers from a range of European universities, including the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (CSWU), Charles University in Prague (CU), University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (USB) and University of West Bohemia in Plzeň (UWB). The exploration encompassed the history of tourism, mobility and travel across varied historical periods and contextual frameworks.

Thematic analysis of the BIP reveals its division into several areas. A distinct group was constituted of expert lectures and student presentations. The subjects addressed included the “prehistory” of tourism in a broader European context, methodologies for researching tourism history, and the legislative and legal aspects of contemporary tourism. The student presentations highlighted topics set both at the European and regional levels. A particular focus was placed on the historical development of regional tourism, with a particular emphasis on the city of Košice. A further significant component of the programme entailed the provision of guided tours and excursions. The focus of this study was the history of Košice, a city that, particularly during the rise of the industrial era, adapted to the development of tourism and built its own infrastructure in this field. The programme also featured a film evening and discussions with invited guests.

On 13 October 2025, the programme was opened by Prof. Martin Pekár, Head of the Department of History, and Assoc. Prof. Maroš Melichárek and Assoc. Prof. Mikuláš Jančura. The participants were greeted and the objectives of the activity were outlined: namely, to establish a connection between historical thinking and the multifarious aspects of tourism, travel and mobility with contemporary issues, particularly in relation to sustainability and cultural heritage.

The opening lecture on the subject of tourism in antiquity was delivered by Kamil Švaňa (Asst. Prof. Department of History, UPJŠ). The speaker elucidated the manner in which travel in the ancient world influenced social relations and global perceptions. In the afternoon, the first set of student presentations followed, including talks on the phenomenon of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth century (Aleksandra Biegała, UKSW), contrasts between mass and individualized tourism (Karolína Rytchová, UWB) and the development of spa towns as centres of European travel (Julia Tyzska, UKSW). The day concluded with a guided tour of medieval Košice led by Drahoslav Magdoško (Assoc. Prof., Department of History, UPJŠ) and an evening pub quiz with students from the Universitas Society, offering a light-hearted yet informative look at the history of tourism.

The second day of the event, 14 October 2025, continued with a series of presentations by students from Poland. The focus of these presentations was on the history of luxury trains (Karol Podolski, UKSW), the role of women in travel (Gabriela Kisielewska, UKSW) and the connection between tourism and nationalism (Franciszek Bogdaniuk, UKSW). In the afternoon, Mikuláš Jančura delivered a presentation on The History of Tourism: Outcomes, Topic Specifics and Challenges for the Historian, addressing how the history of travel can be studied within broader cultural and social contexts. The evening’s programme consisted of a screening of the film *Green Book*, followed by an online discussion with Prof. Jeffrey E. Anderson (University of Louisiana, Monroe, USA) on the subject of travel as a space of cultural encounters and prejudice.

Mid-week, on 15 October 2025, the programme centred its attention on the intricacies of travel organization within the context of totalitarian regimes. The student presentations encompassed a wide range of topics, including the Nazi organization *Kraft durch Freude* (presented by Karolina Hollá of CU) and holidays in the Polish People’s Republic (exposed by Krzysztof Lięża and Krystian Gajc of UKSW). In addition, a series of talks were held that compared past and contemporary tourism models (Veronika Ferenčíková, CU) and

examined organized holidays through the lens of leisure and leisure-time clichés (Kateřina Eisenhammerová, Magdalena Rašplíčková, Leona Kardová, USB). The morning programme concluded with a specialist lecture by Marián Lukáč (Asst. Prof., Technical University of Košice). This presentation set out to explore the evolution of tourism legislation in Slovakia, both in the past and in the present.

In the afternoon, the participants embarked on a brief excursion to the Bankov forest park in Košice, under the guidance of Estera Pracuová (PhD student, Department of History, UPJŠ). The students gained an understanding of the economic, ecological and cultural aspects of this local recreational area, which underwent development under the influence of modernization processes in the beginnings of the twentieth century. The city of Košice, in conjunction with local entrepreneurs, has adopted a contemporary approach to tourism, evidenced by the establishment of recreational zones, in addition to hotel and gastronomic services and traffic services.

