

Department of English
Language and Culture

ISSN 1339 - 7370
1/2024

ENJOY



Beyond Borders: Virtual Collaboration
of Future Teachers of English

ENGLISH JOURNAL FOR YOU

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intro

04

Artificial Intelligence

06

Fake news/Disinformation

10

Digital habits across generations

14

The impact of social media

17

Environment

21

Endangered life on Earth

25

Cultural similarities and differences

29

Traditions

33





Music, movies, and art

36

Famous people in the history

40

Lifestyle and well-being

44

Meaning of life & Being successful

50

Education

54

Sustainable fashion

58

Relationships

60

Virtual and augmented reality

64

Food

66

Mental health awareness

72

INTRO

UNITING YOUNG MINDS ACROSS DISTANCES

Welcome to the latest issue of ENJOY, where we delve into the fascinating world of virtual collaboration. In this edition, titled “Beyond borders: Virtual Collaboration of Future Teachers of English”, we explore the remarkable project that unfolded between Mersin University in Turkey and Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra from February to May 2024.

During this time period the two groups of students engaged in various tasks divided into three main stages.



STAGE 1: BUILDING BRIDGES

During the initial stage, students established meaningful connections by sharing personal insights. They introduced themselves, revealing their passions, hobbies, and motivations for pursuing a teaching career by posting “portraits” in Padlet. As an added touch, international teams crafted eye-catching posters using Canva, outlining their rules of conduct.

STAGE 2: CULTURAL DIALOGUES

The heart of our collaboration lay in intercultural dialogues. Students engaged in discussions on diverse topics, including digital habits, environmental practices, traditions, art, and notable figures. By comparing and contrasting their perspectives, they discovered shared ground and celebrated differences.

STAGE 3: CRAFTING THE JOURNAL

In the final phase, our students joined forces to create this special issue of ENJOY. Each page reflects the debates and insights shared among team members. From artificial intelligence to cultural parallels, from debunking fake news to exploring lifestyle and well-being, our pages offer a rich tapestry of ideas.

ENJOY the Journey

As you flip through these virtual pages, immerse yourself in our unique intercultural show. Let the spirit of collaboration and discovery guide you. After all, life is about embracing the journey, and in this issue of ENJOY, we invite you to do just that.

Nikola Mačicková

A.I. innovation or a threat ?

Artificial intelligence refers to intelligent processes performed by computer systems, including learning, reasoning, problem-solving, pattern recognition, and language comprehension.

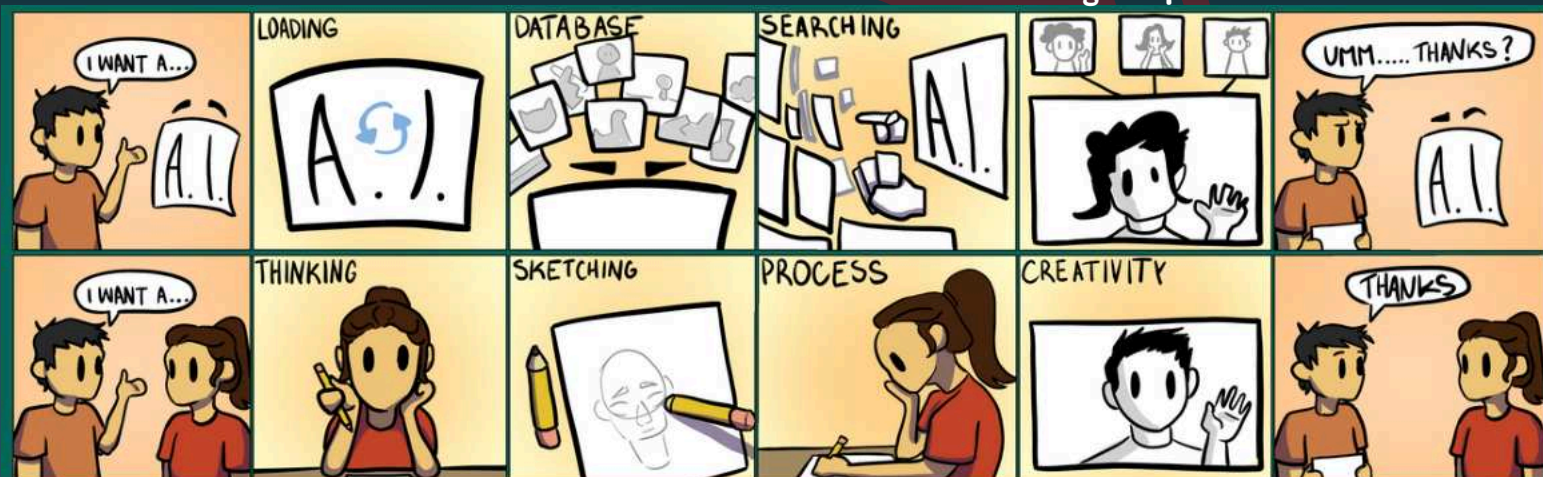
One of the key advantages of AI is its potential to help us with repetitive tasks, leading to increased efficiency and productivity in industries. Additionally, AI systems can analyze big amounts of data to discover patterns and ideas that may not be that obvious to humans. However, there are many concerns about the ethical implications of AI, such as privacy violations, algorithmic bias, and the potential for job displacement.

When it comes to AI art, although it presents opportunities for innovation, there are also significant drawbacks to consider. One of the cons of AI art is the lack of emotional depth and originality compared to human-created art. In our opinion, AI-generated artworks lack the soul and personal touch. Furthermore, there are concerns about the impact of AI art on the lives of human artists, as the widespread use of AI in the creative industry could lead to job losses and to reduction of the value of human creativity.

Overall, even if Artificial Intelligence offers a large potential for advancement, it is important to carefully weigh the pros and cons to ensure the responsible arrangement of AI in society.

Artificial INTELLIGENCE

Comic strip about how A.I. "creates" something compared to humans



AN INTERVIEW ABOUT THE USE OF AI IN EDUCATION

Türkiye

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF AI IN EDUCATION?

AI presents new educational perspectives, offering accurate resources for students' struggles. However, it can also dampen students' motivation by overly simplifying learning.

1.

Slovakia

Advantage - speed, effort, and translation
Disadvantage - inaccuracy

HOW COULD AI BE USED TO MAKE TEACHING MORE INNOVATIVE?

Teachers are increasingly using AI to create compelling visual and audio materials, boosting competency and motivation. Yet, prioritizing authentic materials remains crucial amid this trend.

2.

Inspiration for activities and for problem solving

WHAT RULES SHOULD BE INTRODUCED TO AVOID THE MISUSE OF AI?

Despite the growing emphasis on authentic materials in education, AI programs often lack the ability to locate precise content, leading to fabricated resources. This reliance on AI risks stifling teacher creativity. Implementing a maximum percentage of AI-generated materials in lesson plans could mitigate this issue.

3.

Set a percentage for the use of AI and teach more on how to use sites and resources.

HOW COULD STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM USING AI?

Specifically speaking about the language teaching, learners can use AI bots to make summaries about the topics - and we use this technique also as pre-service teachers, find the examples of the forms and structures.

4.

It helps find more interesting materials that students would not have access to.

PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF AI IN TURKISH EDUCATION.

The use of AI in Turkish education is on the rise, especially with new teachers in state schools. Additionally, discussions are underway in our department for a new lecture on AI in language teaching. Moreover, our department's students have developed an AI bot focused on applied linguistics, offering access to recent approaches and methods literature for theoretical work.

5.

PROVIDE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF AI IN SLOVAK EDUCATION.

In Slovakia, teachers do not use AI for materials. It is also not recommended for students to use it. But many of them do.

Tips on the use of AI generators

- **Be detailed and concise with prompts** - the more specific you are the more likely the result will align with your vision, however, do not use filler words as they are likely to overwhelm the AI and it may produce undesirable results.
- **Try to use style prompts** - prompts like gothic, fantasy, photorealistic, ... are the prompts that have the largest impact on the generation of the image, you can also try to use prompts in the style of Van Gogh, Picasso, ... if you want to replicate that specific style.
- **Use moods and emotions as prompts** - using prompts like melancholic, joyful, can provide a more creative direction for the AI to work with.
- **Learn about art and photography** - to generate an image that is most likely to match your vision, you should, ironically enough, learn about art styles and photography, prompts like "Dutch angle" or "bokeh" are all useful in guiding the AI.
- **Experiment with prompts and different AI art generators** - different art generators will produce different results even with the same prompts. The best way to experiment is to start with a simple concept, such as "portrait of a lake," and continue adding prompts one by one to see how each prompt affects the image.

Tips on the use of ChatGPT

- **Ask for sources** - when using ChatGPT for studying, you should always ask for the source where it got it from. This allows you to verify where the information was pulled from.
- **Provide constraints and limitations** - when asking for information, you can specify constraints to improve the response, for example "summarize in 200 words" or "list all the Nobel Prize winners between 2015 - 2018"
- **Assign ChatGPT a role** - to get a response in a specific manner, you can assign a role to ChatGPT, for example "acting as a professor of medicine, provide me a summary of World War II", this will provide a response about the use of medicine and medical advancements in World War II.
- **Bypass word limitations** - ChatGPT has a word limit of 500 when generating a response. This can simply be bypassed by saying "go on" or "explain further".
- **Tailor prompts after each response** - if you are still feeling that ChatGPT has not provided a good enough generation, you can simply add more context to the prompts to tailor it to your needs, whether it is asking to include or exclude information from a specific author or responding with a different tone by asking it to write in a specific mood.



Artificial Intelligence



How is Turkey shaping its future with AI, considering innovation, ethics, and cultural values?

Turkey develops as a major player in the dynamic field of artificial intelligence (AI), managing the challenges of AI development, adoption, and regulation. By means of global cooperation and discourse, we explore the current discussions around artificial intelligence in Turkey, illuminating its distinct obstacles and prospects. Come along as we examine the many facets of AI and consider the parallels and contrasts that characterize Turkey's handling of this game-changing technology.



In Turkey, there is a lot of discussion on the socioeconomic effects of AI, with an emphasis on using it to advance society and the economy. The main topic of conversation is how AI may spur innovation in a variety of fields, including industry, agriculture, healthcare, as well as education. But there's also a realization that programs to reskill and upskill the workforce for modern times are necessary to combat the inequality and possible loss of jobs brought about by AI technology.

Turkey's varied socioeconomic environment and rich cultural legacy have an impact on how AI technologies are seen and adopted. AI integration into Turkish culture is becoming more and more popular in a variety of domains, including entertainment, language processing, and cultural preservation. Turkey's dedication to the harmony of technology and culture is seen in the cautious approach used to guarantee that AI development respects and maintains cultural values, customs, and language diversity.

As Turkey works through the potential and problems presented by AI, it is at the center of innovation and growth in the field. We are able to comprehend Turkey's journey toward using AI for societal improvement on a deeper level thanks to international cooperation and discourse. We open the door to a more equitable and sustainable future where technology acts as a tool for advancement and empowerment by considering the parallels and distinctions that characterize Turkey's approach to AI.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence, mimics human intelligence in machines. It aids daily tasks through virtual assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant. AI-powered recommendation systems personalize suggestions for movies, music, and shopping. In healthcare, it assists in diagnosis and treatment planning by analyzing medical data. Automation driven by AI optimizes processes across industries. However, ethical concerns such as job displacement and data privacy necessitate responsible AI development and usage.

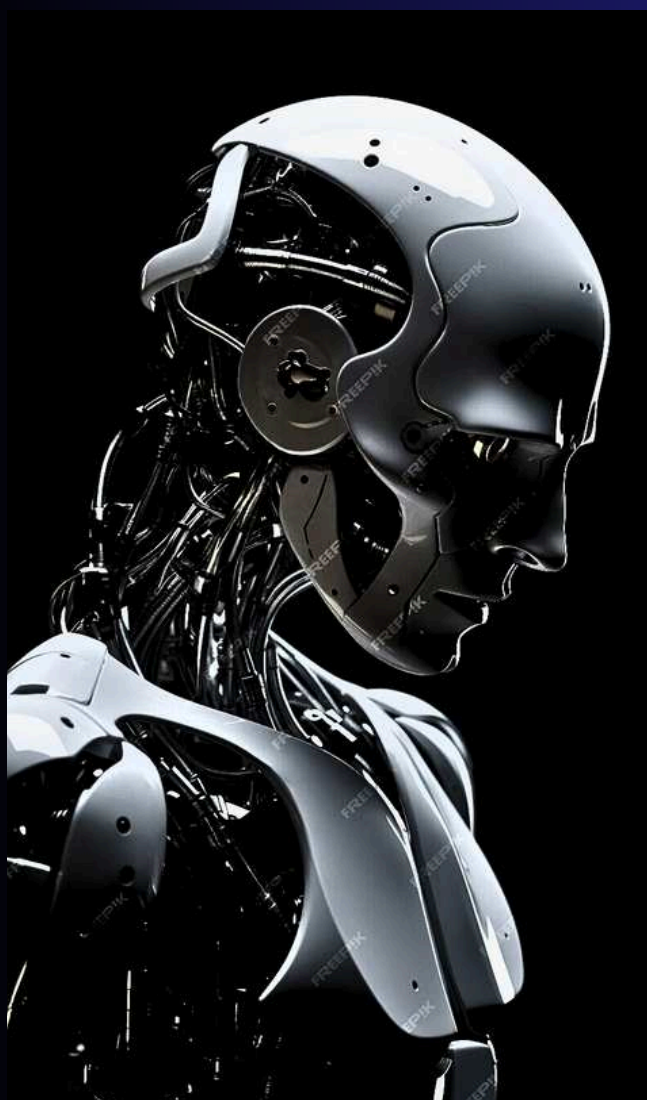


AI has both positive and negative impacts. While virtual assistants and ChatGPT are versatile and helpful, they may not always be effective due to mispronunciations or misunderstandings. On the other hand, AI can streamline processes and improve efficiency. However, if it is misused or falls into the wrong hands, it can pose significant dangers, such as data privacy issues, algorithmic bias, and security vulnerabilities. Therefore, it is essential to approach AI with caution and prioritize ethical considerations to ensure that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

There is a continuing debate among researchers and philosophers regarding the possibility of true artificial consciousness and its implications. While some believe that self-aware AI could lead to unprecedented advancements, others express concerns about ethical and existential implications, including questions of control, autonomy, and the nature of consciousness itself.

In the future, AI holds great potential in various fields. It can enhance diagnostics, treatment, and personalized medicine, which can improve healthcare outcomes. Additionally, AI can enable innovative art creation, offering endless possibilities in visual art, music, literature, and more.

We share many opinions with our Turkish colleagues, except their negative attitude towards Artificial Intelligence. They don't recommend their students to use it and almost treat it as banned.



International News

FAKE NEWS



Fake News in Slovakia and Turkey

Fake news has become a prevalent issue in today's society, as the spread of misinformation can have dangerous consequences. This problem is not isolated to one country, as fake news is a global phenomenon. In Slovakia, fake news has been a significant problem, with several instances of false information being spread online and through traditional media outlets. Similarly, Turkey has also faced challenges with fake news, as individuals and organizations have used misinformation to manipulate public opinion and influence political outcomes.

In Slovakia, fake news has been used to target politicians, institutions, and minority groups. There have been cases where false information has been spread to smear the reputation of political figures or to incite hatred towards certain communities. Social media platforms and online news websites have been used to spread these fake stories, reaching a wide audience and causing confusion and division among the public. The lack of regulation and oversight in the Slovak media landscape has contributed to the proliferation of fake news, making it difficult for individuals to discern fact from fiction.

In Turkey, fake news has been used as a tool for censorship and propaganda. The government has been known to suppress information and manipulate news stories to control the narrative and silence dissenting voices. State-controlled media outlets have been used to spread fake news and misinformation, creating a false reality that serves the interests of those in power. Social media platforms have also been manipulated to spread fake news, with fake accounts and bots being used to amplify certain narratives and discredit opposing views.

International News

FAKE NEWS

Fake News in Slovakia and Turkey

Despite the differences in the ways fake news is used in Slovakia and Turkey, the consequences are similarly damaging. Fake news erodes trust in the media and undermines the democratic process, as individuals are less likely to believe the information they receive and make informed decisions. It also has the potential to incite violence and perpetuate hate speech, as false information can inflame tensions and deepen divisions within society. Both countries must address the issue of fake news through education, regulation, and media literacy initiatives to combat the spread of misinformation and protect the integrity of their democratic systems.

In conclusion, fake news is a global problem that affects countries like Slovakia and Turkey in different ways. While the methods and motivations behind fake news may vary, the impact is the same – the erosion of trust, the manipulation of public opinion, and the threat to democracy. It is essential for individuals to be critical consumers of information and for governments to take proactive measures to combat fake news and ensure the integrity of their media landscapes. Only by working together can we combat the spread of fake news and uphold the values of truth and transparency in our societies.



Daily News

THE ANATOMY

OF FAKE NEWS AND DISINFORMATION



In today's interconnected world, social media platforms have become a double-edged sword, providing instant access to information but also paving the way for the troubling spread of fake news and disinformation. Since social media is accessible, these troubles can easily come into people's lives and they have become one of the most common troubles. Fake news refers to intentionally made-up or distorted information meant to deceive the reader, while disinformation is false or inaccurate information spread intentionally.

Numerous factors contribute to the spread of fake news and disinformation. For instance, people often encounter fake news and disinformation through TV series, articles they read, their environment, and through social media, which is the fastest method for disseminating fake news and disinformation.

In addition to the cruciality of how fake news

and disinformation are spread, it is also essential to highlight the significance of the reasons for spreading them. Some of the reasons include creating confusion among people, manipulating them, and serving malicious purposes. The most substantial reason behind creating fake news is the intention to harm an institution or individual

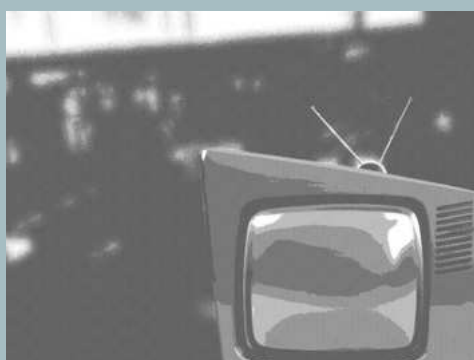
and to gain financial profit.

