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Report about Study tour -Exchange of Best practices – 6th -9th May, 2022; Nyíregyháza, Hungary

The Slovakian and Czech team arrived to our place in Nyírpazony on Friday afternoon where they checked into the guesthouse, visited our small biogarden and its bird friendly facilities. Later that day we all went to Sóstó, the recreational and touristic area of Nyíregyháza. We had our dinner next to a fishing pond which is part of a sustainable farming initiative and went back to our place to Nyírpazony and discussed about the project in the evening.

The Romanian team joined us next morning in Hajdúnánás. As this city is part of the Hajdú region, our host, Imre Magi and his family gave us some historical introduction of the people living there. However, we visited them to learn wood carving technics, we could also participate in the making of some local shepherds' meal for our lunch. There was a short intro about safety rules and the tools what we used during the event.



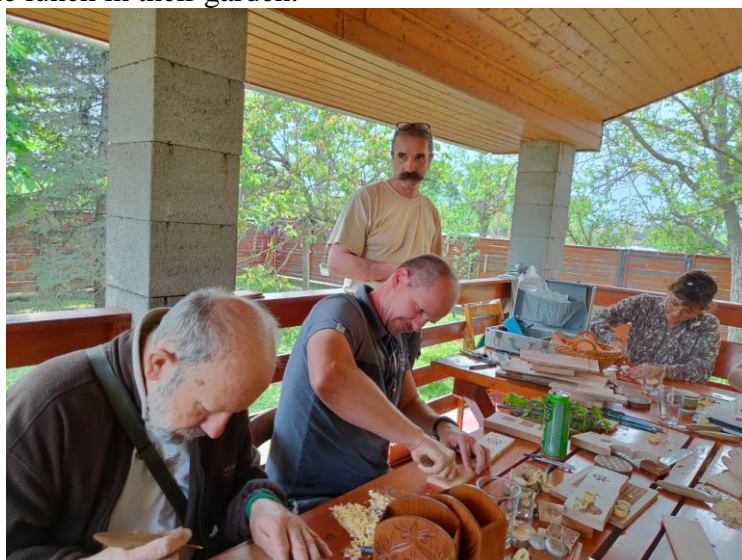
We had plenty of wood carving knives and got our first task to make a ring from elderberry branches. It seems to be easier when we saw it but in practice it is quite hard, so we were slow while followed the instructions from our trainer. As we finished our rings, all of us had the same numbers of fingers as the beginning, so it was a successful try from this point of view as well and we deserved to step further for more exciting work.



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Soon we started a new technique, it was wedge carving. We learned useful basics about different wood types and saw a lot of smaller and bigger furniture decoration, household tools carved from wood. We started with simple lines and basic motives to practice this method. Later we also learned how to draw the sketch for our work with rulers and callipers. So we could draw popular motives on our wood and started to carve it. It was kind of interactive way of learning as we had our freedom in the planning and the carving as well, so Imre was busy to deal with all of us, to correct mistakes and show the right method and some tricks. Carving really takes time and makes you enthusiastic, so we postponed our lunchtime to finish our work first. Sooner or later all of us finalized their first wedge carving figure. Those who were faster helped with doing the table and with serving as thanks to the beautiful weather we could have our late lunch in their garden.



After saying thank you and goodbye to our dear hosts we drove to Tiszadob village to visit the freshly reconstructed Versailles-style Andrassy Castle and its beautiful garden for a photo session there but we could see it only from outside. The building is interesting: it has 4 entrances corresponding to the number of seasons, 12 towers corresponding to the number of



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months, 52 rooms corresponding to the number of weeks and 365 windows corresponding to the number of days in a year.

After it, we went to Tiszalök to see the local water power plant station there on the Tisza River and a large botanic garden next to it. The object is the second largest of its kind in Hungary, remained from the Communist Era, still operating and serves as an industrial museum as well, during summer they organize guided tours for visitors, and for school students. It was long day, so it was time to get back to our base where we discussed our experience during dinner.



On Sunday we all drove to Istvánbokor to the farm of our friend Csaba Szigetvári, president of the E-misszion Conservation Association and founder of forest shepherd activities in Sóstó forest. It is a nice natural environment far from the city, which was perfect for our activities. There were more members of this organization and activists from other NGOs as well. It was a double aimed programme, besides discussing forest shepherd activities, we learned how to make different artificial bird houses from various materials and we learned how to make goulash in cauldron.



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As we were quite a big group, we cooked in two cauldrons. We were first divided into two groups and one started to help the preparation for cooking to our master chef and the second group started to draw and saw the wood for birdhouses. We also had an expert with us from Budapest, who makes bird houses from “garbage”, as he collects for second usage any kind of material which can serve as shelter for birds and installed more hundreds near his living place. We took lots of equipment with us to work with wood, learn the practices and created various houses for different bird species from really small Blue Tits to large ones for Barn Owls. Everyone could use the tools with the supervision of more experienced participants and as it always happens new people bring new ideas and inputs so we all could learn a lot.



In the meantime the goulash was finished and we had our late lunch together. As we had some vegetarian in our group we also made grilled cheese based food with herbs from the host’s garden. Later we shared recipes of the various versions of goulash (as it turned out there are too many different ways how people do it) and also the recipes of the brought home-made



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sweet and salty desserts as kind contribution of our friends. We do believe that the participants had a really good impression on Hungarian gastronomy and could use in their work what they learned and did with bird houses.