On Thursday 16 October 2025, the participants embarked on a full-day excursion to the Tokaj wine region. The programme comprised a visit to the Castle of Boldogkó and a boat trip on the Bodrog River. The excursion provided participants with a combination of historical and geographical context, as well as a direct experience of a landscape that has shaped the region's wine-making tradition and tourist identity for centuries.

The final day, 17 October 2025, featured a discussion entitled *Get Lost the Right Way...* with representatives of Local Nomad Tours from Košice (Igor Kupec, Andrej Klobušník), who presented current trends in sustainable tourism and authentic city experiences.

The concluding session of student presentations addressed topics such as ecotourism (Kateřina Bučková, UWB) and cultural heritage and museology (Adéla Kovaříková, UWB). Following a summary discussion, the event concluded with a symbolic gathering, during which participants shared experiences and ideas for future cooperation.

The Blended Intensive Programme Erasmus+ has been shown to be an event that connected historical knowledge with contemporary questions of travel and mobility. The event created a forum for dialogue and collaboration between European students of history and other disciplines and students of UPJŠ, facilitating the exchange of approaches, networking opportunities and the presentation of Košice as a city that has undergone a long development from a medieval centre to a modern space of cultural tourism.

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MARKING THE 770TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST WRITTEN
MENTION OF THE TOWN OF MOLDAVA NAD BODVOU
MOLDAVA NAD BODVOU, 20 NOVEMBER 2025

The conference, dedicated to the 770th anniversary of the first historical reference of the town, took place on 20 November of 2025 in Moldava nad Bodvou under the auspices of the Department of History, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. A total of twelve presentations were delivered in Slovak and Hungarian. These were organized into three sessions based on chronological and thematic criteria. An exhibition of local postage stamps accompanied the conference.

Following the official opening of the conference, the first session focused on archaeological and historical sources from the medieval and early modern periods. Marián Soják presented his findings from the Moldavská cave. The cave is the most important archaeological site in the area, with findings from various periods, including the Neolithic, Bronze Age and La Tène periods. Yet the most interesting findings date back to the Mongol invasion of the Hungarian Kingdom of 1241–1242. The numerous skeletal remains and deposits of medieval coins testify to the tragic events that surrounded the invasion. Marián Soják concluded his presentation by reflecting on the potential future opening of the cave to the public.

A presentation by Kamil Švaňa and Peter Tajkov concerned archaeological findings from Moldava and the surrounding area, including previously unpublished settlement findings from the Eastern Linear Pottery culture discovered in the nearby village of Mokrance. Júlia Kotrusová's presentation was dedicated to the turbulent relationship between the market town and the Premonstratensian priory in Jasov throughout the medieval and early modern periods. Gabriel Szeghy concluded the session by presenting the coat of arms of the town of Moldava and its changes through the centuries.

The second session was dedicated to important historical figures connected with the town's history. It began with a presentation held by František Šimon, who described the literary work of Ján Gregor Macer Szepsius, a sixteenth-century poet and humanist from Moldava. Annamária Kónyová presented the travels of Martin Csombor Szepsi, as detailed in his itinerary. His travels took him through areas of modern Poland, Denmark, Netherlands, England, Germany and Czechia shortly before the Thirty Years' War. Éva Gyulai's presentation was based on the work of Matthias Bel's account of Moldava and the surrounding area. The name of Juhász Árpád, an interwar writer and editor, is little known today, so the audience was grateful to hear about his literary work from Anikó Szabó-Sári. At the end of the second session, Jozef Džubák presented an exhibition of postal stamps from Moldava dating from 1859 to 1945.

The conference concluded with the third session of presentations, most of which were dedicated to the history of the town during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gábor Békési started by describing the journey of Bény Egressy, a local teacher, to the Milan opera house in 1838. Monika Bodnár presented the history of the furriers in Moldava, while Dalibor Danko's presentation focused on a judicial case involving local Roma people during the interwar period and its reception by the Czechoslovak Medical Society in Košice. The closing presentation by Tomáš Ondřejšík concerned the history of Moldava as described in periodical articles.