Nonetheless, many times it is spread just because people are unaware that it is fake news. To illustrate, a bearded baby

was once born in Turkey and it said: 'On the second day of the holiday, the doomsday will



start.' The so-called news created a big deal in Turkey. Since the first day it was published, it has passed into the history of journalism as an example of fake news. Another example is about the bears in Slovakia. An article was published that lots of tourists cancel their bookings in hotels because of the large amount of bears. However, only a few tourists cancelled their bookings, but the headline of the article was so shocking and sounded like it is a huge problem for the Slovak tourism. Later, it turned out it was only another misleading and exaggerated fake news to confuse people.



Fake news and disinformation definitely have a negative impact on society.

Most people fall into a cycle of sharing posts, one by another, not checking if the news is believable or not, they just want to be active on social media. Therefore, society should be informed about how to distinguish fake news from real ones. Firstly, we should think about whether it is

a fact, opinion or something else. Then we should consider how credible it is, what the sources are or what ideas are conveyed. Furthermore, we should compare the sources and check if the information is the same on different sites. People should think critically when it comes to detecting fake news. The title of an article often includes certain words to shock people, arouse curiosity, create awe, or mislead them. As a result, these types of articles can serve as a warning against fake news and we should approach them with caution. In Slovakia, the fake news are mostly about politics, but in Turkey, they are mostly about holy things. In both countries, there is a high rate of conspiracy theories, though young people are more prone to do research about news than older people. In addition, disinformation can influence the society by ruining someone's career or relationships, it can affect one's mindset and critical thinking and push society into making wrong decisions.

After all, if we want to access real information instead of blindly believing every information we hear or see, we should have a sense of curiosity and research the information we confront. In this way, people can become more conscious than in the past and hopefully, the spread of fake news and disinformation will decrease.



across generations

Digital habits

We primarily focused on the differences in digital habits between Slovakia and Turkey. We did not find many differences because the generation gaps or differences are quite similar worldwide. Following that we realized that all generations can learn something from each other and we decided to picture it in a fun way with a comics.



digital habits across generations

Our research shows that younger people in Turkey tend to favor more visual and video centered platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok, while older age groups are more active on text based platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook.

When it comes to e-commerce, apps like "Trendyol", "Hepsiburada", "n11", "dulab", and "sahibinden" are the most used in Turkey, to the point where some of these apps are now branching to new countries. And although most of the apps in Turkey sell brand new products, "dulab" and "sahibinden" are an exception since anyone can sell new or old stuff on these apps.

The usage of social media in Turkey declines gradually with age, with less than 40% of those 55 and older actively using social media. These trends are similar to social media adoption patterns seen in many other countries, where younger generations have grown up with these technologies and incorporated them more into their daily lives, compared to older age groups.

The integration of technology into Turkey's education system has been a growing focus in recent years. One of the main things affected is the digitalization of curriculum and content. Many textbooks and educational materials are being digitized and made available through online portals and learning management systems.

DIGITAL HABITS ACROSS GENERATIONS

YouTube.com/watch

Search

Slovaks can be sorted into two categories. The ones that use traditional outlets such as paper news, magazines, catalogues etc. And the other ones that prefer digital platforms such as Facebook (typically older generations), Instagram or as it quite efficient but expensive, online news (Nový Čas, Noviny.sk, SME.sk, Topky.sk, etc.). It is also popular to watch news on TV which is on many programmes different (JOJ, Markíza, TV program, etc.)

How do Slovaks typically consume news and media through traditional outlets or digital platforms?

TOP CHAT

What are the primary reasons for internet usage among Slovaks?

It is mainly for work and entertainment purposes. It's safe to say that in many cases being entertained is more important than to be informed. Which leads to loads of misinformation and hoaxes spreading around.

ALL TURKEY TAHA B. NEBIL M.

Page 14

4 PIXELS

Your story

4 Pixels Turkey

Oftentimes people living in the big cities have more time on their hands and they are sometimes cramped in their flats. I believe that this can be the reason why city folks spend more time on the internet in comparison to village people. On the other hand, people living in villages may lack entertainment and so they will resort to spending time online. While this is very much individual older people tend to live in the rural areas and they lack technological skills.

2,136 likes

4 Pixels Turkey Are there any significant differences in digital habits between urban and rural areas in Slovakia?

View all 61 comments

twitch

Indicator Bars Round Webcam Video Webcam Video Places Screen Media Links 2400 - 1350 px Video Overlay

4 PIXELS

LIVE CHAT

Lets Play

What are the trends in online gaming and streaming services usage in Slovakia?

As it goes for other countries, Twitch, YouTube, Instagram or even TikTok are used as streaming platforms.

TOP THIS MONTH

TOP TOWN

How concerned are Slovaks about online privacy and data security?

Slovaks are taught in schools (mostly in primary schools) about online privacy and data security. Understanding that younger generations have a wider awareness about the dangers of the internet and older generations have it opposite. They struggle often and succumb to online scams leading to stolen data. While some people are aware that their information are being collected and they don't care some people go to the extreme and are afraid of it. Those are usually the older generations who don't have enough information about the subject.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media plays a great role in people's lives in Turkey. To illustrate, it is majorly used for keeping in touch with friends, especially in long-distance friendships. It is a terrific way to have fun with the people that are thousands of kilometers away, whether via texting or face timing.



Being an instrument to get information about the world and countrywide news is another substantial role that social media play in Turkey. People use social media platforms such as "Twitter" known as "X" right now and "Instagram" to get instant news as it is much faster to spread information on apps instead of the traditional way, Tv.

Another huge impact of social media on our lives is that the increasing number of influencers, especially, the ones that have bad reputation in public or have harmful effects on people and teenagers. With more screen time on social media, the users start to chase ways to make money or get a chance to have fame. In Turkey, this situation is getting out of control because of its usage by wrong audience and unconsciousness. Thus, recently in Turkey the government has started to take some influencers in charge with their properties. Such notorious people can lead the public in a bad way and upcoming effects would be inevitable with the abuse of social media.

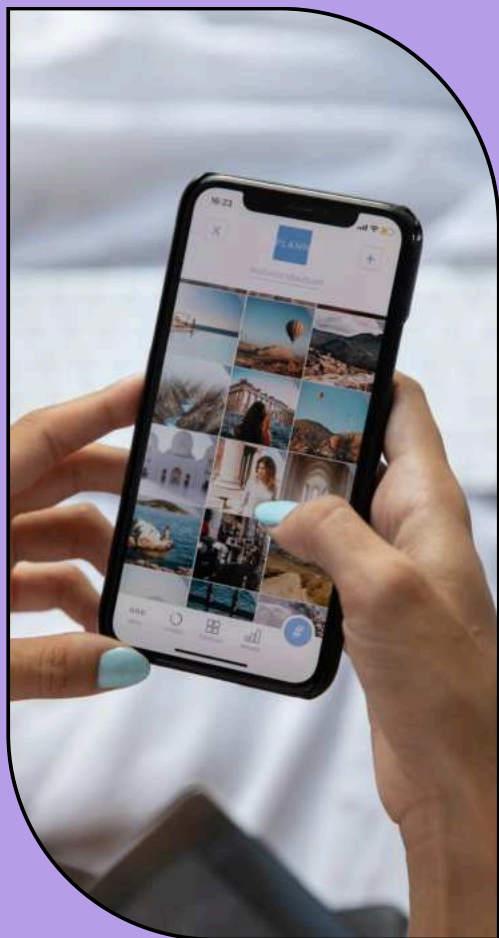
The most popular social media app in Turkey is the "X" which was known as "Twitter" around the world before its new name. People in Turkey are usually using "X" as a tool to get information about the world and countrywide news. The reason is that there can be delusional or misleading news programs on TV. Most of them are not fully reflecting the truth to people when they need accurate information, whether it causes sadness or happiness. People are inclined to use "X" mostly because of the lack of accurate news in Turkey.

In total, there are over 68.5 million social media users in Turkey. This is an excessive number when we take into account other countries' numbers of users.



SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND IMPACT

(GOOD SERVANT, BAD RULER?)



Life without social media and the internet. Who can imagine that? It is by far the best procrastination tool ever made. Tik-Tok or Instagram are classics. We use them mostly for fun, as a source of motivation, information and news, and also as a distraction. But what about the people to whom these social media represent their paychecks, their work? The so-called influencers.

In the past years, mostly during COVID, social media usage has increased by about 20%. Here in Slovakia, the number of active social media users is 4.81 million (this base is estimated to reach 5.14 million users in 2029). With this fact, the role of influencers has increased too, mostly among young people around 16 to 25 years old, but aside from this more "mature" age category, children from middle schools started to dream about a career of an influencer or a YouTuber. However, their grandparents do not see eye to eye about this "passion" of theirs. The elders here in Slovakia, as well as in Turkey and maybe in other states too, don't take the job of an influencer very seriously. Most of them are only concerned about some scandalous pictures of their neighbors and recipes found on Facebook, which is, by the way, the most used social media in Slovakia. More than 80% of Slovaks use Facebook.



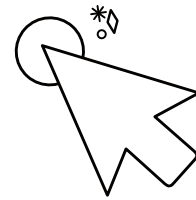
Next in line is Instagram, used mostly by younger generations. But older people, who cannot always tell a friend about a threat and believe in almost everything they see online can be mislead to some unpleasant experiences and troubles. But how can we control their "green time" when everything and everyone around us is connected to the internet?

Maybe instead of texting and raising children through social media we should spend time together and learn from each other...That would be an experience!





THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OUR LIVES



"The impact of social media on our lives" - In this issue, we delve into a topic that is both ubiquitous and timely - the impact of social media on our lives. Social media has become an integral part of modern society, influencing nearly every aspect of our existence. In this article, we explore how social media is reshaping the way we communicate, perceive ourselves, and engage with information and entertainment online. We hope that this exploration of such a compelling topic will provide you with new insights and perspectives. Happy reading!

FIRST OF ALL, LET US INTRODUCE SOME SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SLOVAK AND TURKISH SOCIAL MEDIA

We share high possibility of addiction and we are more likely to compare ourselves too. The content we see on social media is also mainly the same: educational videos, articles, sketches and parodies, gameplays, fashion and make-up content...

What differs between us is that in Turkey, social media is seen as an easy way to make money and being an influencer is quite common. Another significance for Turkish social media is an extreme lynching culture. On the other hand, in Slovakia, being content creator and becoming popular is kind of rare. Slovak social media are typical for being used to spread disinformation and hoaxes.

AN INTERVIEW WITH LENKA MARCINOVÁ AND MARGARÉTA FLAJŽÍKOVÁ



How has social media changed the way we communicate with each other?

Lenka: Social networks offer rapid communication, altering traditional face-to-face interactions. With the rise of long-distance communication, responses are received quickly, but this shift has led to reduced socialization and anonymity, sometimes resulting in online conflict. I often prefer in-person meetings for genuine interaction and the ability to perceive non-verbal cues beyond the screen.

What are the psychological effects of excessive social media use?

Margaret: Well, there are many studies indicating that excessive use of social media can cause isolation of individuals, sense of loneliness and can eventually cause depression. I would say that more people in Slovakia lack real social contact than it was years ago, therefore feel more insecure in their relationships or do not have sense of belonging...

In what ways has social media influenced our perceptions of self-image and body image?

Lenka: Nowadays, many young women compare themselves to online models or individuals. Isn't it odd? Every person is beautiful, yet it's common to see distressed girls. Why? It's about body image! Social networks inundate us with images dictating ideal proportions — slim, tall, toned, devoid of any fat. Consider this — Anorexia or bulimia? Nothing out of the ordinary, all for a photo on social media, often edited. Embrace yourself, prioritize health!

How has social media affected interpersonal relationships and friendships?

Margaret: I believe, that depends on the person... Social media enables people to communicate wherever in the world they are. This is beneficial and *can* strengthen the relationship. However, there are people who chat online with each other even when they are *in the same room*. To my mind, this is more damaging for the relationship than it is advantageous.



What role does social media play in shaping public opinion and discourse?

Lenka: This question made me think about the prevalence of hoaxes on social media. While platforms offer rapid information dissemination, it's not always accurate. This usually leads to the spread of hateful attitudes or intentional misinformation aimed at harming others. Such falsehoods influence societal attitudes. Therefore, it's crucial to verify information before forming opinions and making judgments.

How has social media altered the dynamics of activism and social movements?

Margaret: Thanks to the wide use social media, internet is commonplace where different movements take place. It also helps to spread awareness about upcoming events and activism events faster than we were used to. In Slovakia, it often helps to promote political debates and protests.

What are the implications of social media on mental health, particularly among younger generations?

Lenka: This is an interesting question. Fortunately, mental health is something that has recently come to the fore. In my opinion, social networks are the factor that dramatically affects mental health in general, but especially the urban health of teenagers and the younger generation. We often encounter depression, bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa, insomnia, irritability, hypersensitivity and other ailments that can easily turn into physical ailments.

How has social media changed the way we consume news and information?

Margaret: I would say before social media, TV news and newspapers were more *objective and trustworthy sources*. Because of that, we still have tendency to believe what we see on social media as well, without fact-checking it first. This very often leads to spreading misinformation, hoaxes and information people only *assume* are true.





AN INTERVIEW WITH ENNUR KAYMAN
AND SELIN ASLAN



How much time does an average person in Turkey spend on the internet?

Ennur: On average, a person in Turkey uses the internet for around 6-7 hours per day.

What do you think motivates people to spend time on social media / Why do people become addicted?

Selin: What encourages people to spend time on social media in Turkey is the feeling of being liked and admired. In addition, it takes a lot of time since it is used as a communication tool. / People become addicted to social media because hanging out on the internet is most used as a free time activity, and after using social media for a certain period of time, the desire to constantly share what they are doing and to show it to the people increases.



Does the government regulate the social media in any way?

Ennur: Yes, the government is making some necessary regulations on social media, such as removing and banning violent or inappropriate content, ensuring that only people over a certain age are allowed to use social media, and having age restrictions on some content.

Have you ever been a victim or do you know someone who was a victim of cyberbullying?

Selin: I have never been cyberbullied, but there are people we see on the news and we know personally who are being bullied and made fun of for the content they share on social media, and this can even drive some people to commit suicide.

Why do you think influencers have become so popular?

Ennur: Due to people's increasing addiction to social media and the internet, it is becoming easier for influencers on social platforms to gain fame, and they become even more popular by beautifying products that people want to buy and producing the desired content.



Have you ever heard about people hurting themselves because of social media? If so, how did you feel about it?

Ennur: Yes, there are many people who harm themselves because of social media. These people are usually younger and are more affected by the comments or reactions they receive. They can harm themselves both physically and psychologically. This issue is truly heartbreaking, I think social media should be completely transformed into a place where people can support each other and the government should also try to achieve this.

Would you consider absolute cancellation of social media networks? In what way would it change your life?

Selin: I do not find it right to completely cancel social media. Although there is bullying or abuse, there is also a lot of informative content. It is also a great tool for having fun when used in moderation. Complete cancellation of social media would change everyone's lives, phone addictions would probably be greatly reduced, but I still think the solution is not the complete cancellation of social media.

Have you ever bought something because you saw it in an advertisement of your favourite influencer?

Ennur: Yes, I am really impressed by the advertisements on social media. Unfortunately I have made many unnecessary purchases in the past because of this. I especially admire the advertisements of my favorite influencers. Even though I know they are promoting for money, it is still very difficult to suppress that desire to buy something.

Do you think that working on social media would be fulfilling for you? Why yes / no?

Selin: Frankly, working on social media would not be very satisfying for me, because I do not see it as a real job. I think working only for social media is a bit risky, because one cannot know what tomorrow will bring and unemployment may arise in the case that social media platforms are stopped being used.

Do you think influencers can be closer to kids / teenagers than their family?

Selin: It is not normal for me to equate my family with an influencer I know online. But children who have bad family relationships, therefore are introverts and spend too much time on social media may feel closer and relate to the influencers they like.





ENVIRONMENT

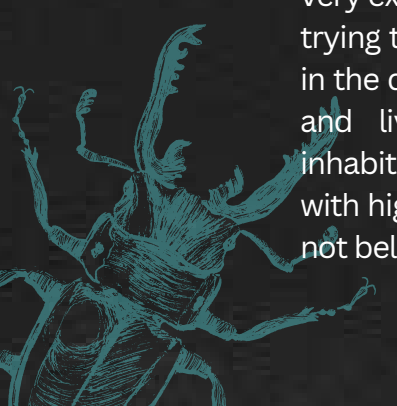
AND WAYS OF PROTECTING IT

Our expectations before taking part in this common project were high, and we hoped to meet just the right team members who would be happy to contribute to the project in order to finalize it and present it in all its glory. Weeks of hard work and close cooperation between all the members, who were open to different ideas of high quality and practical viewpoints, were really beneficial, and thanks to this we were able to merge different parts of our tasks into our final project, which would be presented as follows.

What is the environment and how do we perceive it? While the majority of people would claim that it's simply the vast greenery that surrounds us, it's really the main aspect that shapes our world, making sure that we as humanity keep careering forward instead of falling behind, it's something that determines our overall existence, source of life and energy we possess. Without it, we would be lost and unable to walk these lands, often labeled as home, something that gives our life a meaning and sets a pace of rumination itself. It is absolutely necessary for us to protect it with all our might in order to preserve its original state, its unadulterated and varied beauty.

It is in our innate nature to take and take in order to reach a certain level of opulence, which makes us blind to our callous, downright abominable deeds, which interfere with the coded balance of nature, resulting in the uncontrolled destruction of the planet itself. The Earth is trying to defend itself, even if it means wiping out the very existence of humanity, it is desperately trying to tune in to the original stability, like in the days when man did not pose a threat and lived in harmony with the other inhabitants of nature, behaving and acting with high spirits instead of taking what does not belong to us alone in quantities.

