

Experiences of foreigners in Maribor

Within the YOUMIG project (you can read more about the project at: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/youmig>), Maribor Development Agency conducted several interviews with migrants: people who came to Maribor, who've left Maribor or have returned from abroad..

This gave us an opportunity to speak with very interesting people, such as the controller of the cross-border programs, who came to Maribor from Szombathely, or with a Polish young entrepreneur, who opened her company after staying in Maribor for a month. A welder from Bosnia and Hercegovina, who worked in Germany and has now settled in Maribor also shared his story, as well as a woman sent by her employer to Slovenia, where she found her life partner and stayed in Maribor. On the other hand, a jack-of-all-trades explained why he decided to leave his hometown of Maribor and Slovenia in general, to only come back for visits. And we didn't conduct interviews only with individuals, but also organizations that are constantly in touch with people migrating in and out of the country, such as the Financial office, National Health Insurance, Centre for Social Work, Office for Youth and Culture Maribor, University of Maribor, Academia, Administrative unit, employment Service and others.

All migrants shared a common experience of having to adjust in the new environment, where they were left more or less on their own, except for the support of family or co-workers. On the other hand, there are support offices with the University or the private educational institution Academia, who try to reduce the stress of foreigners in the city as much as possible. But with all these actors, we also met one that attracts highly skilled professionals to Maribor, although we haven't really considered them at the beginning of the project. That's the football club Maribor.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank NK Maribor for their help in setting up an interview with one of the most famous interviewees, Mr Jasmin Mešanović, striker for NK Maribor, who came from Bosnia and Hercegovina to Maribor only this year.



Photo: NK Maribor (http://www.nkmaribor.com/igranci/?id=204818&id_mostva=1)

His experience upon arriving to Slovenia was very different from what most other migrants told us. That is because the club has a very professional team that helps foreign players upon arriving to Maribor. They relieve the players themselves of worries about formalities, so they can be fully concentrated on their athletic achievements.

Therefore, the club handles the paperwork, so Jasmin and other foreign players can play for and live in Maribor. Naturally, Jasmin was involved in all the parts of the process and had to sign documents in person, but he did not have to worry about forgetting to fill out a form, getting a translation for some paper, or similar bureaucratic requirements. The staff of the club knew exactly what he needs and how it has to be processed for a smooth experience with the administrative unit. They also handled the health insurance, working papers and helped with the apartment where Jasmin lives.

Jasmin is therefore very happy to tell us, he had no worries about a place to stay, about travel documents both for staying in Slovenia or traveling to international matches. All of these are worries migrants encounter only when they find themselves in an unpleasant situation, because they weren't able to find the right info at the right time, or haven't fully understood the procedure that had to be undertaken.

We are very happy Jasmin had a pleasant experience and that he feels nice in Maribor with his teammates, who showed him around Maribor. Also, we are very happy that the club turned out to be really professional not only with the team on the green, but also with the formalities that their foreign talents have to deal with and which remain hidden from the eyes of most of the general public.

Author: mag. Borut Jurišić