In general, the conference can be considered an important step towards planned future work on a monograph about the town. As such, it also attracted a large number of attendees from the general public, demonstrating their interest in local and regional history.

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FROM THE CITY TO THE COUNTRY
OLOMOUC, 24 – 28 NOVEMBER 2025

The final week of November 2025 was dedicated to doctoral candidates within the Aurora Alliance and its associated partner institutions. PhD students and early-career researchers participated in a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) hosted by Palacký University Olomouc (Czech Republic) focusing on sustainability, urban resilience and cultural heritage. Participants represented a wide range of European universities, including Universität Innsbruck, the University of Duisburg-Essen, the University of Iceland, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University and other Aurora partners. All faculties of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University were represented, highlighting the programme's strong interdisciplinary dimension. The programme at Palacký University Olomouc was led academically by Assoc. Prof. Pavlína Flajšarová and organizationally coordinated by Marie Sieberová.

The primary objective of the week-long programme was to introduce, develop and intensively practise the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) format, culminating in a final competition. The 3MT is a well-established international initiative that challenges researchers to communicate the significance of their research to a non-specialist audience within three minutes, using only one static slide. The format emphasizes clarity, conciseness and impact, aiming to strengthen researchers' academic communication skills and public engagement.

The programme was structured into interconnected thematic sections, closely linked to the historical and urban fabric of the city of Olomouc and its surrounding region. It began with an introductory day dedicated to presenting the overall aims of the BIP and outlining the programme for the following days. A substantial part of this opening day focused on networking activities and familiarizing participants with one another's research topics. This initial exchange provided an important foundation for the programme's broader engagement with urban histories, as subsequent sessions were to explore the evolution of cities through the interaction of natural resources, technological development and societal change.

Academic content during the week addressed topics such as natural resource management, the circular economy, biotechnology, urban archaeology, urban heat islands and nanotechnologies. These sessions were complemented by field visits, including to the Molitor House and the Cathedral District, which illustrated the historical layers of urban development and supported research exchange and international collaboration. The core of the programme consisted of intensive 3MT training sessions conducted under the guidance of Suzanne Whitby and Prof. Toby Wikström. Prof. Wikström, of the University of Iceland, contributed extensive academic expertise in research communication, while Suzanne Whitby, introducing herself as a foresight practitioner, futurer, facilitator, communicator and storyteller and based in Innsbruck, Tirol, Austria, focused on narrative development, audience engagement and future-oriented communication strategies.

The training sessions were highly dynamic and interactive, emphasizing peer-to-peer feedback and conducted in pairs and small groups, as well as in front of simulated audiences. Participants worked intensively on mastering the strict three-minute format, identifying and communicating the key messages of their research and designing the single permitted slide, which constituted the only visual aid allowed under official 3MT rules.

The open, supportive atmosphere and strong group cohesion naturally fostered informal and individual consultations, during which participants received valuable advice and constructive criticism from the programme leaders. Alongside the intensive preparation for the final 3MT competition, a complementary programme enriched the academic experience. Participants took part in a full-day excursion to the Lavender Farm in Bozděchov and Úsov Castle, where environmental themes were contextualized within cultural and historical frameworks. Additional workshops focused on plant physiology, examples of green urban development, and environmental law, further broadening the thematic scope of the BIP.

On the final day of the programme, all participants gathered at the Pevnost poznání (Fortress of Knowledge) in Olomouc, where the concluding 3MT competition took place in an inspiring and innovative environment. The jury consisted of university educators from partner

and associated universities within the Aurora Alliance, many of whom were simultaneously participating in a parallel BIP programme. Presentations were evaluated according to multiple criteria reflecting both the formal requirements of the 3MT format and broader principles of effective research communication by early-career researchers. While the jury announced three award-winning presentations and a jury prize, a shared conclusion emerged during the closing lunch: the most significant outcomes of the programme were the newly acquired skills, enhanced knowledge, adoption of innovative presentation methods and exceptionally high level of networking and collaboration established among young researchers across disciplines and institutions.

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