Despite the alarming fact of our mortality and exhaustible lifespan, the majority of our population remains stoic and oblivious to the alarming consequences of our actions that are about to crash down upon us, the price we will pay dearly for the abuse of the life we've been given. Our intention behind this message was not to condemn all of humanity for our crimes, but rather to give you a broader insight into what could possibly go wrong in the near future. Is this deteriorated state of the once immaculate world really the gift we want to pass on to future generations to deal with, perhaps to fix our mistakes instead of us and deal with the following consequences? And that is exactly why we should step into consciousness and finally act, instead of remaining dormant observers, waiting for some form of salvation that will correct our mistakes for us, because that scenario is not going to happen in the near future, not until we finally reach the state of opening our minds and grasping the situation at hand, with the intention of changing our world in a positive light. Fortunately, there is no shortage of environmentally minded people who are determined to eradicate the effects of our exploitative approach to the face of the earth and its inhabitants. The existence of various environmental organizations and policies is also one of the essential steps we should take to ensure proper protection of the environment and regulate further deterioration. What is their purpose, you may ask. Well, they aim to promote sustainable practices and strive to reduce the effects of climate change and pollution. They also work to raise awareness of climate issues and provide information and resources to help people reduce their environmental footprint.



SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD

1. World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - The WWF is the world's largest conservation organization, working to protect wildlife and their habitats. They have headquarters in over 100 countries and partner with governments, businesses, and communities to save biodiversity and combat climate change.

2. Greenpeace International - GI is a grassroots environmental organization which works to protect the planet and its ecosystems. They have volunteers in 70 countries around the world, campaigning to protect the environment and promote sustainable practices.

3. The Nature Conservancy (TNC)- TNC is an international non-profit environmental organization dedicated to conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. They are a global leader in protecting land and water, saving species at risk, and working with communities around the world to find solutions to environmental challenges.

4. Conservation International (CI) - CI is a global environmental organization dedicated to maintaining the diversity of life on Earth. They work in over 50 countries to help protect important ecosystems, preserve natural resources, and promote sustainable development.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY STRATEGIES TROUGH WHITCH OUR COUNTRIES PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

So, during our interaction within the project that we have created through the equal cooperation of all group members, we have come to the conclusion that no matter the cultural, distance or background differences between both of our countries, it is safe to assume that both, Slovak and Turkish

residents are striving to contribute positively to the protection of the environment, because during our recent interactions within the group while simultaneously performing the tasks revolving around the environment, we came to realize that directly the mutual differences do not overlap with the established intentions that we all share, regarding the environment. So, to give some of the most prominent examples to prove the core idea of our beliefs, we must say that thanks to deeper discussions among the group members, we have gained a certain understanding that the Turkish and Slovak people are both working to protect the environment.

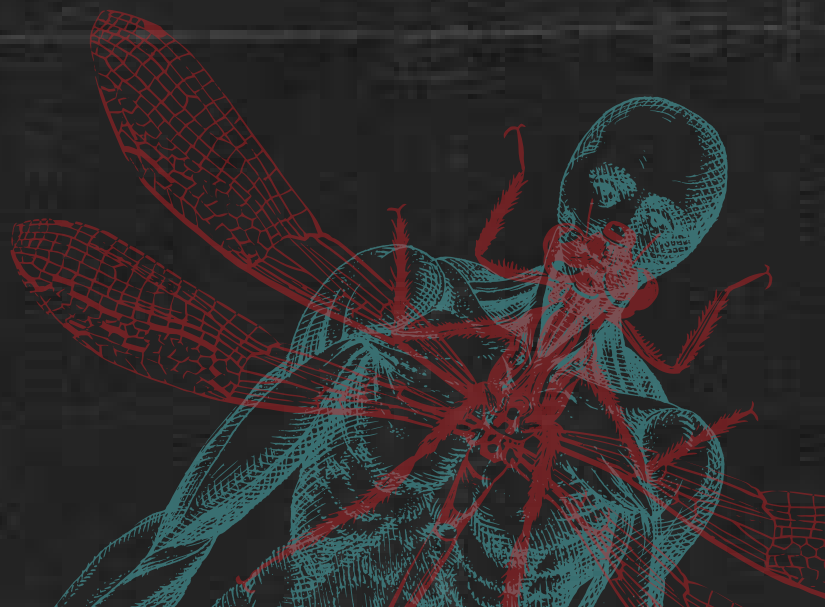
WAYS IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS CAN HELP PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Turkish people can help the environment by reducing energy consumption, buying eco-friendly products, using renewable energy sources, and practicing sustainable consumption habits.

2. Slovak people can help the environment by reducing waste, recycling, using energy-efficient technologies, adopting green transportation, and supporting environmental activism.

3. Planting trees and planting more green spaces to help reduce carbon emissions and clean the air.

4. Using products made from recycled materials to reduce waste.



ENVIRONMENT

IN SLOVAKIA

22

The environment of Slovakia is extremely beautiful and diverse. Situated in the center of Europe, Slovakia contains deep forests, mountain ranges, and vast plains. In terms of the geography of Slovakia, it is mostly hilly, stemming from being deep in the mainland, and the mountain formations surrounding us. However, there are also places in Slovakia where the presence of hills and mountains is not so prominent, and where the flat plains take over, such as the southwest and southeast. There are many rivers and lakes in our country, forming beautiful reservoirs of nature, which are often protected. Due to this, the variety of Fauna and Flora is excellent, as well. In terms of our forests alone, 44.3% of Slovakia is covered by them. A number that is currently dwindling due to deforestation.

Slovakia has 9 national parks, and 15 more landscape parks, spanning a total of 37.59% of Slovakia that is protected. Turkey also has its share of protected areas, but they cover only 7% of their landscape. One way how we can protect our environment is by recycling. Slovakia recycles around 30% of its trash, while Turkey recycles around 12%. In terms of global warming and atmospheric pollution, only around 23% of Slovakia's energy production comes from renewable sources, while Turkey uses around 35%



An image of one of the many rolling hills in our country occupied mostly by pine forests. This type of landscape is found closer to the mountainous areas, with areas above 150 meters taking up around 50% of our country's topography



An image of one of the flat plains of Slovakia, commonly used for agriculture.

About 49% of our soil is fit for agriculture, and our plains alone take up around 22.4% of Slovakia's area.

The environment of Turkey is extremely beautiful and diverse. Situated between Europe and Asia, Turkey is a bridge between continents. It contains a tremendous amount of beaches on north, west and south sides, sumptuous and endless mountains on the east side, and vast plains in central regions. In terms of geography, it has every kind of geographical variety. There are many rivers and lakes in our country, especially in the eastern region, there are the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which are the heart of Mesopotamia. In addition, Turkey has Istanbul, which played a huge role in our history, Çanakkale, where the legend of Troy took place, Izmir, which hosted many important philosophers, and the eastern region, which witnessed many battles, from Alexander the Great's to Genghis Khan's, and where you find many castles.

Turkey has 49 national parks, and 19 special environmental protection areas, which cover only 7% of our landscape, the percentage is low because Turkey has a huge landscape compared to Slovakia. There are a total of 17 heritage sites recognized by UNESCO in Turkey, 15 of which are cultural and 2 are mixed. The recycling rate of treated garbage varies greatly from country to country. According to 2020 data, 39.9 percent of the waste treated in the EU is recycled. The recycling rate in Turkey is 31.2 percent. In terms of global warming and atmospheric pollution, while the average percentage of renewable energy produced worldwide is 22%, this rate has reached 29% in Turkey. As of the end of 2015, Turkey produced 32.5% of its electricity from renewable energy sources, 25.8% hydroelectric, 4.4% wind, 1.3% geothermal, 0.6% biogas and 0.4% from solar energy.

Since our country has many beaches, one of the most common tree species is palm trees. Especially in Mersin, where our University is located, almost whole town is full of palm trees. Additionally, a large part of our country, especially the eastern part, is incredibly mountainous. And it is home to many mountain ranges and mountains such as Taurus Mountains, Northern Anatolia Mountains, Munzur Mountains, Mount Erciyes, an excellent ski resort, and the mighty Mount Ararat.



Endangered life on EARTH

Welcome to our **interview** on "Endangered life on Earth". Join us as we explore the challenges, causes, and solutions surrounding this critical issue. With *two pairs of interviewers* from the **Slovak** and **Turkish** sides, we'll delve into the urgent need for conservation efforts. Let's begin our journey to understand and address the threats to **life on our planet**.



What do you think about the global cleaning of the planet? Is it worth it? Will it make a difference?

The global cleaning of the planet is essential for sustainable life on Earth. If countries obey the treaties they signed such as The Paris Agreement, it will make a difference.

Have you ever experienced anything related to natural disasters in your country (Turkey)?

Last year, our country experienced an enormous earthquake. Although the city we live in was not directly affected, we still felt the shock.



What are some of the ways in which human activities, such as deforestation and urbanization, can exacerbate the impact of natural disasters on ecosystems and wildlife?

First of all, deforestation in mountainous regions removes trees and vegetation that act as natural barriers against landslides, soil erosion and floods. Without these barriers natural disasters become more severe, often resulting in destroying wildlife habitats and harming ecosystems. Secondly, urbanization can lead to water pollution, affecting freshwater ecosystems and the species in it. Also, polluted waters are less resilient to floods and droughts, further impacting the ecosystems.

How do natural disasters impact the balance of life on Earth, both in terms of human populations and ecosystems?

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, volcano eruptions and tornadoes can have profound effects on both human populations and ecosystems. They impact human populations through loss of life, displacement, infrastructure damage, and economic losses. Ecosystems suffer habitat destruction, species extinction, water quality issues, and soil erosion.



Recycle, Reuse, Reduce

Do you think that the Earth still has a hope of improving the environment or slowing down the human impact on the planet in the future? Or is our planet headed for doom?

With the help of developing technology, we can solve environmental problems such as renewable energy, waste management, water conservation, and carbon emissions. So yes, there is still hope.

What are the main causes of species endangerment and their impact on biodiversity?

Species endangerment is primarily caused by habitat loss, pollution, climate change, overexploitation, invasive species, disease, and human activities. These factors collectively degrade ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and threaten the survival of numerous species worldwide.

Why is it important to preserve endangered species for ecosystems and human well-being?

Preserving endangered species is vital for ecosystem balance, as they contribute to essential services like pollination and nutrient cycling. Their conservation safeguards biodiversity, which supports human well-being, agriculture, and economic stability, while also preserving potential future resources for medicine and other needs.



There is no planet B



How does human activity like deforestation worsen natural disasters for ecosystems and wildlife in Slovakia?

Deforestation in Slovakia exacerbates natural disasters by reducing the natural protective barriers against flooding and landslides. Without the stabilizing effect of trees and vegetation, ecosystems become more vulnerable to extreme weather events, leading to habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, and heightened risks for wildlife populations.



Do you know who the climate activists are? What do they do? What are they trying to achieve?

Climate activists are individuals or groups who advocate for action to address climate change and its associated impacts. They engage in various activities such as protests, lobbying, education, and awareness campaigns to raise public and government attention to the urgency of the climate crisis. They aim to achieve goals such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to renewable energy sources, promoting sustainable practices, and advocating for policies that prioritize environmental protection and climate justice.

How can global collaboration and policies help conserve endangered species, and what are the obstacles?

Global collaboration and policies can aid endangered species conservation by fostering coordinated efforts and sharing resources. However, obstacles like political differences, funding constraints, and conflicting interests among stakeholders can impede the effective implementation of conservation measures.



ENDANGERED LIFE IN SLOVAKIA & TURKEY



Life faces an array of threats that jeopardize its very essence. From the smallest microorganisms to the majestic creatures of the wild, every species contributes to the delicate balance of our planet. However, this balance is increasingly under siege due to various natural or human-induced factors in various parts of the world, unfortunately Turkey and Slovakia are no exceptions to this. Some of those factors are:

Habitat Destruction

By Umut K.

One of the most significant problems in Turkey today is the destruction of forests. People are cutting down trees for reasons such as building construction, obtaining wood, and opening up farmland. Various factors like having barbecues and making fires in forests are also causing the habitats of many species to gradually disappear. Additionally, Turkey is a rapidly growing country in terms of population, leading to the expansion of cities. As cities expand, there is less space left for animals and natural habitats.

Pollution

By Mário B.

Pollution in its various forms, including air, water, and soil pollution, poses a significant risk to life.

Chemical pollutants, plastic waste, heavy metals, and agricultural runoff contaminate environments, poisoning wildlife and disrupting ecosystems.

In 2019 Slovakia was ranked as the 40th most polluted country in the world, with a moderate score of 18.50 points.

Yet the country has the 10th worst air quality in Europe, according to a report which was published on the topic. U.S. Steel Košice is the largest steel producer in central Europe, situated close to the village of Veľká Ida, near Košice. The village was also revealed as the most polluted village in Slovakia in 2018.

However, in the last five years, Slovak Republic has reduced some environmental pressures and over the past decade the country has taken important steps to improve its biodiversity policy.

Overexploitation

By Marcus K.

Overexploitation in Slovakia presents a concerning narrative of resource depletion and ecological imbalance. The nation's rich natural landscapes, encompassing dense forests, sprawling meadows, and picturesque mountains, have long been subjected to various forms of exploitation, often driven by economic incentives. Forests, vital for biodiversity and carbon sequestration, face threats from excessive logging, leading to habitat destruction and soil erosion. Similarly, overfishing in Slovakia's rivers and lakes jeopardizes aquatic ecosystems, disrupting delicate food chains and endangering species. Agricultural practices, while crucial for sustenance, can degrade soil quality and compromise long-term agricultural productivity if not managed sustainably. Moreover, urbanization and industrialization exert pressure on land resources, exacerbating pollution and encroaching upon vital habitats. Addressing overexploitation demands a multifaceted approach, including stringent regulations, community engagement, and sustainable development strategies, to safeguard Slovakia's natural heritage for future generations.

Biodiversity Loss

By Onur A.

Biodiversity in Turkey has always been vast and beautiful as Anatolia is a paradise for all kinds of animals and species. However, this situation seems to be changing. Due to the irreversible impact they cause, dams take the first spot when it comes to damaging biodiversity as a result of the water policies of Turkey. Due to these policies, several rivers, wetlands, and grasslands have disappeared, taking the biodiversity in those areas with them. In addition, mining operations, tourism, and urbanization are also some large factors that drive species out of their homes where they can't live comfortably and for long. The issues caused by the conflict of interest between these sectors and conservation policies should never be overlooked.

Conclusion

By Marián M.

Even though humanity has evolved significantly throughout centuries, we still are not able to learn from our mistakes. The irresponsible usage of natural resources will create giant problems for us and the next generations that will never be able to repay the natural debt. Even now, the problems have grown so much that the present earth differs from the one a few decades ago. The pollution, deforestation, decrease of animal habitats, urbanization, even war conflicts had a massive impact on how earth differentiates from the time when our grandparents were young. But maybe the hope is not yet lost for us. If humanity as whole can combine its strength and willpower, if we can change our consumerist lifestyle and provide nature some help, that it urgently needs, we could save ourselves from destruction. It would take many years and lots of work to accomplish this goal. But the struggle would be worth it in the end.



CULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Michal (SK)

Our group meetings helped us to become familiar with a lot of aspects in both of our cultures. What are the two most different cultural phenomena that distinguish your culture from Slovak?

Serkan (TR)

Food and weddings. We were surprised that your weddings last just for a couple of hours. Another thing were the castles on the top of the hills. Most of our castles have their foundations on the water. When it comes to food, our cuisines differ in these areas: our traditional foods contain meat more often, and our deserts are more sugary.

Nina (SK)

Speaking of food, could you recommend 3 dishes every visitor should try?

Serkan (TR)

Yes, for sure! I would recommend "Lahmacun", "Adana kebab", "Antakya döner" and for deserts "Baklava" and "Künefe."

Michal (SK)

During online meetings of our group, we were talking about some traditions that are typical for both of our cultures. You've mentioned a couple of interesting phenomena that are present in your culture, for example weddings that last 3 days. Could you explain more, why they take that long?

Serkan (TR)

A separate ritual is performed every day, on the first day henna is burned, on the second day money is collected and jewelry is worn, and on the third day, the Halay is played continuously.

Nina (SK)

What would you say was the biggest surprise from our culture?

Serkan and Furkan (TR)

We were pleasantly surprised to learn that most of your country is forest. We also never heard you had such beautiful castles.

Nina (SK)

What are the best places to see the real Turkish culture and what can you do there?

Furkan (TR)

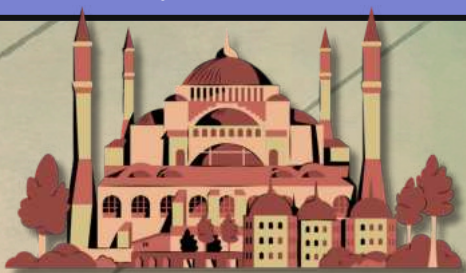
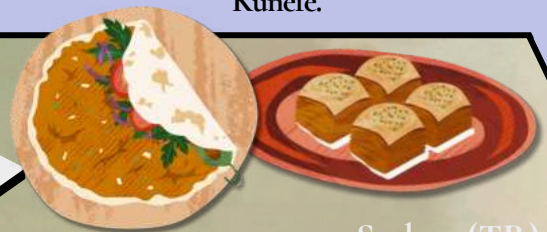
The best place to see Turkish culture is Istanbul, where you can find beautiful sights and delicious food, but it can be expensive too. It's mainly because of the high population in the city which results in higher expenses for people. It's a bridge between Asia and Europe, and because of that it is the capital of tourism.

Nina (SK)

What do you love about your culture the most?

Furkan (TR)

I love our food culture most because when I look at the food of other countries, for example Japan and China, I'm not really used to its taste. I like the taste of our cuisine.



Serkan (TR)

What is the most fundamental part of your culture that distinguishes you from other countries?

