

STEP Jihlava 2011

The STEP (Short Term Exchange Program) in Jihlava, taking place from August 20th to September 2nd, was definitively one of the most interesting and memorable experiences for me.

It actually began during the train ride, where we got acquainted with one another (there were only two people I already knew) and started discussing what we were expecting. At the train station we met the official Czech representatives of STEP and our two local guides (students at the VSP Polytechnikum Jihlava) who accompanied us to the hotel and afterwards took us on a first quick tour of the city before we had lunch. One of the first things all of us noticed was how much cheaper food and drinks are in Jihlava compared to Vienna.

Obviously the two weeks were all about learning as much as possible and so we had a lot of Czech classes, however for me learning the language proved to be not too hard, as I already know two other Slav languages. We also got some insights into Databases and PHP-Implementation as well as Network-Protocols.

We also had tours to some of the local companies (OPTOKON; Valeo Compressor; Bosch Diesel and Centropen) and all of them invited us to migrate to Czech Republic and work for them ☺

To round it off our two guides visited the historical attractions of nearby cities (Telč, Třebíč and Dačice) with us and on our free day (which coincidentally happened to be my birthday) they suggested we should visit Prague, a suggestion everybody loved. We had to get up a little bit earlier than usual so that we had more time to see as much of the city as possible. Even so we had nowhere near close to enough time to visit every place we wanted to as we had to get back to Jihlava because we had classes the next day. However, because it was my birthday three of my new friends stayed with me in Prague in order to celebrate this occasion in “Karlovy Lazne” – the biggest club in Prague, before going back to Jihlava in the morning, where we then only had time to shower and eat breakfast and hurry to aforementioned classes. This way I ended up staying awake for 40 hours without sleep, but it was absolutely worth it ☺

Since I already mentioned the club in Prague – Obviously we young students wanted to be entertained in the evening and luckily Jihlava did not disappoint us. Our guides showed us around a few clubs, including the students club “College Centrum” (where they even threw a surprise birthday party for me ☺), and bars where we could play billiard and go bowling.

After all this none of us really wanted to go home and so the good-bye at the train station was really sad and some of us actually shed a few tears when we were leaving.

Summing it up I really enjoyed the two weeks of STEP although the time seemed to pass by too fast. I hope that next year there will be another program and another chance to come to Jihlava and see all of our new friends again.