

HOW I WANDERED INTO THE LAND OF CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN?



I landed in Andersen's Land.

We have always listened to how the Scandinavian world is something special. Not just because of the fearless Vikings who discovered America before Columbus. Mainly due to a well-organized social system. Emphasized care for social, health, education ... For us teachers, this was placed in textbooks as a special mantra.

Moreover, when I had the opportunity as a teacher to gain new experience and knowledge through the *Erasmus + program*, I said to myself – why wouldn't I take a look?

With mind and heart embraced, you come far

That Denmark happened and not any other Scandinavian country was a happy coincidence. Thanks goes to the outstanding teacher Raino

Kristian Hansen, Ph.D. cantab, biology and chemistry teacher and head of international cooperation at *VUC Roskilde*. His sense for benevolent initiatives, followed by goodwill, kindness, and cooperation, works wonders. Followed by my suggestion, he impressed the school management and designed a very varied and intensive program for a seven-day follow-up work at their school.

In addition, I hit the road to Denmark in mid-September.

Denmark and Slovenia - sister countries

I realized that I had luckily chosen a country soon after arriving in Copenhagen. The very first walk through the city told me - this is my home. Namely, people sit relaxed with a glass of wine or beer and talk unobtrusively. Especially in the evening, when the social gatherings are filled and you are lured into a happy company. Everyone is here - young, middle aged and older. Equally - men and women. The atmosphere is of the 1980s.

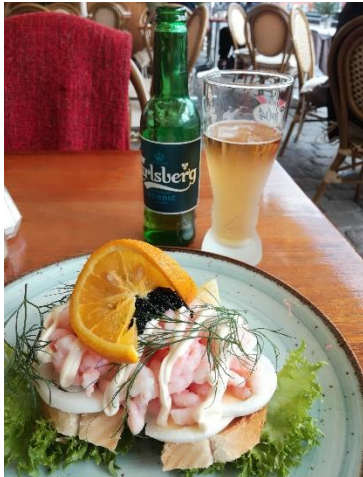
Well, that's how I found out that Denmark is the only Scandinavian country where a glass of wine or beer is part of the culture, because they are producers of excellent beer. In other Scandinavian countries, however, alcohol is imported, very expensive and even banned in some public places.

Another similarity is that we are both small: there are just little under six million Danes. Moreover, the fact that we both have free education, health care and well-regulated social care.



Danish parks as well as shared gardens between houses are enchanting. The municipality takes care of the parks.

The Danes don't complicate things



Denmark's most popular dish: smørrebrød, which goes well with beer or a slice.

The most beautiful are their houses. Danes are real artists in combining the old and the new. Even in antique houses, they do everything to make living comfortable, while not diminishing the original beauty. Without any hesitation, they would place modern houses next to the old one, in such a manner that the appearance as a whole is not distorted. They even know how to convert an old church into a useful building and add a bar to it.

Their simpleness is also evident by Denmark's most typical dish - buttered bread (smørrebrød) with all sorts of delicacies - and in the fact that they easily make an enjoyable picnic on a small bench, on a break by the water or on the lawn in the park. However, they also have a good sense of humour. And as the tourist guide says, they are the inventors of casual enjoyment - hygge - and among the happiest nations in the world.

High tax - many benefits for citizens

"What can you attribute to the fact that you are among the happiest nations in the world" - I asked the people I met. "High tax" - was the most common answer. The tax enables good and free schools, free health care and non-profit housing (about a third of the population lives in them). That is why we have more educated and socially active people, enough trade unions..., which hinders the authorities from evicting the population. It couldn't happen that an employed working person is poor. The second reason is the high level of democracy - all decisions within smaller and larger collectives happen using conversation and consensus. Democracy was introduced in Denmark as early as 1849; women got the voting rights in 1915.



The houses in Denmark are beautiful.

VUC Roskilde - a special school

VUC (voksenuddannelsescenter - centre for adult education) is a kind of preparatory education for adults, or a school for the "second chance". There is no such a school in Slovenia. Not like a public school. Some programs are implemented at individual private schools or in "People's Universities" and are mostly paid. This school is free, participants only have to pay a symbolic amount (about 80 euros per year per subject) for a deposit and it will be returned to them when they receive diploma.

The idea of the school is as follows: If you may not like to study right after the high school and just want to prepare for your studies, you can attend some subjects here for a year or two, and get to know better what makes you happy in life. Alternatively, if you would like to gain new knowledge later in life, maybe opt for another profession, you come here. However, some decide that after completing their business careers, when they are already retired, they would like to gain new knowledge. Therefore, the students of the school are between 18-70 years old. Among them are also many

foreigners living in Denmark who improve language skills and acquire new knowledge. At the time of my visit, there was a 60-year-old lady in the student community. She studies with the aim of becoming a priestess at the end of a long working life. Therefore, she attends some classes so that she can later take an exam in theology.

Technologically advanced school

Another stunning fact: all students are present with computers, tablets, phones ... Blackboards are also "smart" - in fact, large computer screens. Everything written on the board is immediately sent to students as a note of the lesson, and all learning materials and notices are accessible through a single computer system (CANVAS). This greatly facilitates the lessons as well as the overall coordination of the school. For example, if a teacher falls ill or leaves school, he is easily replaced by a new one.