Michal (SK)

I would say that it is the architecture. We have many villages with characteristically painted folk houses such as Čičmany or Vlkolínec which we have shown to you during our online meetings. They belong to one of many open-air museums that we have.

Serkan (TR)

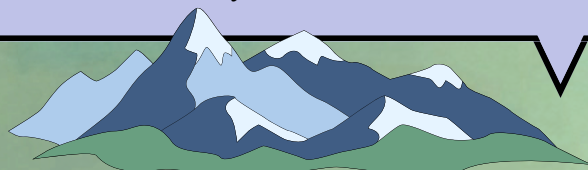
Which cultural feature of Turkey caught your attention the most?

Nina (SK)

I would also say the wedding was pretty big for me and the love you have for cats.

Serkan (TR)

Do you have a food culture that other countries might find different or interesting?



Nina (SK)



Furkan (TR)

Which Slovakian traditions are the most similar to Turkish culture?

Most people from USA, when I spoke to them about our food, were surprised because our cooking is a bit more time consuming and especially the baked goods. So, for them it was very weird to not just order something or just do something quickly.

Nina (SK)



Serkan (TR)

What are the best places to see the real Slovak culture and what can you do there?

I would say the folk traditions, for example we have a folk group called SLUK which presents folk music and folk dances. If I remember correctly, in Turkey, there are some folk dances too, for example one of them is "Zeybek", as you mentioned.

Michal (SK)



Serkan (TR)

Could you think of any 3 dishes every visitor should try?

As it was mentioned earlier, I would recommend everyone to see the architecture of the folk houses in villages and open-air museums. Any places connected to folklore can give the visitor a broader image about our culture. These can be for example shepherd's huts where you can taste typical sheep or goat cheeses and milk. Another thing to keep in mind is our nature. In Slovakia there are plenty of national parks and beautiful mountain ranges to choose from, for example High and Low Tatras, Slovak National Paradise, Little Fatra or Pieniny.

Michal (SK)

You should definitely try "bryndzové halušky" (gnocchi with sheep cheese). They are our national dish. But I understand that this meal may not be to everyone's taste, it's very specific. Therefore I would recommend to try some sweet traditional dishes such as patties with cottage cheese or steam jam-filled dumplings with poppy seeds.

Cultural Similarities and Differences



The students from three different countries have prepared answers to some questions regarding their cultures. Enjoy reading the students' interviews, where they shared their knowledge and opinions of their own countries. We are sure that you will learn something new and interesting.

What is your country's general stance on multicultural society?

Turkey: Turkey is geographically situated between Europe and Asia; it has a large mixture of ethnic groups and religions. Turkey's view of multiculturalism is really complex, and some of the issues stemming from this complex view are ethnicity issues, identity issues, and issues regarding cultural and linguistic rights.

Ukraine: I believe that Ukraine is a good example of a multicultural society since we have many people of different nationalities (Ukrainians, Jews, Crimean Tatars, Hindus, Koreans, Belarusians, and others), and therefore there are many different religions in the country (Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Muslims, pagans, Buddhists), but there also may be atheists.

Slovakia:

I think Slovakia was closed off to other cultures for a long time in the past, but at present, we can see many people coming from different countries and bringing their culture and traditions with them. However, I think Slovakia can still be considered a monocultural society. That being said, there are some minorities in Slovakia, i.e. Hungarian, Rusyn and Romani minorities, whose culture is now being more often showcased on TV, and there is undoubtedly a more extensive awareness of other cultures and traditions among the Slovak population.



How do people express politeness and respect (specific gestures, phrases...)? How do you greet people depending on your relationship with them?

Turkey: People in Turkey use honorifics and formal language markers for older people and those with higher status. Some of our polite expressions include "Teşekkür (Thank you), "Lütfen", which means (Please), and "Rica ederim", meaning (You're welcome).

Ukraine: We usually greet people older than us with the phrase "Good afternoon", but when we greet friends, we usually hug, say "Hello" and we can also wave our hand. Very often, you can see the habit that when people say "thank you", they automatically nod their heads. We address friends with their first names and teachers or strangers with their last names or Mr./Mrs.

Slovakia: We often use honorifics when talking to older people and people of higher status. In the past, kids used honorifics even when talking to their parents and grandparents; now, you don't see people addressing their parents this way. An interesting expression of politeness is probably a slight nod or raise of a hand when crossing the street on a crosswalk, signalling the driver a little "thank you" that he stopped. The most used greeting in Slovakia is probably "Dobrý deň", which means good day, and "Ahoj" or "Čau", which can be used interchangeably as "Hi" or "Bye".

Are there any unique rituals or ceremonies associated with weddings, funerals and other life milestones in your culture?

Turkey: Rituals associated with weddings, funerals, and significant life events mostly depend on the culture of that specific region and also on religious affiliations. One prevalent custom of Turkish weddings is henna night - "kına gecesi." During this time, bride's hands are decorated with henna, which is believed to symbolise fertility, joy, and protection against evil.

Ukraine: There is a tradition on the first birthday of a baby: you need to spread various objects on the blanket (for example, money, jewellery, keys, glasses, a book, cosmetics and a bottle) and then sit next to the child. Whatever he/she chooses - this will be his/her fate. There are usually many traditions at a wedding; for example, first, the groom must pay "ransom" to get his bride, then the bride and groom get married in the church, then the groom's mother must change the bride's veil for a handkerchief. At the end of the wedding, the bride throws her bouquet, and the girl who catches it, will get married soon.

Slovakia: One of the wedding traditions in Slovakia is "čepčenie", which symbolises that the bride is now a married woman. During this ceremony, a crown of flowers on the bride's head is replaced by a traditional folk head cover "čepiec". Many people still practice this tradition during weddings. Another tradition of Slovak weddings is that one person, either from the family or a stranger, will perform the role of an emcee, who will comment on and navigate the wedding festivities lightheartedly and crack jokes about the married couple.

What do you think your country/culture is famous for?

Turkey: Turkey is mainly known for its beautiful nature, which is represented, for example, by the travertine terraces of Pamukkale and historical landmarks like Hagia Sophia. Turkey is also famous for its flavourful dishes, and the tea and coffee culture.

Ukraine: Ukraine is famous for its Carpathian Mountains, Black and Azov seas, diverse cuisine, interesting traditions, and unique culture.

Slovakia: Slovakia is known for its beautiful and preserved nature and a large number of castles. We also have many beautiful caves and amazing sheep cheese - "bryndza," which is surely craved by many Slovaks living abroad.

We all live in different countries that have different traditions and cultures. All cultures are distinct and unique, but we have learned that we are all a bit similar in one way or another. We learned a lot by comparing and exploring our cultures. Even with more differences, we are all people, and we should treat each other as such, with compassion, understanding, and appreciation. Embracing diversity not only enriches our lives but also strengthens our communities. So don't be afraid to explore new cultures. :)

Slovak Traditions



St. Nicholas Day – on 6th of December we have St. Nicholas Day, when a tall man with a long white beard, dressed in red trousers and a red jacket, accompanied by an angel and a devil, goes through the streets and enters houses to give sweets to the kids who were good and punish those who weren't, for example, by giving them onion or garlic instead of sweets.



1st of May – on this day young men in Slovak villages put up a „Maypole“ in front of the houses of the girls they love and want to marry. It is a several meters high tree decorated with colorful ribbons and bows. The boy that builds the tree, takes some of his friends to also sing for the girl. This is a medieval tradition, so is not that popular nowadays.



Easter – on Easter Monday it is tradition for boys to use a ceremonial switch made from willow springs decorated with ribbons to gently whip girls and also pour water on them. It is supposed to give the girls health and beauty for the whole year. In favor, boys receive some money and chocolate eggs. This day is also important for the whole family. The reason is, that women prepare some typical Slovak food and cakes for men that will come over. A part of this tradition is also drinking typical Slovak alcohol.



Fašiangy – Carnival, called Fašiangy, begins on 6th of January and this year ended on 14th of February. People in Slovak villages go from house to house wearing traditional costumes, sing Slovak songs and dance traditional dances. For religious people, who respect and appreciate these traditions, this is followed by fasting, 40 days without eating meat.

Turkish Traditions

Turkey celebrates various cultural and religious festivals throughout the year, each with its own customs and traditions. Events like Eid al-Fitr, Republic Day (October 29th), and Independence Day (March 18th) are marked with parades, concerts, and other festivities, showcasing national pride and unity. Traditional ceremonies, such as weddings and circumcision celebrations, also play significant roles in Turkish culture, often accompanied by music, dancing, and elaborate feasts.



Turkish cuisine is renowned for its variety and flavors, blending influences from Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Balkan, and Central Asian cuisines. Traditional dishes like kebabs, mezes (appetizers), baklava, and Turkish delight are enjoyed both domestically and internationally. Sharing meals with loved ones is a cherished tradition.



Family holds great importance in Turkish culture. Respect for elders, close-knit family ties, and multi-generational living arrangements are common. Family gatherings are frequent, especially during holidays and special occasions, fostering a sense of unity and support.



Turkish hospitality, known as "misafirperverlik," is deeply ingrained in the culture. Guests are treated with great respect and generosity, often offered tea or coffee upon arrival, and served delicious homemade meals. Hospitality is seen as a way of showing kindness and building strong social bonds.

TRADITIONS

Traditions in Slovakia and Turkey are all about the things people do that have been passed down from their ancestors. Let's look at some of these traditions!



In Slovakia, people celebrate holidays like Christmas and Easter with a lot of excitement. Families come together to eat special meals, give each other presents, and decorate their homes. They might eat yummy dishes like cabbage soup, fish with potato salad and wafers with honey.

Every family has its own special traditions too. In Slovakia, some families like to bake pastries or make Christmas decorations together. In Turkey, families might cook special dishes like meatballs or stuffed vegetables and eat them together.

In Turkey, there are also special holidays like Ramadan and Kurban Bayramı. During Ramadan, people fast from sunrise to sunset, and then they have a big meal called "iftar" with their loved ones. During Kurban Bayramı, they share meat with people who need it.



The food in Slovakia and Turkey is really tasty! In Slovakia, people cook dishes like potato dumplings or dumplings with sheep cheese, and in Turkey, people like to eat meatballs and a sweet dessert called baklava.

Weddings, funerals, and religious ceremonies are also important traditions. In Slovakia, people at weddings often sing and dance to traditional folk music, while in Turkey, weddings have special ceremonies like henna night. Funerals in both countries are about remembering loved ones, but they might have different customs.

Overall, traditions in Slovakia and Turkey are about bringing people together, sharing good food, and celebrating important moments in life.

MOVIES

*Ukraine Turkey
Slovakia*



For this project, members of our teams from Ukraine, Slovakia, and Turkey introduced one another to their country's art scene, mainly to their music and movies. We discovered what we have in common, and what is unique in every country.

When it comes to Turkish films, the cinematic landscape is thriving with a blend of cinematic masterpieces and groundbreaking independent productions. You can experience the magic of Turkish cinema through the lens of visionary directors such as Nuri Bilge Ceylan, whose films like "Winter Sleep" have garnered international acclaim, showcasing the depth and complexity of Turkish storytelling.

In Slovakia, films are not made for television, but rather for cinemas. Examples of famous Slovak movies are the fairytale Perinbaba or Obchod na Korze (The Shop on Main Street) which was the first Czechoslovak movie to win an Oscar. However, it's the TV shows that go to TV programs right away. Their main topics can span from relationships between people and themes like family, friendships, and love, to comedies that tend to exaggerate village life in an amusing way.

And in Ukraine, movies like "20 days in Mariupol" ("20 днів у Маріуполі") show contemporary Ukrainian life of people in modern reality. But despite these events Ukrainians like to watch dramas, histories, criminal series, movies and TV shows. Especially, they prefer comedies because this genre is an integral part of their lives.

All three countries depend on talented actors and directors to bring them the best cinematic experiences. Actors play big roles in the movie industry, as their talent often overlaps with other areas. Many actors are also singers or comedians and well respected in their country. The movies themselves can range from mindless comedies, to very important historical documentaries.



MUSIC

*Ukraine Turkey
Slovakia*

Music is something everyone can understand. Often, we don't even need to know the lyrics to feel what a song is about. Music is a way of expressing yourself, which all three countries use masterfully.

The Turkish music scene spans folk, classical, and contemporary genres. Sezen Aksu has a hand in shaping Turkey's cultural identity on both local and global scales. Turkish music has soul-stirring melodies where each note weaves a tale of tradition, passion, and the vibrant cultural tapestry of Turkey. Anatolian folk music is a famous scene of Barış Manço, you can listen to pop from Tarkan, and Ceza for rap and hip hop.

Modern Ukrainian music blends languages, originally Ukrainian with English. We can see it, especially, in Monatik's songs and in his eclectic compositions. While singers like Tina Karol (ukr. Тіна Кароль) fill pop melodies with emotive depth. In contrast, traditional music in Ukraine featuring instruments like the trembita and sopilka creates wonderful songs with Ukrainian literary poems.

Similarly, in Slovakia, the modernization of folklore and national songs using instruments like guitar and violin became especially popular. The group Kandráčovci, and singers like Rabada and Juraj Bača have many beautiful examples of such music. The Slovak music scene is always changing due to the famous TV show SuperStar, which runs annually on TV. While pop songs are the main genre that Slovak musicians lean into, diving into themes of love and relationships, there is a representation of genres such as rock with the band Desmod, and rappers like Rytmus, Kali, and Sima.

For every country, we can sense their cultural expression through music, either in their sound, theme or through using their national instruments. Some genres are popular in all three countries, and others have a bigger following in one specific country, but as always, music is something that can always connect us all.

Slovakia and Turkey, despite their geographical and cultural differences, boast rich and diverse artistic traditions that have captivated audiences worldwide. From fascinating films to soul-stirring music and groundbreaking art, both countries have contributed significantly to the global cultural landscape. In this article, we delve into the worlds of Slovak and Turkish movies, music, and art, exploring their unique characteristics, notable figures, and the fascinating interplay between tradition and modernity.

Slovakia's musical heritage is as diverse as it is rich, encompassing a wide range of genres and styles that reflect the country's cultural tapestry. Traditional folk music holds a special place in Slovak musical tradition, with its haunting melodies and lyrical depth capturing the essence of Slovak identity. Contemporary Slovak musicians, such as Jana Kirschner, Richard Müller, and Peter Lipa, have gained popularity both at home and abroad for their innovative approach to blending traditional folk elements with modern sounds. Their music resonates with audiences, offering a poignant reflection of Slovak society and culture. Nowadays, the most played genre among young people is rap. We have a lot of great rappers, for example Separ, Rytmus, Pil c, Gleb. All of them and even more rappers from Slovakia perform at the biggest hip-hop festival "Hip Hop Žije" (Hip Hop Is Alive). Furthermore, the second most played genre is pop. Lot of singers are winners or participants of music competitions such as SuperStar.

Slovakia's art scene is as vibrant and eclectic as its cinematic and musical counterparts, drawing inspiration from a rich tapestry of influences that span centuries. From medieval frescoes and Gothic sculptures to avant-garde experimentation, Slovak art reflects the country's complex history and diverse cultural heritage. Renowned Slovak artists such as Ľudovít Fulla, Martin Benka, and Mikuláš Galanda have made significant contributions to the country's artistic legacy, creating visually stunning works that capture the imagination and provoke thought. Their art explores themes of identity, nature, and the human condition, offering a window into the soul of Slovakia

Music, movies and art in Slovakia

Slovak cinema has undergone a renaissance in recent years, with filmmakers garnering international acclaim for their thought-provoking storytelling and cinematic prowess. Directors like Juraj Jakubisko, whose films blend surrealism with historical themes, and Martin Šulík, known for his introspective exploration of Slovak identity, have brought Slovak cinema to the global stage. One of the most celebrated Slovak films is "Obchod na korze" (The Shop on Main Street). This poignant portrayal of life under Nazi occupation won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1966, bringing international recognition to Slovak cinema. Nowadays, the most popular Slovak series is "Dunaj, k vašim službám" (Danube, at your service) about the situation in Slovakia during World War II, another very popular is Zrada (Betrayal), Nemocnica (The Hospital), Mama na prenájom (Mother for Rent) which are typical soap operas.

In the realm of music, Turkey's diverse culture is reflected in its vibrant musical traditions which can be traced back to the time Seljuk Turks migrated to Anatolia and Persia in the 11th century, and contains elements of both Turkic and pre-Turkic influences. And even before that, individual instrumentalists were mentioned in the Orhun inscriptions, which are believed to be the oldest written sources of Turkish history, dating back to the 8th century. Folk music or *Türkü*, literally “of the Turk”, generally deals with subjects surrounding daily life and most songs recount stories of real life events.

Over the years, the Turkish music has evolved thanks to the open economy and society supported by Aksu (the Queen of Turkish Pop) and Tarkan promoting pop music. They have achieved legendary status, both in Turkey and abroad, earning accolades for their innovative approach to blending traditional Turkish sounds with modern influences. The development of alternative Turkish rock, hip hop, rap, and electronic music transformed music in Turkey entirely.

Turkey, with its rich cultural heritage spanning centuries, has produced a wealth of cinematic treasures that have left an inerasable mark on the global film industry. Its history often divides into 4 parts: early years, *yeşilçam* era, the new Turkish cinema and contemporary Turkish cinema. Each era is characterized by distinct styles, themes, and influences reflecting the social, cultural, and political context of their representative times. For example, *Yeşilçam* era is considered to be the golden era of the Turkish cinema history, with its films presenting various genres and legendary artists like Kemal Sunal, Türkan Şoray, and Cüneyt Arkın.

Some well-known modern Turkish series are “*Diriliş Ertuğrul*”, “*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*” (historical dramas about the Ottoman Empire) and *Kurtlar Vadisi*. Some of the Turkish modern movies are “*The Butterfly’s Dream*”, “*Climates*”, “*Head-On*”, and “*Ayla: The Daughter of War*”.

