

**GRUNDTVIG LEARNING PARTNERSHIP  
CZECH INTERNATIONAL VISIT 31/10 – 2/11/2012**

**Reviving rural areas**

**Report from the field trip**

**Visit dates and participants**

The visit in the Czech Republic took place from 31<sup>st</sup> October till 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2012. The visiting delegations consisted of one representative from Slovak organisation AGROEDUKA and one person from Dutch partner organisation Stichting Streekeigen Producten Nederland. The Polish partner didn't have its representation. The project group of the hosting country consisted of people from the hosting organisation LAG Strakonicko and its partner Association of Regional Brands.

**Programme:**

**Wednesday:**

- Arrival and accommodation at monastery Štěkeň
- Optional guided tour at monastery
- Welcoming dinner
- Presentation of host organisation LAG Strakonicko and its activities

**Thursday:**

- Project "Reviving rural areas" – working programme, role of partners, time schedule, outputs, financial provisions – presentation of the coordinating partner and discussion
- Lunch at Strakonice castle (restaurant Hradní sklípek – holder of the regional brand)
- Visit of a cattle farm in Hoslovice, presentation and testing of the local agro-tourism offer
- Accommodation and evening at the boarding house – holder of the regional brand

**Friday:**

- Visit of a lace making cooperative in Sedlice (holder of the regional brand)
- Evaluation of the visit
- Departure



The **kick-off meeting** started on 31 October at the Štěkeň Castle with the introduction of the hosting organisation LAG Strakonicko (<http://www.strakonicko.net>) and its activities in the field of the rural development. Participants had chance to get to know basic information about the visited region, its specifics and in general the situation of local action groups and other involved entities in the Czech Republic.

Successful projects from the region supported by the LEADER program were presented during an in-deep presentation. These projects were mainly focused on maintenance and recovery of the tradition, development of agrotourism, keeping of cultural heritage, care about countryside and other similar topics. The meeting place – Štěkeň castle was also granted a support from a LEADER program for the investments aimed at the tourist services.

The second day of the visit was given for introduction of partner organisations and mainly for **working meeting** where representatives of the partner organisations debated about project issues. They confirmed the determined dividing roles in the project, agreed on ways how to organise the international visits and on their themes. They also discussed about the outputs of the project and about administrative things connected with the project.



The main theme of the field trip was the support of the local producers via the regional brand. The brand is dedicated to local craftsmen, farmers, producers of food and services of tourist industry. The coordinator of the brand called PRÁCHEŇSKO regional product is LAG Strakonicko, the hosting organisation and one of the partners of this learning partnership project. Participants of the visit had also chance to meet the holders of the regional brand.



The first opportunity they had on Thursday when they have lunch at the awarded **restaurant 'Hradní sklípek'** ([www.hradnisklipek.cz](http://www.hradnisklipek.cz)) in Strakonice and tasted there the regional food.

A quote from its web presentation:  
*'Welcome to a newly renovated stylish restaurant Hradni sklípek which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> courtyard of Strakonice castle, right below the majestic tower called Rumpal. You can look forward to a pleasant atmosphere, non-smoking environment, friendly and helpful staff and last but not least to a delicious culinary experience.'*

Next stop was in **Hoslovice** on a cattle farm ([www.danek-group.cz](http://www.danek-group.cz)) which holds the regional brand both for the beef from a freely bred cattle and the tourist services (a restaurant and a boarding house) as well. The owner of the farm provided the participants with a guided tour through the farm and explained them the specific situation of farmers in the Czech Republic after the communist period. The dinner consisted of beef meat from the own breeding. After dinner a presentation of the agrotourism offer on the farm followed – e.g. cattle rodeo or lessons and festivals of horse riding. The farm is also involved in a horse tracks building project.



The last day the participants saw the other example of the products with a regional brand. They visited the **lace making cooperative in Sedlice** ([www.krajky-sedlice.cz](http://www.krajky-sedlice.cz)) where they could hear not only about the long tradition of lace making in the region but also about the present situation of this handicraft and problems related to the handwork in general.

The non-profit organisation 'Sedlická krajka' helps to market works of dozens of local lace makers. It runs its own store and an e-shop and takes parts at different fairs and exhibitions. But to keep this very time consuming handicraft is very difficult even if it is still attractive for the young generation.



Participants acknowledged the variety of different examples of bridging the tradition and today economic activities. They enjoyed also the opportunity to share their experiences and discuss about differences in their countries during the whole visit.