

## The main coordinator of the ERDI project visited Železnohorský region

MAS Železnohorský region, one of the local action groups, is a “working life partner” of the University of Pardubice in the ERDI project since 2016. The project deals with the creation of knowledge alliances in involved regions of five European countries (Finland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Netherlands) and Canada. The current phase of ERDI includes a visit of Finnish coordinator (Karelia University of Applied Sciences) at each project partner. The arrival of Sini-Tuuli Saaristo was planned to 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2018. Because MAS Železnohorský region is active in networking and creation of knowledge alliances for a long time, the goal of the meeting was to show the cooperation of different subjects in the region and its results.

Despite heavy frost and snow two days before, the weather happened to be very nice that day. The sun was shining whole day. Firstly, the Finnish coordinator and team of MAS visited the municipality of Valy. After warm welcome of the mayor Dušan Doležal we discussed the cooperation of Valy, MAS and university. The municipality was involved in a competition of “The best creator of Village Renewal Programme strategic document”. The mayor was a member of evaluation committee of the competition. The students created the strategic document for the municipalities from Železnohorský region following the lead of the mayor and the university teachers. This way the students gained practical experience in addition to the academic point of view. Then the development intentions and outcomes of cooperation within the association of municipalities were presented to Sini-Tuuli Saaristo during the walk through the village Valy.

Then the team of MAS and the Finnish coordinator went to the MAS office in Heřmanův Městec. There was held the meeting between MAS team and Finnish coordinator about the current state of the ERDI project and the future steps. After lunch in restaurant MAPLE the group continued to the castle ruins of Lichnice where you can find a great example of cooperation of municipalities – a lookout tower Milada. Then the team continued to Berlova limekiln which is available to tourists thanks to cooperation of the town of Třemošnice, National geopark of Železné hory and local tourist information center. Moreover, the town of Třemošnice cooperates in education with local high school and local employers.

The last stop of the excursion through the region was the minibrewery of Mr. Kutílek in Žlebské Chvalovice. The team together with Mr. Kutílek discussed certification of regional products and the willingness of producers to cooperate. For example, the Gourmet trail that joins local producers and restaurants was formed because of the proactive approach of producers. The Gourmet trail offers excellent specialties to eat and drink to visitors, as well as demonstrations of craftsmanship.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March at the University of Pardubice, there was held workshop of Finnish coordinator together with representatives of University of Pardubice and MAS Železnohorský region. The topic was competences to international projects, as well as the aspects of cooperation of MAS and university because one of the goals of MAS and ERDI project is improving of incorporating the practise into the study, so that the skills and knowledge of higher education graduates are better suited to the needs of the regional labour market. There will be outputs from the workshop with all international partners that will serve to compare and to draw inspiration from each other.