Teachers Monitoring

Probably this learning activity is called job shadowing precisely because you always rush after a teacher like his shadow, from the classroom to the classroom and back, and again to the library, for coffee... My monitoring was especially thorough, as I monitored every day at least one, and usually two teachers. Therefore, I was able to peek into just about every corner of the school and ask many curious questions. I even joined a regular two-week school leadership meeting. At the time of my visit, it was in Køge, where the *VUC Roskilde* branch is located, and where we saw the new classrooms where part of the lessons will be moved. You might think I didn't understand anything when the school board spoke Danish. Well, I did - many things. Above all, the accuracy and respect for the timeline is a respected virtue. That culture of discussion is high - in a debate that was more and less passionate, no one kept silent or talked all the time, and everyone expressed their views. I also saw the floor plan of the new classrooms and other spaces, which are imaginatively arranged according to the Danish architectural style, connected by a triangle-shaped corridor. All rooms have huge windows and lots of natural light.

Roskilde - a Viking city

Roskilde was the first Danish capital, and the city was founded in the 10th century. It houses one of the most attractive Danish cathedrals, which is under UNESCO protection. All the rulers of Denmark are buried in it, including the Viking kings Harald I (the Bluetooth). You can come to Roskilde for a Viking boat trip and see the *Viking Museum*, or enjoy a summer rock festival where about 130,000 music lovers gather at the end of June. In an area of the city called *Musicon*, where also the *Museum of Pop, Rock and Youth Culture* stands.

One should not miss out on a walk in the harbour. In general, this is the most charming side of Denmark - the sea accompanies you wherever you travel (no place in Denmark is more than 50 km from the sea). Along the coast, however, there are many cycling and walking routes. Therefore, on Saturday I took a bike trip, to the small family brewery Herslev, 8 km away, across fields and forests, past lakes and beautiful villages, as well as mighty mansions.



All the rulers of Denmark, including the Viking king Harald I (Bluetooth), are buried in the cathedral church in Roskilde, which is under UNESCO protection. The author of the first photo is Jens Cederskjold.



Musicon was created in the area of a disused factory with concrete products: creators, musicians, skaters ... got their place here, and at the same time, it became an "experimental workshop" for urban living approaches.



The most beautiful in Roskilde is the harbour. You can also sail with a Viking ship.



Cycling through the countryside of Roskilde, across fields and forests, past lakes and beautiful villages, as well as mighty mansions, to the small family brewery Herslev, 8 km away.

Birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen

Yes, Odense. It is less than an hour and a half by train from Roskilde. It is one of the oldest Danish cities, named after the Nordic god Odin. Small and magical, like from a fairy tale. The same little house, and the street where the famous storyteller was born (April 2, 1805), is reminiscent of the image from the blushed postcard. When H.C. Andersen was two years old, his family moved to the other side of town. This house, too, has remained unchanged and shows the modesty in which the writer's family lived (his father was a shoemaker). The fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes* was recently celebrated by *Jasa association* – it was published in its new book [*What kind of Slovenia I'm dreaming of*](#) as an encouragement to young people to never stop telling the truth. That is why it was also necessary to pay homage to this place and to the venerable writer.

And a glimpse from the Danish train: of course, a lot of people look at phones or tablets, but a lot of girls and women knit - just nice to see. I learned that they recently revived this hobby.



The famous storyteller H. C. Andersen was an avid traveller.



The birth house (far right) and the street have retained their original appearance.



The house where the Andersen's have moved when he was two years old.

Copenhagen

Of course, it's not about ignoring the capital. I visited it on the way from the airport and back. To see it really thoroughly was helped by a rented electric bike. I also took a boat ride through the city gulfs and canals next to the colourful houses (Nyhavn), where it is most beautiful. All of the other city venues are also amazing: the *Tivoli amusement park*, which is the second oldest in the world, and the promenade with burgher houses, full of shops and bars, and beautiful parks.

In the *National Gallery*, I learned everything from the first settlements of Denmark through the Viking period to the present day. The most interesting is the independent city in the city - *Christiania*, which is a safe place for all the "maladapted". In 1970, some intellectuals and hippy rebels occupied an abandoned military zone and turned it into a self-sufficient community with bars, galleries, music avenues and a cooperative "all in one" store. The whole area looks like a wonderland, full of screaming

collars, graffiti, imaginative houses and hidey-holes - one single open gallery of omnipotent statues and sculptures. The residents are friendly and sociable people.



COPENHAGEN HIGHLIGHTS:
 1 Tivoli - the second oldest amusement park in the world,
 2 Spontaneous concert at Christianshavn,
 3 Boat trip and homes on the water,
 4 Pleasant with useful - urban beach,
 5 Nyhaven,
 6 National Museum,
 7 Socializing in front of the "church" Bar
 8 Walking cone of the town (photo: Atlandited phototravel).



This time, too, I learned about the meaning of work assignments. We should only load as much that we can still have time for other content as well. We must not turn life into a race. He who walks slowly goes further and sees more. He enjoys life better, more responsible.

Mateja Jamnik, MA, philosopher, president of the *Jasa Association*