Turkish art refers to all works of visual art originating from the geographical area of what is the present day Turkey, since the arrival of the Turks in the Middle Ages. Turkey was also the home of very significant art works produced by earlier cultures, including the Hittites, Ancient Greeks, and Byzantines. It has many facets, including metal, glass, wood, and leather artwork, as well as handwritten books, lamps, and stone carvings. However, the traditional arts like *Ebru* (marbling), the art of transferring colorful patterns to paper by sprinkling and brushing colour pigments onto a pan of oily water and then transferring the patterns to paper, are more well-known.

Some of the greatest *Ebru* artists are Hatip Mehmet Efendi, Necmeddin Okyay (who brought the floral marbling) and his student Mustafa Düzgünman.

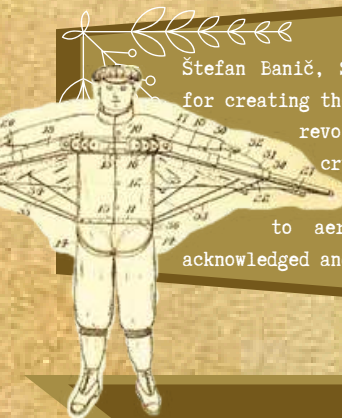
Music, movies and art in Turkey

I. Does your country have a "national hero?" How did he/she become one?



Slovakia has many national heroes, but the one who is known to everyone is Juraj Jánošík. He can be compared to the English Robin Hood, but the difference is that Jánošík is not a fictional character. He was a robber, a bandit, who purportedly robbed nobles and gave the loot to the poor. He was baptised on 25th January 1688 and died on 17th March 1713, but his deeds survived to these days. His statue was unveiled on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his birth, in his birthplace Terchová.

Štefan Banič, Slovakia's most famous inventor, is renowned for creating the parachute in 1913. His innovative design revolutionized safety in parachuting and became crucial in aviation, military operations, and sports like skydiving. Banič's contribution to aerial safety and innovation remains widely acknowledged and celebrated.



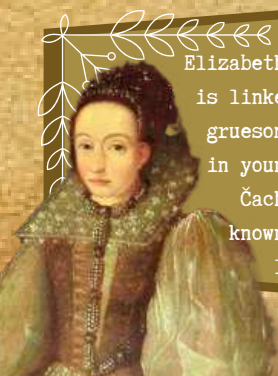
II. Who is the most famous inventor in your country? What did he invent?

III. Which famous people helped in the development of your country?

Every country needs a literary language so that people from the same country are able to communicate, and people who were able to codify a language, have the biggest impact on the development of the country. For Slovakia, it is Anton Bernolák. He and his colleagues were the first people in Slovakia who were able to codify the first grammatically correct Slovak language. In his private life he was a Slovak Roman Catholic priest, nobleman and linguist. He died in 1813, and in 2019, he was ranked 57th in the greatest poll about famous Slovaks.

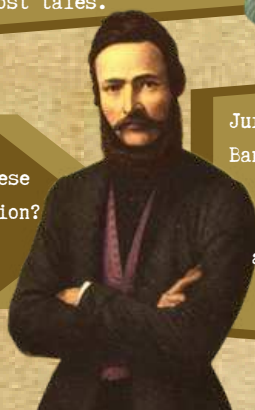


Elizabeth Báthory, known as the Blood Countess, is linked to Slovak folklore for her alleged gruesome acts. A legend claims that she bathed in young women's blood to maintain her beauty. Čachtice Castle, her residence, is a well-known tourist attraction in Slovakia, often linked to myths and ghost tales.



IV. Which famous people were mentioned in some of your myths/legends?

V. What lasting influence do these individuals have on our generation?



Juraj Jánošík is the symbol of resistance and justice. Štefan Banič, with his invention of the parachute, is the symbol of human creativity. Elizabeth Báthory represents a cautionary tale of the abuse of power. Anton Bernolák, and also Ľudovít Štúr, codified the standardized Slovak language, contributing to Slovak identity.

SIMILARITIES

many figures represent ideals of national identity & heroism

they showcased human ingenuity & knowledge

they left lasting legacies in their fields, shaping their nations' development & identity

their stories contribute to the cultural narratives & legends

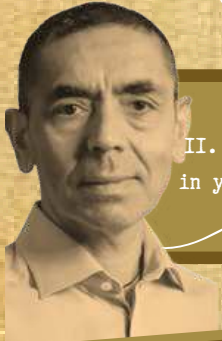
they shaped the identity & advancement of their cultures



Yes. He is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He made primary education free and compulsory, opening thousands of new schools all over the country. He also introduced the Latin-based Turkish alphabet, replacing the old Ottoman Turkish alphabet. Turkish women received equal civil and political rights during Atatürk's presidency.



I. Does your country have a "national hero?" How did he/she become one?



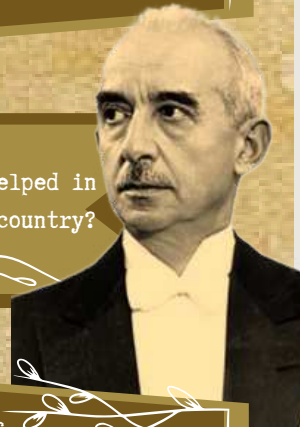
II. Who is the most famous inventor in your country? What did he invent?

Uğur Şahin. He is CEO and co-founder of German biotech firm BioNTech, which partnered with Pfizer to produce the first Covid-I9 vaccine approved in the US.

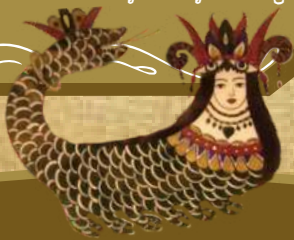
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü, Aziz Sancar, Cahit Arf, Hulusi Behçet and many others helped in the development of our country.



III. Which famous people helped in the development of your country?



IV. Which famous people were mentioned in some of your myths/legends?

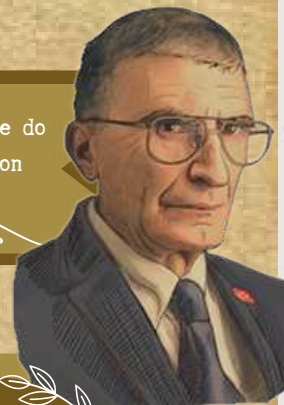


The figure of Şahmeran, meaning "Ruler of Snakes," goes back to pre-Islamic times. Depicted with the face of a beautiful woman wearing a crown in the upper half of her body and the form of a serpent from the waist down, she is at the heart of numerous folk tales.

Atatürk led reforms for a secular state, including free primary education and thousands of new schools. Aziz Sancar, a Turkish biologist, won the 2015 Nobel Prize for DNA repair research. Cahit Arf, a renowned mathematician, contributed greatly across multiple fields.



V. What lasting influence do these individuals have on our generation?



DIFFERENCES

they belong to different time periods, contexts and had different impact

their areas of expertise and contributions

Slovakia

FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM HISTORY

Historically famous figures from Turkey and Slovakia share several commonalities despite their diverse backgrounds.

Leadership and Influence: Each of these individuals played a significant leadership role within their respective societies, shaping the course of their nations' histories through their actions, ideas, and reforms.

Cultural Impact: They all left enduring cultural legacies that continue to resonate within their countries and beyond. Whether through literature, politics, or social reforms, their contributions have had a lasting impact on the cultural landscapes of Turkey and Slovakia.

National Identity: Many of these figures were deeply involved in movements aimed at fostering national identity and pride. Whether through language standardization, political independence movements, or cultural revitalization efforts, they sought to strengthen the sense of identity and unity within their nations.

Historical Significance: Each of these individuals occupies a prominent place in their respective countries' histories, often being remembered as pivotal figures in periods of significant change or transformation.

International Recognition: While their primary influence may have been within their own countries, their contributions have also garnered international recognition and admiration, with their ideas and legacies transcending national borders.



Turkey

FAMOUS PEOPLE

FROM HISTORY

Strong Work Ethic:

Both cultures value hard work, perseverance and determination in achieving goals and success.

Rich Cultural Heritage:

Both Turkey and Slovakia have rich cultural histories, reflected in music, dance, literature and art.

Warm and Friendly Demeanour:

Turks and Slovaks are known for their friendly and approachable nature, making it easy to strike up conversation and form connection.

Strong Sense of Community:

Whether in small villages or bustling cities, both Turkish and Slovak communities often have tight-knit bonds and a sense of unity.

Religious Diversity:

While Turkey is predominantly Muslim and Slovak is predominantly Christian, both countries have diverse religious communities, contributing to a rich tapestry of beliefs and practices.

Respect for Traditions:

Both cultures have deep respect for their traditions and customs, often passed down through generations.

Strong Sense of National Pride:

Both Turks and Slovaks take pride in their national identity, history, and achievements, often celebrating national holidays and cultural milestones with patriotic fervour.

These shared characteristics help foster understanding and connection between Turkish and Slovak people, despite geographical and cultural differences.



LIFESTYLE AND WELL-BEING



Lifestyle is a set of attitudes, habits, or possessions associated with a particular person or group. It's the way in which a person lives. Well-being is the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

TRADITIONAL VALUES

Both Turkish and Slovak cultures often place importance on family, community, and traditions. Family gatherings and celebrations are significant events, and respect for elders is commonly practiced.



CUISINE

Slovak cuisine is hearty and influenced by Central European flavors. Traditional dishes include “bryndzové halušky” (potato dumplings with sheep cheese), “kapustnica” (cabbage soup), and various meat dishes. Meals are often accompanied by bread and locally produced cheeses. Similarly, the Turks also consume bread with a lot of main courses. Thanks to Ottomans' multicultural demographic structure, it is possible to see a rich Turkish cuisine like kebab, chicken wrap, lentil soup, grape leaf wrap (which is filled with a mixture of rice), and Simit (a kind of bagel).

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Turkish, as well as Slovakia's natural beauty, with its mountains, forests, and rivers, encourages outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, skiing, and cycling. Many Slovaks and Turks enjoy spending time in nature and participating in sports and recreational activities.



MUSIC AND DANCE

Music and dance are integral parts of both Slovak and Turkish culture. Traditional folk music and dances are still performed at festivals and events throughout the country. Just as many Slovaks take pride in preserving these cultural traditions, so do Turkish people.



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

While work is important, Slovaks also value leisure time and work-life balance. Lunch breaks are often longer, compared to some other countries, allowing people to enjoy a proper meal and relax during the day. In Turkey, the employees work 5 or, in some cases, 6 days a week and working hours vary from 6 to 8 hours, and the lunch breaks generally last 1 hour. That can cause a lot of stress and bring unhappiness to a person who doesn't like to work, but has to earn money. However, the law requires the companies to give eid promotion to their workes so that they have an allowance for 9 or 7 days of vacation, which happens twice a year.



HEALTH ISSUES

Slovak young people are affected by drinking alcohol, smoking, taking drugs or lack of physical movement. These bad habits lead to health issues such as obesity, lung cancer, weakened immune system, etc. Also mental issues, for instance depression, anxiety or schizophrenia, have increased recently. However, not to be too negative, many young people in Slovakia are dedicated to a healthy lifestyle, they eat healthy and do sports. For example, they play football, hockey, tennis or do weight lifting.



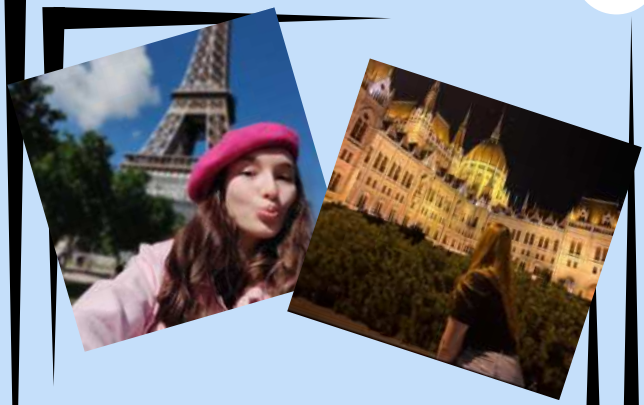
Overall, the lifestyle of Slovak and Turkish people are characterized by a blend of tradition and modernity, with a strong emphasis on community, nature, and cultural heritage.

Lifestyle in Slovakia

Lifestyle includes everything, from national dishes to exercising, reading books, or traveling. In Slovakia, people live healthy lives. We like to cook and explore amazing cuisines. Slovak people often go out and spend time in nature. We love doing a lot of sports. Whether it is playing hockey, cycling, or hiking, most Slovak people engage in some sort of physical activity at least once a week.



Slovak people enjoy many ways of relaxation. We like listening to music, watching movies, or playing instruments. In our free time, we enjoy traveling abroad. Exploring foreign countries brings one of the best feelings, and most of us cherish irreplaceable memories.



Our favorite pictures from vacations.

An interview about lifestyle in Slovakia

T: Could you talk about your national dishes?

S: Our national dish is dumplings with sheep cheese. We also have a very tasty dessert - steamed sugar buns with jam and poppy seeds.



T: Do you have any pets?

S: We do not have any pets. However, in the future, we would like to have dogs.



T: Can you play any instrument?

S: No, we can't.

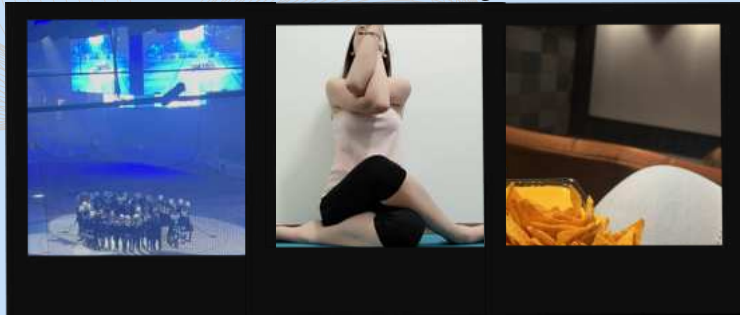
T: What are your favorite subjects?

S: Both of us love English. We have a lot of fun during English classes. On top of this, Janka likes psychology and Soňa enjoys geography.



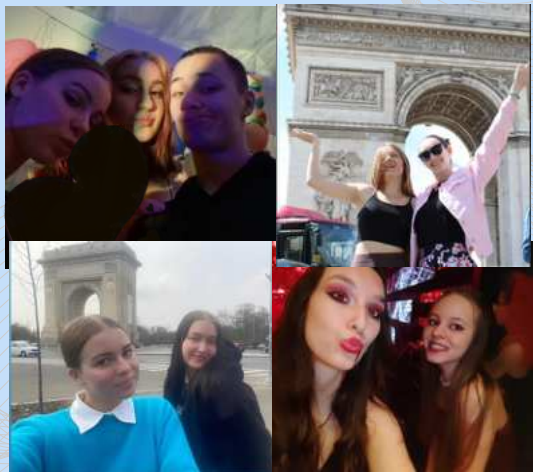
T: After a tiring day, how do you relax?

S: After a hard day, we like to exercise. Janka does yoga. We also love watching good movies. If there is a hockey match, we like to go watch it.



T: What do you enjoy doing with your friends or family?

S: We love travelling around the world, doing sports, and going to parties with them.



Lifestyle in Turkey

A person's lifestyle is their way of life. It all comes down to routines, habits, and the things that constitute a person's daily existence. In Turkey, people always try to improve themselves for good. We enjoy trying new things and playing sports. In our perspective, Turkey also has the best cuisine in the world. Turkish people enjoy travelling, especially during summer.



Turkish people adore sports, especially soccer, and they love cooking. Turkish people also love animals. If you come to any Turkish city, you can see well-fed cats wandering around the streets and no one hurts them.

An interview about lifestyle in Turkey

S: Which sport is Turkey most successful in?



T: Although soccer is the most popular sport in Turkey, our best achievements are in volleyball.

S: Do you have any pets?



T: Well, Ayşe does not have any pets, but Mehmet has a cat.



S: Can you play any instruments?



T: We both play guitar and electric guitar. It is our hobby. We like playing guitar so much.

S: Could you talk about your national dishes?

T: Our national dishes are kebab and lahmacun. We also have a traditional delicious dessert called baklava.



S: What are your favourite subjects?

T: We both love English very much. That is the reason why we both study ELT. Apart from that, Mehmet's favorite subject is History and Ayşe's favorite subject is Mathematics.

MEANING OF LIFE & BEING SUCCESSFUL

In today's fast-changing, blue, boring, and mad world, where people live busy lives and things are always changing, figuring out what life is all about and how to be successful takes on a new importance.

With our lives moving so quickly and lots of things to do, it can be hard to find time to think about big questions, like the meaning of life or how to achieve success. But in this rapidly evolving environment, it is even more important than ever to think about these things and find our way to success. Even though life can be really busy and things can change fast, it is really important to stop and think about what matters to us and how we can be successful in this new world we live in. We might easily lose our motivation, we can feel burnt out, and not be able to encourage ourselves. But why do we always put such pressure on ourselves, and miss out on what is actually in front of us while looking for something better?

Life is all about learning, teaching, and experiencing. Teaching involves passing knowledge from one person to another, like parents teaching their kids how to do things, how to love, how to grieve, and how to hold on to life. Learning is about finding out new stuff, like when you learn how to romantically love someone for the first time, or what you are going to do when you break a loved one's heart. Experiencing is what happens when you go through certain things in life, good or bad, and learn from them. You can't carry all things, all grudges. Decide what is yours to hold and let the rest go. In your life, you will inevitably misspeak, trust the wrong people, under-react, overreact, hurt people who didn't deserve it, overthink, not think at all, self-sabotage, create a reality where only your experience exists, ruin perfectly good moments for yourself and others, deny any wrongdoing, not take the steps to make it right, feel very guilty, let the guilt eat you alive, hit rock bottom, finally address the pain you caused, try to do better next time, rinse, and repeat. Every choice you make leads to the next choice, which leads to the next. It's hard to know sometimes, which path to take.

