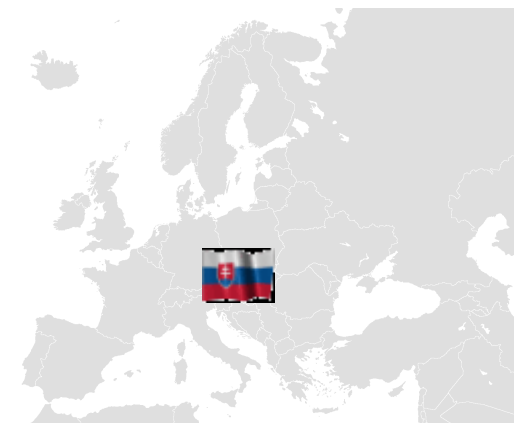


Interviews with Immigrants

Interview to J.K. Slovakian, emigrated in Australia and U.S.A.

Interviewed by Milan Pukancik



Personal Data

First name: J.K.

Age: 27

Country of origin: Slovakia

Year of emigration: (2003, 2005) **Country of destination:** (Australia, USA)

Now living in: Slovakia **Since:** (2008)

Interviewed by: Milan Pukancik

Date and place: 26. 02. 2009

Personal History of Emigration

Before leaving

1. *How old were you when you left your country? Moving to another country was your own decision?*

22 yrs. Yes, it was my own decision.

2. *Did you leave alone, with your family, or with other people you knew? How many relatives did you leave behind?*

I travelled alone, all my family and friends were left in Slovakia.

3. *Why did you leave your country? Were you looking for a job? Had you religious or political problems? Did you just wish to know new countries and new people? Other reasons?*

The main reason was to study the language (English). But also for the experience with other culture, different people and I it was also my dream to live and work somewhere abroad.

I never had any religious or political problems.

my goal was to know better other countries, different people and also my own will to be independent, to earn some money, making my travellers dreams come true and also to know my own skills and capability.

4. *How did you choose your destination? Did you know where to go and what to do? Did you know the language?*

My destination was any English speaking country. I make my decision according to possibilities to study and also the fact that I had already knew somebody in the target country or some of my friends were there even before.
my knowledge of language was on the very beginning level.

5. *Tell me something about the expectations you had when you left your country: did you think to remain in the country of emigration, .or to come back home?*

Well, I expected the amazing country with amazing people, I will learn the language very quickly and gain many other new and positive experiences, a unique opportunity to visit interesting places. I never wanted to stay abroad permanently. I studied university in Slovakia. Australia is very far from Slovakia, from my friends, my family which I wanted to be with.

Travel

1. *Which means of transport did you use?*

Plain.

2. *How long was your journey?*

To Australia 24 – 30 hours / to USA 9 – 12 hrs.

3. *Tell me something about your feelings along the journey.*

For the very first time I was excited from every moment and from the chance to stay for a while in every transit country (Singapore for example). Later I perceived the flights as something inevitable. There is always a lot of stress before the journey, administrations, forms, allowances same in Slovakia as in other countries.

First Impact

1. *Tell me something about the first impact with the new country. What first happened when you got to your destination?*

Maybe I was lucky, but I met unbelievably nice and always smiling and helpful people. First impression after my arrival was very hot air temperature and strong sun. I was heartily welcomed by gorgeous people, who helped me to find accommodation.

2. *How much time did you need to find a house?*

Accommodation for me was already booked before my arrival. Travelling to USA I had just contacts on some places but I was helped by mates from Slovakia, who helped me much.

3. *How much time did you need to find a job?*

For the first time in it was about 1 – 2 weeks, I was helped by country mates, the next job I found after about 5 months. I worked always as part-time worker in gastronomy and tourist enterprises, not very expert positions.

4. *Which were the main difficulties you encountered within the first period? What did you mainly miss (home, friends, language, food, tradition, other issues)? Were there any countryman of yours waiting for you?*

Unknown environment, difficult orientation in new local area, lack of language knowledge, not familiar with ruler, norms, acts, many thing perceived as usual and normal are in new country absolutely different. In despite I was helped by many people I felt depressed and exhausted from very simple things.

What I missed as the first thing was my domestic cuisine. We tried to keep some traditions.

I was in contact with one family acquaintance. Later I knew more country mates.

5. *Did you feel “different”? What did you think about that people? What did they think about you?*

Yes, absolutely. Central Europeans are more conservative as people in Australia or in the USA. Australians or Americans were (are) very natural, communicative, friendly, sometimes shallow and impressed me as careless. In the USA I perceived a bit higher tension and restlessness compared to Australia. Their opinion about me was strongly affected by the stereotypes about the region I come from. All we are “Eastern” – poor, suffering from war and so. But it was not always. Some have better knowledge, some have not.

After some time (6 months/one year)

1. *What have you done in order to try and integrate in the new country?*

I improved my English. I communicated more with people, even with strange people. And I economised the water usage (Australian national trend)

2. *Did anybody (institutions, associations, single people, native or guest) help you to integrate into the community?*

My friends helped me the most, especially country mates who had to solve very similar problems as me. Very important for me was my English teacher and the school employees and colleagues from my work.

3. *Did you feel that the help you received was enough? What could have been done and was not to help your integration.*

Yes, as in this case everybody will receive as much help as he/she asked for or need. For my very poor English I missed contacting local people in the beginning.

4. *What did you feel was the most effective help you received?*

Accommodation and work were the most important factors of my stay. Both were found with a huge help of my friends. And also useful advices from teachers from school I attended.

Now

1. *Is the country in which you actually live the one you reached first? did you achieved citizenship? or have you moved again? and why?*

I travelled a lot. But I decided to live in Slovakia.

2. *[only for people still living abroad] What do you think now about the country you actually live? does it agree with the imagine you had before coming here?*

3. *Is there any unpleasant event (racism, indifference, cold, etc.) you went through, or you witnessed ?*

Not directly in Australia, but there are strong affirmative actions for Europeans who want to come to live to Australia opposite to Asians.

4. *Do you think that the differences between this country and your motherhood have increased or decreased by the time? or did they remain the same?*

Differences decreased but by my opinion are still noticeable.

5. *How do you look back to your experience ?*

a. *Is there anything you "learned" from your new fellow citizens (job, culture, food, lifestyle, social or political institutions, etc.)?*

Yes, overview and less criticising and complaining. I got a different opinion about myself about world and about many other things.

b. *Is there anything you think they "learned" from you?*

Frankness and the value of real and long-term friendship and distinguishing the real friends, friends and acquaintances. Persistence, purposefulness and diligence.

c. *Is there anything you think they could "learn" from you, if only they knew you better?*

I am sure there is.

d. *Which actually are your feelings? Have you any regrets? If you could go back in your life, would you come in the same place? or would you go elsewhere? or would you stay home?*

A lot of good positive memories, I would be glad to visit Australia again. I not impressed so much by the USA. If there would be a chance to commute between Slovakia and Australia it would love to live there.

Finally: what do you think about your future? are you going to stay in your new country? or to go elsewhere? or to go back home ?

I will probably stay in Slovakia or even in Europe.