As Taylor Swift says: "There will be times in life when you need to stand up for yourself. Times when the right thing is to back down and apologize. Times when the right thing is to fight, times when the right thing is to turn and run. Times to hold on with all you have and times to let go with grace. Sometimes the right thing to do is to throw out the old schools of thought in the name of progress and reform. Sometimes the right thing to do is to listen to the wisdom of those who have come before us. How will you know what the right choice is in these crucial moments? You won't." It helps us grow and understand ourselves and the world around us.

Life is like a big adventure where we're always learning and growing. Each day brings new things to learn and experiences to have, and they all add up to make us who we are.

All these experienced mistakes aside, without a doubt, they will give you the power to achieve everything you wish. It's not just about wanting it; it's about accepting yourself and being willing to put in the effort to make it happen. As you tackle your journey toward your dreams, know that you have the support and encouragement of those around, including yourself. Reflect on all the times you've overcome challenges and achieved success, no matter how small. Each win, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is a testament to your strength and determination.

Sure, there may be barriers along the way, but they are not roadblocks; they are opportunities for growth and learning. Every setback is a chance to reassess, recalibrate, and come back stronger than ever. Remember, the path to success is rarely unbent. It's filled with twists and turns, ups and downs, but each step forward brings you closer to your goals.

Look to those who have come before you for inspiration. They were led by their gut instincts, their intuition, their desires and fears, their scars, and dreams. They too faced doubt and uncertainty, but they strived, fueled by their affection and persistent belief in themselves.

You maintain that same inner strength and resilience. So, don't let fear or self-doubt hold you back. Embrace the challenges, and the journey, while most importantly, embrace the belief that you can achieve anything you set your mind to. With dedication, steadiness, and a positive mindset, the possibilities are endless.

In the tapestry of life, people are often driven by a delicate interplay of health, wealth, and success. To choose only one element is to choose an unhealthy lifestyle. Each element holds its significance, yet finding a harmonious balance is the key to a fulfilling existence.

Health is the cornerstone upon which all else rests. Without it, even the greatest wealth or success can feel sunken. Prioritizing physical, mental, and emotional well-being lays the basis for a deep and meaningful life. It allows people to pursue their goals with spirit and strength, encouraging a sense of wholeness and joy.

Money, too, plays an essential role in shaping people's lives. It provides the means to meet basic needs, pursue passions, and create opportunities for oneself and others. However, the pursuit of wealth should not overshadow the importance of health and well-being. A relentless focus on financial gain at the expense of one's health or relationships can lead to emptiness and disillusionment.

Similarly, success is a worthy pursuit, driving individuals to push their boundaries and achieve their aspirations. Whether in career, relationships, or personal work, success brings a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment. Yet, true success is not measured solely by external achievements but also by internal fulfillment and happiness.

A balanced life is ultimately about navigating the intricate dance between health, wealth, and success. It's about recognizing the importance of each component while ensuring that none of them overshadows the others. It's about adapting to the journey, experiencing the richness of life in all its facets, and finding satisfaction in the delicate equilibrium of mind, body, and spirit.

The word success is used a lot in our society and so much weight has been attributed to it. This concept is so contradictory in the culture, that it is almost impossible to get to its whole potential fully described. Every person has their own opinion about success, there is no such thing as universal label for it. If one wants to understand what success means to a certain nationality, certain group of people and maybe age group, minorities etc., one has to become well-read, travelled, and should be open to new insights and ideas. Through judgement and prejudices, people get further and further from understanding each other in most aspects of life, in many ways it neither helps us understand, nor being understood back.

Success for our team is a state of mind, where a person is happy, at peace with himself, but still sees space for improvement, yet not really needed for a person to live anymore. According to our parents it may be very different. The differences are probably caused by the time we live in, circumstances we experience and information we are provided. There are also many similarities, for instance to be healthy, have a shelter, close relationships to help each other, and even a job that provides resources to be able to survive.

Meaning of life, for our generation, is mainly to be happy. To find a job that we enjoy doing and that helps us earn money, to have a perfect spouse, perfect life, because the slightest inconvenience might leave us unhappy or even depressed. Older generation's point of view is that survival and physiological needs, obviously are more important than happiness and perfection. Shelter, food, family and friends, and generally people who stand by one's side, education to help get a better working opportunities and enough material things to live a normal life, those were, and still are factors, that defined happiness and the meaning of life.

By the time technological progress came, decent survival was the meaning of life, due to the lack of information, criticism and inspiration from others. With social networks, people are now able to compare, judge and change their view point for the meaning of life throughout the life span. Technological tools definitely affect the point of view at the concept.

Even a phrase "being influenced" comes from social network period and technological age. Not only by creating a personal bubble to be supported in our ideas, but also to get to know ourselves from another side. With controlling the things we share, we build a space, where we see potential and meaning in what we do, who we are and where we are heading.

At first, we may not see the meaning of our life straight ahead, but as we get older and more experienced, small connections start to form. Connections of deep passion for somebody or something, and what needs to be done and is morally right.

Balancing these aspects, being successful and holding a stable value ladder brings us to the realization, that meaning of life is maybe a very simple concept. Being provided with money, to enjoy life a little by finding a nice job, that we do not necessarily hate, and being gifted with some spare time, for our passions, might be universal terms for seeing meaning in our own life.



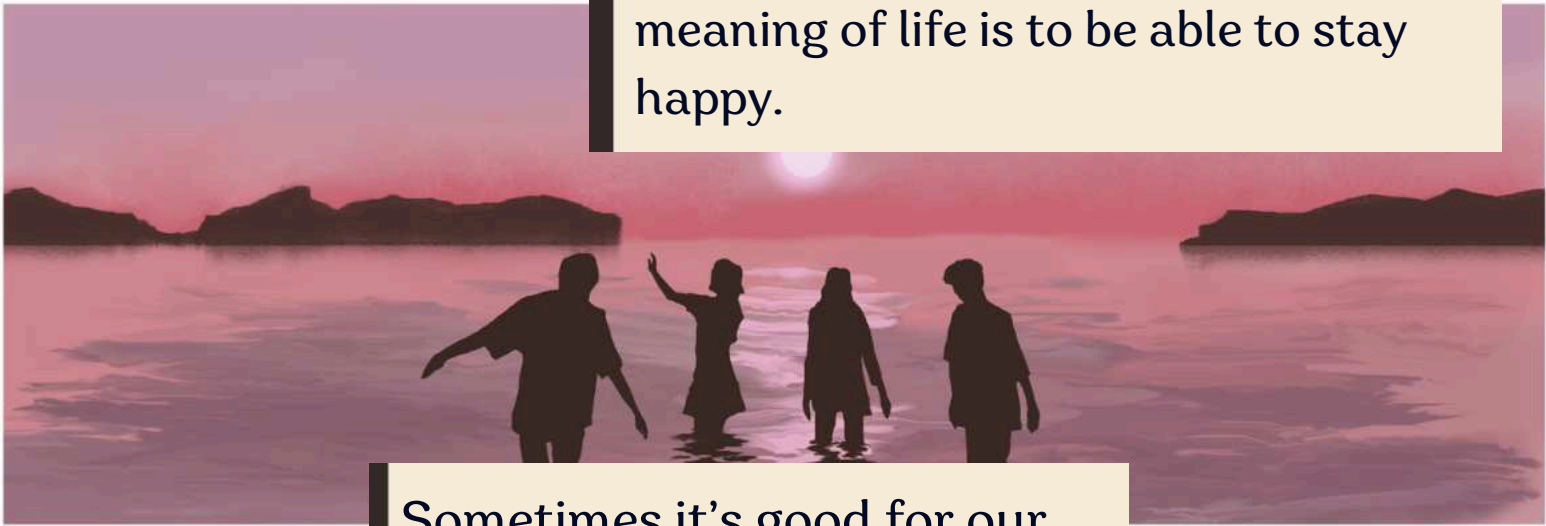
TEAM: Creative Chaos

The meaning of life is
being happy with who
we are.

50



What keeps us going is our dreams.
For me, the real success and
meaning of life is to be able to stay
happy.



Sometimes it's good for our
soul to have fun with children
as if we were children too.



A quiet, happy life is the
most beautiful way of life.

Always following your passion is the most important thing in life.



To discover yourself, you need to spend time with yourself. Don't be afraid to be alone.



Self-improvement takes time, and making mistakes is completely normal.

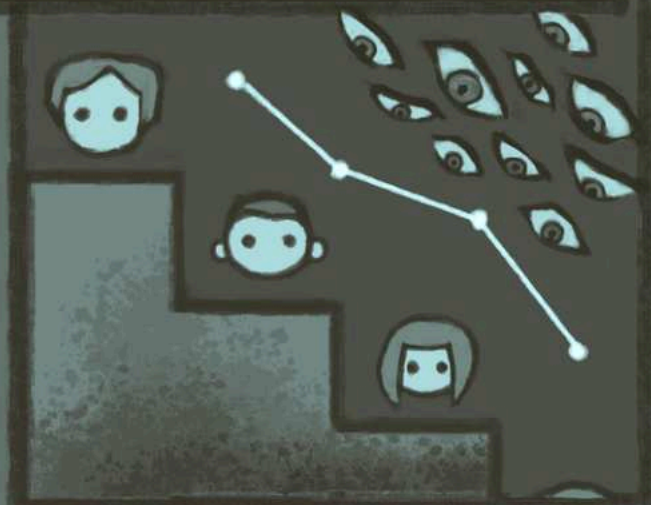
Remember that you can't control other people's thoughts.



“That it will never come again is what makes life sweet.”
Emily Dickinson



It's a story about growing up
in an environment that equates
your worth to success...



...with a chronically
malfunctioning brain.

Success was always inseparable from high productivity in my culture.
If you're not productive enough - you're a failure.
Every mistake was a sign that my life is meaningless.

maybe I don't deserve life it won't get better I don't want to be me how long will I be able to pretend
it will never get better **But I found acceptance in art.** I can't fit in I want to disappear
I wish I could be someone else I'm such a disappointment why can't I just change I want to stop it all

Art doesn't care if you're successful.

Art doesn't care if you're a failure.

Art doesn't care if you're (ab)normal.

While having no practical purpose,

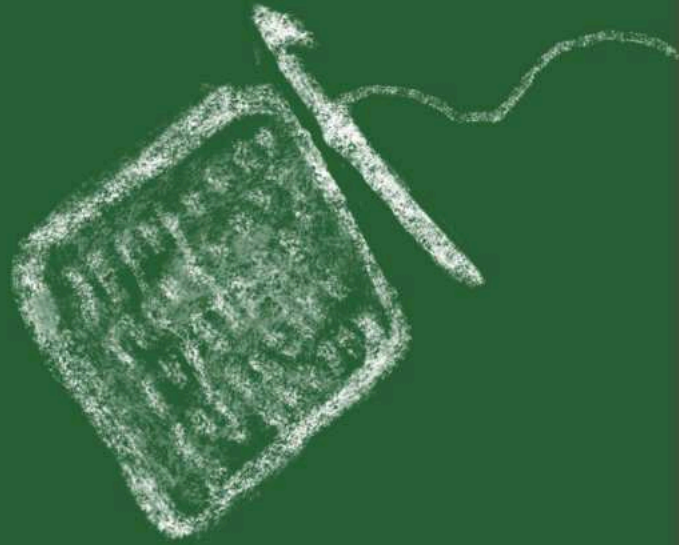
Art is pure meaning.



Life is all about finding meaning.
Mine is art.

Sometimes it's crocheting.

Sometimes
it's painting.



or even
self-expression
through

LANGUAGE

Success is being able to inspire
others and help them learn to
appreciate art like I do.



4 BRICKS ON THE WALL

What it's like to study in Turkey/ Slovakia?

Hello, tell us a bit about yourself, who you are and why you chose to study to be an English teacher.

I: I am İlhan Öz. I am 18. I live in Mersin which is a province of Turkey. I chose ELT because I have been thinking about it since middle school and I didn't want to change it.

H: My name is Hüseyin and I am 29 years old. I live in a small village in Adana, the province next to Mersin. I have chosen English Language Teaching because I was told that I could graduate without too much effort and I also like teaching people new things.

K: My name is Kristina and I'm 19. I am from Orava region in Slovakia. I have chosen to study teaching because I think being a teacher is really an important role for young people.

D: I am Dorota but my friends call me Dory (from Finding Nemo). I am 20. I live in the Slovak town Trenčín. During my high school studies, I had wonderful English teachers. They were the ones who motivated me to decide to study English language teaching.

What do you like most / least about your school system?

H: I personally like the way the education system integrates both social sciences, such as psychology, history or geography, and natural sciences, such as chemistry, physics or biology.

İ: I don't like when some teachers ask certain information in exams that they have never mentioned in class.

D: I really like that our school system cooperates with international programs (Erasmus). I think it is a wonderful opportunity for students.

Is school something students in Turkey look forward to or do they rather hate it?

H: The school holds different purposes as the student's level progresses. For example, primary school and secondary school can be seen as a place to socialize with new friends and a safe place to spend time outside of home. However, as the students start their high school journey, they realize that the school becomes dull and repetitive so they start to hate it more and more.

K: I agree with that, it is very much the same here as well.

How do your lectures work? Do you guys make your own schedules? Do you need certain amount of credits to pass to the next semester?

H: Our lectures differ from each other based on lecturer's and students' preferences. Some lecturers prefer to have a more direct approach and some prefer theoretical classes. Schedules also differ based on the available lecturers teaching the specific topic. Some classes are only given by the same lecturer so you do not get to pick your schedule but some classes are given by multiple lecturers so we can edit our schedule to our preference. There is a certain amount of credits we need to pass each year and also there is a limited amount of credits we can take every year.

K: Interesting, we can make our own schedules as well, we do need certain amount of credits to pass and get bachelor degree, in all 3 years we need 180 credits.

Do you have a dress code, uniforms?

H: There is no extra dress code in schools that aren't associated with specific ethnic groups or a foreign country. However, most schools hold design contests or hire professional designers to determine a unique uniform for their students. Apart from some specific faculties universities do not have a dress code. For example, medicine and maritime faculty.

D: No, Slovakia does not have a nationwide uniform dress code for schools. Also, uniforms are not very popular, but in schools where they are required, they typically consist of specific items of clothing such as a particular style of shirt, pants or skirts, and sometimes accessories like ties or scarves.

Do you have a religious class? Is it optional?

H: Religious classes exist in pre-university education and it is mandatory. Since they mostly focus on a single religion in these classes, I would have preferred not to have them if I had had a choice.

D: Slovakia offers religious education in schools. However, students are not required to participate in religious education if they or their parents choose not to.

Which school years do you call the best years of your life?

İ: I think high school because my teachers were very qualified, especially in terms of English.

H: My favorites were primary and secondary school years as we mostly had fun and created friendships that would also continue outside the school walls.

K: I definitely think it was elementary school, because I didn't care about anything and just lived. But to me, university life also isn't bad, especially because I am away from my home and my world opens to this new way of freedom I have never had before.



İlhan



Kristína



Dorota



Hüseyin



Does your school include practice? If so, do you think it's enough? Is it more interactive or lecture-based?

H: Our school is mostly lecture based with the integration of internships. Lectures are also interactive between students and lecturers since we do not have many students in class.

D: In Slovakia, schools often include practical components in their curriculum, especially in subjects like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Our schools may employ a mix of interactive and lecture-based methods.

What subjects or skills are emphasized in your curriculum?

H: Knowledge of English Language such as speaking, writing, listening and grammar. We also have classes in psychology, philosophy, maintaining the class and sociology. Education faculty curriculum includes a vast variety of classes that teach students to be able to perform as a good teacher while English department teaches students to master the language and be able to teach it.

K: We have it similarly. We need to know all the above mentioned subjects to become good English teachers.

Are there any unique extracurricular activities or programs?

H: Our university offers students extracurricular classes. For example, music, art, theatre, sign language, etc. These classes are mandatory in second year and higher. Students can choose between them as they wish.

D: Slovak schools offer activities like folklore groups, outdoor education, and language clubs. They also have STEM competitions, sports clubs, and cultural exchanges. Arts workshops and theater productions add creativity to students' experiences. These activities help students grow and learn beyond the classroom.

Can you employ yourself after only graduating high school without a need for higher education?

İ: I wouldn't employ myself after graduating high school without a higher education and I don't think it is normal because I know I can do better with some extra education.

H: Employing yourself after only graduating high school is definitely possible. However, going to university for an academic education is less risky than starting a business and employing yourself.

K: In Slovakia, you can employ yourself by just graduating from high school, but you cannot expect much. It is usually a minimum wage job and working from 6 am to 2 pm. Having a degree might help you to get a better job, but its not granted. You can still end up with a minimum wage job.

To wrap this up, do you have any funny or embarrassing experience that happened to you during school that you will remember forever? Spill the tea.

İ: When I was in middle school, I hit my head to a basketball post. It was so embarrassing to me.

H: Even though I always tried to avoid problems in my early school years, I would always find myself in some sort of fight. Most of the time it would be me trying to defend my friends and getting myself in more trouble than the person I was trying to save.

K: I think mine is falling from stairs, like all the time, in front of the whole school. Resulting in having a hole in my phone. Of course, getting a headshot by some ball during PE was on a daily basis.

D: When I was only in elementary school, I once wanted to lock myself in the toilet, but the handle fell out from the inside. And instead of giving it back normally, I started screaming for help and everyone heard it. In the end I had to open it myself anyway.

In conclusion, Turkey and Slovakia are really similiar in their educational systems. There are only few differences.



SILLY CATS >:3

EDUCATION



KRISTÍNA



ENES

EDUCATION SYSTEM

SIMILARITIES



DIFFERENCES



LEVELS OF EDUCATION:

1. pre-primary education (age 3-6)
2. primary education (age 6-15)
3. secondary education (age 15-19)
4. higher education (age 19+)

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

	10 years
	12 years

COST

free education

(up to first three years of university)



GRADING SYSTEM

	1 to 5, exceptionally %
	only %



INTERVIEW

DESCRIBE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN YOUR COUNTRY

Kristína: I think it is outdated and not innovative enough. Everything has progressed, but our schools have been the same for three centuries. It is mainly based on memorisation and it doesn't focus on development or growth, but rather building discipline.

Enes: It is horrible for most of the part. They just burden students with unnecessary piles of study materials. An outdated system based on memorisation, which prioritizes the teacher's comfort rather than the student's abilities and preferences.

WHAT WERE YOUR EXPECTATIONS BEFORE GOING TO UNIVERSITY?



I was expecting people to be more enthusiastic about teaching. I also don't like the bureaucracy I have to do when I need to solve something. However, I feel like this is just another year of high school instead of university, but definitely not in a bad way.



My expectations were kind of high as universities kept presenting themselves to be a whole another republic but it is literally just a fifth year of high school. Similar lessons and student behaviour. Still, the situation might be better in higher ranked universities.

DESCRIBE INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS USED IN YOUR COUNTRY OR THOSE YOU WILL USE AS A TEACHER



I experienced many teachers who put extra effort into their lessons. The most creative one was our high school biology teacher who created a histology version of the board game activity in less than three days. In my future career, I'd like to focus on active recall methods and teach students how to learn effectively instead of memorising.



I can't think of any, however I would want my students to be in touch with nature constantly. Last time they taught us something outside, was in primary school. From then on, the students are trapped between four gray walls and don't know how joyful education can be.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVATION TO BECOME A TEACHER?



In our country, money is definitely not the motivation. I simply love working with youth and children. I will have to be creative and understanding, with a huge responsibility that will lie on my shoulders. Also, the holidays sound nice.



No need to tell lies, I like the money and the high number of holidays. Even so, I want to help young people to find their path leading to wherever they want.

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST FEAR OF BECOMING A TEACHER?



Not being respected, not having enough knowledge to teach, burning out too soon, trying to be too perfect, children getting into accidents that I'm going to be responsible for.



Nepotism. I guess it explains itself very well.

SUSTAINABLE FASHION

Sustainable fashion refers to the design, manufacture, and distribution of environmentally friendly and socially responsible clothing, shoes, and accessories.

With sustainable fashion, it is aimed to use eco-friendly materials and reduce waste in production. In usage of sustainable fashion, consumers hold immense power in shaping the fashion industry. As the sustainable fashion is gaining attention worldwide, Slovakia and Turkey are no exception. While the concept of sustainable fashion is more developed in Turkey than in Slovakia, due to being relatively new in the business, there is still growing awareness and interest in adopting more environmentally friendly and socially responsible fashion among consumers, designers, and businesses in both countries.

In addition, the way both countries approach fashion differs in terms of affordability, choice of aesthetics, population, and the climate of each country. Sustainable fashion has become a significant movement not only in Turkey but also globally. In Turkey, there is a notable increase in awareness regarding the environmental and ethical impacts of the fashion industry. Turkish designers and brands are actively working to incorporate sustainable practices into their production processes. They are increasingly focusing on using eco-friendly materials, reducing waste, and ensuring fair labor practices. Furthermore, Turkey's rich textile heritage provides a strong foundation for sustainable fashion practices, as many local artisans are skilled in traditional techniques that can be adapted to create enviro-friendly and ethically made clothing.





SUSTAINABLE FASHION

Turkish consumers are becoming more conscious of the impact of their purchasing decisions, leading to a higher demand for sustainable fashion options.

When comparing Slovakia and Turkey in terms of sustainable fashion, we observe different approaches and developments. Sustainable fashion has gained significant momentum in Turkey in recent years. Additionally, Turkish consumers are increasingly conscious of their purchasing decisions, driving demand for sustainable fashion options. While sustainable fashion is relatively new in Slovakia, there is growing awareness and interest in adopting environmentally friendly and socially responsible fashion. The concept is less developed compared to Turkey, but there is potential for growth. Factors such as affordability, aesthetic preferences, population size, and climate influence how both countries approach fashion sustainability.

In summary, sustainable fashion is a global movement, and both Slovakia and Turkey play unique roles in shaping its future..



RELATIONSHIPS

Communication Styles: Slovak relationships might emphasize directness and honesty in communication. There might be a preference for clear and explicit expression of thoughts and feelings. In contrast, Turkish relationships might incorporate more indirect communication styles, where messages are conveyed through gestures, tone, and context. There might be an emphasis on politeness and maintaining harmony in interpersonal interactions.

Family Dynamics: Slovak relationships might place a significant emphasis on individualism and personal autonomy within the family unit. Relationships may prioritize equality and mutual respect between partners. In Turkish relationships, family ties and obligations could play a more prominent role. Family structures might be more hierarchical, with elders holding considerable influence and decisions often being made collectively or with family input.



Cultural differences shape how people connect, with each society bringing its unique traditions and values to relationships. Slovak and Turkish cultures, for example, offer contrasting perspectives on how couples communicate and interact within families. By exploring these differences, we uncover how culture molds the way people relate to one another. This essay examines two key aspects – communication styles and family dynamics – in Slovak and Turkish relationships, shedding light on the diverse ways people connect across different cultures.



RELATIONSHIPS

Conversely, Turkish relationships may exhibit more nuanced communication styles, characterized by an emphasis on indirectness and subtlety. In Turkish culture, there's a strong emphasis on maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict in interpersonal interactions. As a result, communication may involve implicit cues, such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language, alongside verbal messages. It's common for Turks to communicate indirectly, especially when discussing sensitive topics or expressing disagreement, as a means of preserving social harmony and avoiding confrontation.



In conclusion, the exploration of Slovak and Turkish relationships unveils a fascinating panorama of cultural nuances and interpersonal dynamics. Through the lens of communication styles and family dynamics, we have glimpsed into the intricate tapestry of human connection, woven from the threads of tradition, history, and societal values. While Slovak relationships emphasize directness and individual autonomy, Turkish relationships showcase the importance of indirect communication and familial ties. Despite their differences, both cultures exemplify the kaleidoscopic diversity of human relationships, highlighting the richness that arises from embracing and celebrating cultural variation. As we navigate the complexities of cross-cultural interactions, we may continue to appreciate the beauty of diversity and strive to foster understanding and empathy in our global community.

Timea Kočnerová



What are the typical steps in dating in Slovakia?

I've never dated someone from Slovakia, to be honest, but I have friends with rich experience in dating. They usually meet their potential partner in bars or at a party. Some go only for the looks and don't care about the personality, while others are more cautious of their potential future partner. They usually talk while drinking an alcoholic beverage. It helps ease the tension and "untangle the tongues".

Which factors influence divorce rates and separation in Slovakia?

I'm from a divorced family myself, so I can speak from my own experience. Sadly, people here are too spontaneous when it comes to marriage and usually find out too late that they, actually, hate each other. Many find out after they have their first child. Another big factor is money. Many families split because of financial problems. Lastly, as was the case in my family, drugs and alcohol play a big part in divorces. Usually, it's the fathers' fault, but mothers also tend to follow bad paths.

What are the prevalent attitudes towards LGBTQ+ relationships and rights in Slovakia?

Bad, and they are getting worse. Queer relationships aren't usually public and people tend not to share their attraction if it isn't heterosexuality. Marriage or even registered partnership for queer couples is not allowed by law, and with the current political situation, it won't be for a long time. LGBTQ+ is publicly villainized, because conservative people think it is disgusting and against their fate. What's worse, not even some members of the younger generations are fond of queer people.

What do you look for as a priority in your relationship?

I won't sugarcoat it, looks are on the top. But that doesn't mean I'm only going for the looks, I've learned my lessons the hard way. The person I would look for should be nice to others, shouldn't try to make themselves look almighty and perfect, and also they should know how to spend their time without me. I'm an introvert and if someone would want to spend time with me 24/7, I would end the relationship in a flash. Another important factor, they shouldn't argue about meaningless things.

What's the best piece of relationship advice you've gotten?

You're asking the wrong guy. My advice would be, don't rush it. Take time and think really well if the person before you is the one you can be with for a significant length of your life. Think about your financial stability before having children. I know it is tempting for some to become parents, but do the child a favor and don't bring it into a family where parents argue because of money or because they don't have time for each other. Don't spend all the time with your partner. I get it, you're in love and want to be with your loved one for 24/7, but people tend to get tired of each other, and no matter how much you love someone, you'll eventually need to take some time to recharge your batteries, and it is better to do it periodically than once and for forever.

Tomáš Okres



Feride Mevlüt



What do you think about same sex couples or LGBTQ as a whole?

I respect all kinds of love. Love means love. However, it is not legal in many countries, and one of them is Turkey. Queers and LGBTQ+ have the same feelings like heterosexuals. Even when it goes against the norms of society, we cannot block or restrict people's emotions. We must accept them as they are.

How's dating in your country?

Obviously, I don't have much experience with dating, but based on my observations, I can say that people meet on the internet or talk to people around them. Dating apps are still being used, but they have lost a bit of popularity. Instead, people are using apps like Instagram and its derivatives more and more, and they started to communicate within them. Therefore, I think that dating shifted to the virtual environment.

Are there some customs in your country for the process when you're looking for a partner?

Yes, there were arranged dates before, I mean, families would find partners for their children and they would have to meet; the girl's or the boy's opinion would not be taken into consideration very much.

Is divorce common in your country?

Actually, it is not very common because our families are very attached to their traditions and they think that divorce is not a good thing.

What do you think makes a relationship strong?

I think reliability makes a relationship much stronger. When we trust someone, we can be completely open to him, which plays an important role in the development of a relationship.

Asude Boyraz



Over Sleepers

1.50€ per issue

Nitra – Mersin

Monday – April 2024

VR helping Slovak hospitals

VR is used in medical field to help with anxiety. Some people may be scared and in pain after or before operation. The first time it was used was in 2019.

It also helps doctors to see the anatomy of patients. Scientists combine two-dimensional images from MRI and CT scans using advanced computer programs to create three-dimensional images of the patients anatomy.

In year 2016, Stanford University School of Medicine faculty began using virtual reality for training at its own Center for Neurosurgical Simulation and Virtual reality. The platform was called "Surgical Theater". It combined several types of brain scans of real patients to achieve greater accuracy. One hospital (Svet zdravia) in Trebišov uses VR in psychic ward for Alzheimer and Parkinson sickness treatment.

Karin Jabčanková



iStock



The Virtual Reality Bar

Experience virtual reality in Bratislava. VRBA - Virtual Reality and Gin & Tonic Bar is a unique place in Bratislava's Old Town. You'll find the perfect mix of things to keep you entertained. You will experience the virtual reality, taste craft beer, mixed drinks or lemonades. In addition to our excellent bar offer, Gin&Tonic is our specialty. We have more than 30 types of gin that we mix with quality tonic.

Human body in 3D game. The Slovak startup made it to the PlayStation VR platform

After approximately three years since the launch of PlayStation VR, i.e. the platform for virtual reality, Slovaks also have their own game in it. Virtual Medicine, which until now has helped college and high school students study anatomy through an app, has created a new product. It is also preparing an expansion of the game, which could be on the market this year.

More on pg. 4
Jasmina Adame



iStock

KURZY NBS (12. 9. 2001)

USD	EUR	DEM	ATS	CZK
48,227	43,250	22,113	3,143	1,269

POČASIE - STRANA 20

Stále chladno

Oblačnosť a občasné dážď. Teploty 12 až 16 stupňov Celzia.

DNIS

Meniny má Mária.
Zajtra bude oslavovať Čibor.



37

VR in Turkey

The Biruni VR-LAB was opened in Osmaniye on August 2, 2023 as part of Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University's digitalization activities. On February 6, 2023 Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University decided to provide virtual reality laboratory support to the cities affected by the earthquake. In addition to Gaziantep, Hatay, and Kilis, it also opened VR-LAB in Osmaniye.

KTMU Rector Prof. Dr. Alpaslan Ceylan participated in VR-LAB opening via online meeting. Rector Alpaslan Ceylan stated that Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University constantly renews and develops itself. In March 2022, the first VR-LAB project was launched as part of Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University's digitalization activities. Rector Alpaslan Ceylan invited the Turkic World youth to study at



the Manas University, Teachers, students, which will prepare and the public will them for the future have access to the with the best Design Skills Center opportunities. Prof. (OTBM) laboratory, which will be Dr. Alpaslan Ceylan integrated with OTBM's STEM and closely follow Robotic Coding earthquake - Workshop. In this damaged Turkey's digital classroom provinces, especially with computers with Osmaniye.

the latest technological infrastructure, ultra-virtual reality glasses connected to computers, interactive television screens and other technological equipment, all kinds of content for social sciences will be available for youth.



VR and AR technologies have begun to be used in the field of education in Turkey. These technologies are improving educational experiences in many schools. For example, by taking advantage of these technologies, students can not only go and explore other time periods or geographical areas, but also learn the history and culture of that place.

AR and VR technologies are also used in the field of healthcare in Turkey. It is used for purposes such as patient education and treatment. Medical students are using VR technologies to practice before undergoing real surgeries.

AR and VR technologies are creating a revolution in the field of architecture in Turkey. Architects use these technologies to create three-dimensional images of buildings and thus present properties to clients in a virtual way.

These are some of the most common areas of use of virtual reality and augmented reality in Turkey.

Aslı Kazan

While both Generation Z and Millennials are interested in trying virtual reality, Baby Boomers aren't far behind. According to research by Greenlight VR and Touchstone Research, 64% of Baby Boomers have positive feelings towards virtual reality.

While immersive experiences (depending on the definition) have been around for decades, the actual term most people use to describe them is relatively new. The term "virtual reality" was conceived by Jaron Lanier in 1987, during an intense period of research around this form of technology.

Typically, when people think of virtual reality, they think of computer games. Unfortunately, this stigma excludes some of the best and most interesting virtual reality experiences out today that have nothing to do with gaming. There are virtual reality travel experiences, virtual reality documentaries, and much, much more.

Morton Heilig patented the first VR Headset and named it "Telesphere Mask" in 1960. The device was equipped with optical units, television tube units, earphones, and discharge nozzles to be fitted and adjusted to the user's comfort. It features stereoscopic (3D) TV, wide vision, and true stereo sound producing a 3D reality experience.

Dana Barátová, Henrich Brisuda



THE FOOD CULTURE OF THE TURKS

As the team “STAR GIRLS” we, Slovak and Turkish students, shared a lot of things about our food cultures and learned new things. When we compared our eating habits and foods, we found in both countries very close similarities and remarkable differences.

Turkey is rich in variety of foods because it is a country that contains different climates, cultures and people. That is why these factors shaped the lifestyles and food choices of people. The role of Seljuks and the Ottoman Empire in this cultural wealth is also enormous.

When you go to the Aegean Region, western Anatolia, it is more likely that you will eat foods with plenty of vegetables and olive oil. Some of these foods are Sarma, Enginar, Kereviz and Şevketibostan.

In addition to this, if you are looking for something else that resembles the food of this region in Turkey, Blacksea region is another option for you to try new flavours. Along with pickles, foods made with herbs such as nettle, and black cabbage soup, it is known for delicious fish dishes.

Ordu, a city in this region, is on the first place in nut production all around the world.

If you are looking for something meaty, your route should lead to the Eastern Anatolia and the Southeastern Anatolia regions because you can eat the best meat dishes here.

Some of the most popular ones are Lahmacun, İçli Köfte, and different kinds of Kebabs like Büryan, Cağ and Urfa.

The Mediterranean is another wonderful region, where you can find any kind of meat or vegetable dishes. The most popular ones are Tantuni, Humus and Piyaz.

When it comes to Central Anatolia, this is known for its pastry. Some of these foods also contain meat, such as Mantı and Kayseri Yağlaması. Katmer and Keşkek are other foods consumed in this region.

In the last region “Marmara”, foods like Edirne Tava Ciğer, Kuzu Kapama and different kinds of Böreks are consumed.

In Istanbul, most people like to eat fish because of fresh fish caught in the Bosphorus.



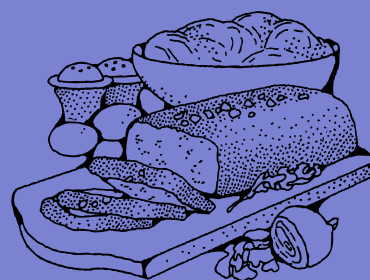
THE FOOD CULTURE OF THE TURKS

What about the delicious desserts in this multicultural country?

Turkey offers many different kinds of desserts, some of which contain plenty of milk or sherbet (syrup). The most popular dessert, that many people know from Turkey, is Baklava which contains sherbet. Also Şekerpare, Revani and Künefe are other options for desserts with syrup.

Turkish cuisine contains lighter desserts made with milk such as Sütlaç, Keşkül, Kazandibi and Tavukgöğsü.

The last thing that represents the rich cuisine is the Turkish delight with Turkish coffee. This duo is so popular that it is served to the guests at home.





THE FOOD CULTURE OF SLOVAKIA

Welcome to a destination that promises to captivate your senses and ignite your desire to visit Slovakia immediately. We will present the most famous traditional dishes in Slovakia. We will try to use text and pictures to evoke the most beautiful tastes of Slovak cuisine and show gastronomic peculiarities and specialities, which best represent the tradition and history of Slovakia.

The most typical Slovak national dish are “bryndzové halušky” with bacon. These are dumplings made from potato dough mixed with a special kind of sheep cheese - “bryndza”, which has a delicious taste.

Another traditional speciality are “oškvarkové pagáčiky” (greaves pogachas), an essential delicacy at any celebration, feast or gathering. They are popular throughout Slovakia and each region has its own recipe.

Slovak lunch always starts with a soup. The most traditional soup in Slovakia is “kapustnica”. It is prepared from sauerkraut. Soups made with potatoes, beans, peas, cabbage, mushroom, onion, garlic, spinach are also very popular, as well as various vegetable or meat broths.

“Lokše” (potato pancakes) have a unique significance in Slovak cuisine. They can be served with soups, serve as an excellent side dish to roast goose with stewed cabbage, and can also be enjoyed by spreading jam, sprinkling poppy seeds or sugar, and folding into a pancake.



Bratislava, capital city



Bryndzové halušky



Oškvarkové pagáče



Lokše

THE FOOD CULTURE OF SLOVAKIA



Another dish in Slovak cuisine is “guláš” (goulash), a hearty dish featuring onions, meat, and spices like pepper and paprika. It's often served with potatoes and dumplings, which add a special touch to its aroma. Dumplings, made from flour or potato dough, are a common side dish, along with vegetable-based sauces.

For dessert, we have a sweet roll called “Skalický trdelník”, one of the most popular desserts in Slovakia. People continue to visit the town of Skalica for a culinary adventure, seeking to savor the delightful trdelník, known for its soft texture and variety of toppings, such as nuts, chocolate, cinnamon, or poppy seeds. Poppy seeds, nuts and cottage cheese are often used in baking. They are used in traditional cakes like “orechovník” (walnut strudel), “makovník” (poppy strudel), “tvarohovník” (cheese strudel), and in some parts of Slovakia also “jablčník” (apple strudel).



Trdelník

Some other amazing desserts from Slovakia are “bábovka” (marble cake) made of a two-colour dough - the darker part containing cocoa - is often served with milk, and another dessert is called “dukátové buchtičky” (sweet buns with vanilla pudding).

A very popular drink in Slovakia is beer, known for its high quality. Likewise, in areas with vineyards, wine is commonly enjoyed alongside meals.

These dishes show that Slovakia is a country that loves and celebrates food, and it is no wonder that foreigners are delighted with Slovak hospitality and beauty of tables full of food.



Makovník



As is well known, every country is proud of its beautiful nature, monuments, and traditions. And how would you impress people better than with your traditional cuisine? So let's take a look at what Turkey and Slovakia offer us.

In our article, you can learn a lot of new information, notice a lot of differences between our cultures, supplement your imagination with real photos, and you can try the specialties according to the recipes below.



TURKISH TRADITIONAL FOOD

Kebab

Turkish people have many types of kebabs. For instance, Adana kebab, Urfa kebab and so on, but the most favorite kebab is Sis kebab. For the Turks, it's almost impossible not to eat meat every day. Especially in the eastern region, every Turkish person likes kebab.

Do you want to try it?

DRINKS

Coffee

First of all, Turkish coffee has a very special and important meaning. It is served not only to guests but also during the ceremony, where two families want to marry their children. It is like a test for the groom when he has to drink coffee with salt to prove he will be able to face possible problems in marriage.

Tea

The second popular drink is tea, which is made of tea leaves. The tea is so fresh, that Turks drink it after their meals. Some families also drink it twice after dinner.



BEEF MEAT
OLIVE OIL
THYME
RED PEPPER
SALT
BLACK PEPPER
MILK OR YOGHURT



PRICE OF FOOD

It doesn't matter where you go in Turkey, you will see a lot of places offering food. But food price depends on your preferences. If you like luxury restaurants, you will pay more money than in street food restaurants.



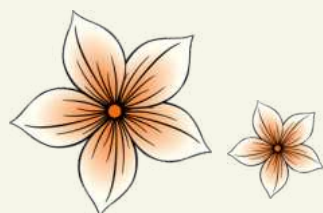
HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

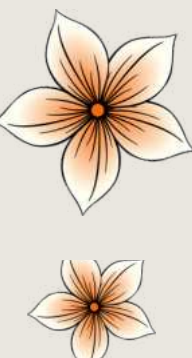
Birthdays are not so important for Turks as other traditions, but at funerals and weddings, they serve food to people for three days. Sarma and dolma are the most popular meals that Turks share during celebrations.



WELCOMING NEW NEIGHBOURS

When new neighbors move in, Turks are ready to prepare some meals in their homes and visit newcomers, thinking they are hungry and cannot cook anything in the new house. They usually ask them if they need some help and offer them some food.





TRADITIONAL SLOVAK FOOD

Bryndzové halušky - Potato Dumplings

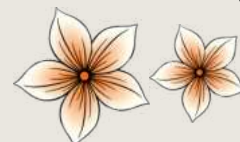
It is Slovakia's national dish with sheep cheese. Real dumplings are made of potatoes, flour, salt and special sheep cheese called "bryndza", seasoned with bacon and scallion.

DUMPLINGS:
GRATED
POTATOES
SALT
FLOUR
EGGS
WATER
BACON
ONION

DRINKS

BOROVÍČKA

Traditional drink of Slovaks is borovička, which is a popular alcohol among the majority of Slovaks. Of course, we also have a lot of Slovak beer brands and wines served at various celebrations, but if you want to relax, you can visit many cafes and enjoy your coffee or tea.



PRICE

Cooking at home is more economical and cost efficient than eating in restaurants. Prices in restaurants: soup €3-6, pizza €7, meat + potatoes/rice €15, beer €3, coffee €2.50. Meals in a cheap restaurant are about €8.50.



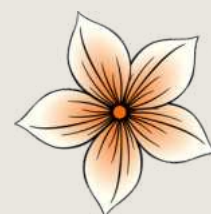
HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

The Easter menu includes hard boiled eggs, potato salad, and smoked ham. Traditional cake is baked in shape of a lamb. Some people prepare Easter cheese "hrudka" or bake sweet bread called "paska".

Traditional Christmas Eve dinner starts with Christmas wafers "oplátky" with honey and garlic. Christmas wafers are thin unleavened wafers. All family members exchange good wishes and blessings while sharing the wafers with others. Next comes sourkraut soup, followed by fish (usually carp) and potato salad. Carp is often baked or fried. Typical Christmas sweets are honey spice cookies and walnut strudel "orechovník." At celebrations and parties, the most commonly served Slovak appetizer is garnished bread sandwich. "Oštiepok" is a traditional cheese made from sheep milk.

WELCOMING NEW NEIGHBOURS

Welcoming new neighbors in Slovakia is a great way to create future good relationships. Slovaks often offer the newcomers their national meals or some sweets like biscuits and cakes. In the past, people used to offer visitors bread with butter and salt. This has roots in an old Czechoslovak fairy tale called "Salt over Gold." In this fairytale, people discovered that they can't exist without salt.



Mental health awareness and education



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND HOW IT IS IN SLOVAKIA.

Mental health is basically about how people think, what they feel and how they behave. It can affect one's life, relationships and, in the end, even physical well-being. It is important that we raise awareness on mental health and educate people about this topic. We can do so by educating ourselves and informing others, listening without judgement, working in some campaigns or auxiliary groups, or promoting understanding about mental health issues.

Stigma surrounding mental health still exists, to some extent, in Slovak society. Some individuals may still view mental health issues as taboo or a sign of weakness, which can discourage people from seeking help or talking openly about their struggles.

However, the increasing numbers of people who seek out help is a good sign on the way of raising awareness on mental health problems. People deal with stress or anxiety on daily basis, and it should not be considered a sign of weak mind to come and talk to some professional therapist or psychologist. The change is visible when young people are willing to talk to some specialists. On the other side, young generation of Slovakia is very affected by depression and anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly increased stress, anxiety, feelings of loneliness and social isolation, and even had an impact on economy of families and disrupted the daily routine of people.

HOW WE TRY TO RAISE AWARENESS IN SLOVAKIA:

Bringing awareness about mental health isn't a one-and-done task. It takes hard work from each and every one of us. We have to show support and understanding for people who are dealing with mental health issues. In educational institutions, we do so by creating supportive environment that prioritises students' mental health and well-being, for example, incorporating mental health education into the curriculum at all levels, promoting self-care, supporting each other, and also ensuring the presence of a school psychologist or counselor in every school.

INTERVIEW WITH VANESA AND ZSÓFIA:

Do you think it is important to share tips for maintaining good mental health?

Z: Providing tips for maintaining good mental health can help prevent mental health issues from developing or worsening. Openly discussing and sharing tips on mental health also normalizes the conversation around it.

V: Sharing tips is important, because you never know what helps the person you are talking to, and maybe you give them the help they need.

What helps you when dealing with stress or anxiety?

Z: Sharing my thoughts and feelings with my friend, reduced time spent on devices and social media, simple activities that can calm my mind, and a healthy diet.

V: Talking, food and activities that make me divert the focus from reality and daily problems, e.g. reading.

Have you ever been to a psychologist?

Z: No, but I want to try it once – maybe he can give me a good advice on how to solve problems, how to see the problems in a different way than my family or friends.

V: Yes, and it helped a lot to have an objective perspective. I encourage people who want to go and see a specialist.

How would you help someone who is struggling with their mental health?

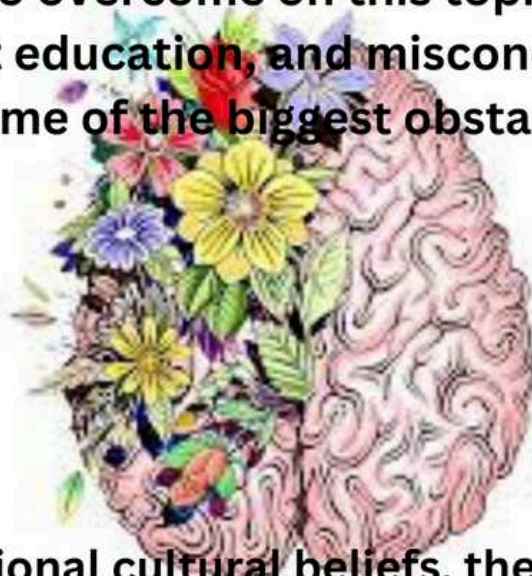
Z: Listen without judgment, offer reassurance and support, encourage to seek professional help, encourage healthy routines, be patient and persistent.

V: Listening and patience are crucial, also giving space when needed, but never make people feel they are alone.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND EDUCATION IN TÜRKİYE



A healthy mental mind means a healthy, durable physical body, people, family, relationships, and conversation. Mental health issues have started to be taken seriously by most countries. Türkiye is one of them. In recent years, Türkiye has witnessed significant progress. Thanks to awareness programs, social media platforms, and well-prepared education, prejudice and stigma have decreased. Although these numbers have decreased, there are still many challenges to overcome on this topic. Traditional cultural beliefs, insufficient education, and misconceptions about mental illness are some of the biggest obstacles to progress.



To begin with traditional cultural beliefs, there are numerous beliefs in Türkiye. Some of them are family and their support; gender roles; and stigma. Family is a vital issue for Turkish culture. The stronger the family ties, the less likely a person is to have mental problems, or if a person is supported by family members, that person is more likely to share or seek support for mental problems. In terms of gender roles, some regions' people expect that men are likely to have power because of this expectation men may feel under pressure that they do not have any mental problems. Stigma is still a problem, despite rising awareness about mental health in Türkiye. People are afraid of being labeled or excluded by their communities if they share mental problems or want to consult a doctor for problems. These beliefs are the common ones and affect Turkish people's lives in bad ways.

Moreover, in Türkiye, like a lot of countries, education plays a crucial role in developing mental health awareness. Because of inadequate education about that topic, people do not know what they do or how they behave when they have mental problems. In the past, most people did not even know the meaning of mental problems, but thanks to new information, developments, and breaking taboos, humans are now more conscious and know what they do. For instance, every school has an advisor teacher for these problems, and universities have organized many conferences to raise mental health awareness. Also, there are some online or face-to-face therapy programs to find a treatment for your problems. With all of them, awareness of mental health is better in Türkiye.

In conclusion, the mental health awareness-raising process is quite hard due to conventional beliefs, insufficient education and programs, and misconceptions in Türkiye. It requires a lot of effort to heal, but when compared with the past, people are more conscious and more educated. By breaking taboos and stigma, raising the number of educated people, and improving misconceptions, Türkiye can increase awareness and consciousness about mental health issues.



Another problem is misconception. Turkish people are generally proud and strong. When they face a mental challenge, they do not accept it or tell others about it. They try to solve problems on their own because having a mental problem means weakness or insufficiency for them. This belief or idea might lead to self-blame and feelings of inadequacy, making it harder for individuals to seek help and receive support, but now people can admit and seek help for their problems. Everything will be better in time.



Mental Health & Education

Mental health has become a hot topic in recent years, and that is for good reason. It is important for us to stay healthy both physically and mentally, though this can be a difficult task for students of all ages. From elementary all the way to high school, students have to not only learn what's in their classes and pass their exams, but also how to socialise and manage their time. This can be stressful and exhausting.

WHAT ABOUT SLOVAKIA? 99

What can we do to reduce strain on our dear students and what have we already put into practice? Mental health awareness and education are slowly gaining traction in Slovakia, but there's still a long road ahead. It's heartening to see a shift in attitudes, with more people recognising the importance of mental well-being. However, there's a lingering stigma that prevents many from seeking help, or even discussing their struggles openly.



Education plays a critical role in breaking down these barriers. Schools are beginning to incorporate mental health topics into their curriculums and are now teaching students about coping strategies, self-care and where they should seek support. This early intervention is key in fostering a generation that is more understanding and empathetic toward mental health issues.

However, we can't just stop here. It is essential to reach all corners of society, including rural areas where mental health services may be limited. Even though mental health is something that can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, income or any other factors, teens and young adults are most frequently affected. We should do everything we can to help them with problems that can feel suffocating.



Additionally, training for healthcare professionals is imperative. Many of them still lack the necessary knowledge and sensitivity when dealing with mental illnesses. By investing in continuous education and training, we can ensure that everyone receives the support they deserve.

Above all, fostering a culture of openness and acceptance is paramount. We need to create safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable discussing their mental health without fear of judgment. It's through these conversations that we can truly make progress in improving mental health outcomes for all Slovaks.

What about Turkey?

There are many problems that a student must deal with - in regards to family, friends, classes and even love. If stressful situations are not handled well, they can cause a student to develop depression, anxiety or other mental health problems. School-aged kids spend the majority of their time at school, so schools provide a great opportunity for preventing and supporting students with such problems. Some schools are developing mental health programs where they teach teachers how to support mental health in their classrooms, how to recognize young students that are at risk of experiencing mental health problems and coping strategies for traumatic events. Equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge is an essential first step, though it is most definitely not the only one.

Although schools already have guidance counselors, whose job it is to take care of a student's psychology, as well as mental health programs, many times issues are undiagnosed and the students are forced to 'fight' it on their own. If the situation develops to a point where they can't cope on their own, they are often excluded from school or family due to their troubles. Students with diagnosed problems may have an individual education plan that can include information for teachers on how to handle and correct certain behaviors, so it is a good thing that a student with problems like anxiety, depression or any other mental health issue is diagnosed. Without proper training it can be difficult to differentiate mental health problems and behavioral problems, so kids can easily be misdiagnosed.



Teachers don't have the proper training for handling these problems, but what they do have, is the power to make their classroom safe space for every student.

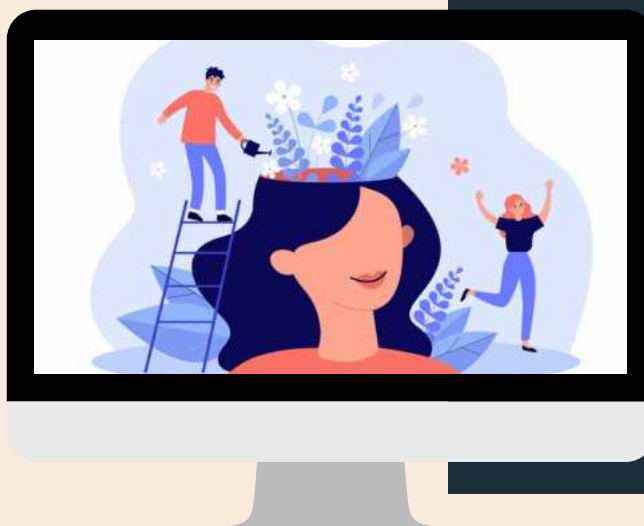
Depression, anxiety and mental health issues are a big problem in the Turkish education system. Because of the pressure of being forced to get the best grades at school to be accepted to the best universities, even a single bad exam can cause major feelings of inadequacy and major stress in students.

Because of the low understanding and the low acceptance of mental health issues, those students who suffer with severe anxiety and depression can spiral into terrible mental states. In Turkey, most teachers do not understand anything about common mental health issues, so students who suffer from depression, anxiety, ADHD, dyslexia, and other such symptoms are mostly labeled as "lazy" and "bad students."

This is also connected with the weak economy of Turkey. All students are constantly under stress to finish school and find a way to make a living. Most students choose jobs that can actually pay them enough to be able to afford a good living, which means the competition is fierce and slipping once can cause a spiral of doubting one's abilities and shame. Even if the students can manage to get a good university in a high paying field, they might not even be able to find a job in that field since everyone is trying to do the same thing. Because of this, quite a lot of the high success students choose to leave Turkey and work abroad, which connects these issues even more, since none of the brightest students that graduate from Turkey actually try to get jobs in Turkey which causes that there are even less high paying job opportunities.

With all of these being common knowledge, depression and anxiety in student bodies have sky rocketed, with most giving up on school since they believe it will not help them whatsoever. But since most schools are not trained to handle these students, they are shamed and shunned instead. To fix this, a wide sweeping amount of changes need to be done in Turkey to recognise mental illnesses and help the young generations. Only when we can actually support the students, will these issues start being fixed.

In conclusion, every student deals with their own struggles, as it is not very rare for teenagers and young adults to suffer from mental health issues. The most important thing, however, is that all students with these mental health problems should be diagnosed correctly and have access to the right treatment. Firstly, their family should realize, in case they don't, then this should be done by teachers in schools. Don't forget that to diagnose can be as difficult as it is to cure.



A huge thanks to a friend from another uni - Mustafa Alperen "Alphie" Sinav, who provided insight and wrote the information in the above section about the Turkish mental health and education situation.

ISSN: 1339-7370

PUBLISHED ONLINE:

Once a semester, twice a year

PUBLISHED BY:

Department of English Language and Culture,
Faculty of Education,
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

CONTACT:

KAJK, Dražovská 4, 94901 Nitra, Slovakia

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Mgr. Beáta Ďuračková, PhD. (Editor-in-Chief),
Mgr. Nikola Mačičková

Many thanks to all Slovak and Turkish contributors.

Contact e-mail: lmichelcikova@ukf.sk

I/2024

Special issue about a virtual exchange project between Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia and Mersin University, Turkey.