

EASTERN EUROPE TRIP 1 CAN-GO REPORT

Trip Location: Hungary, Serbia, and Croatia

Trip Dates: June 15-22, 2022

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Trip Summary

Our first day in country we spent in group prayer and discernment about how to proceed, ending the day with a Bible study/prayer meeting with the Tolna congregation. One thing that became clear to us after our conversations with Tony Frei (EFM missionary to Hungary and EFCI Europe director) on the way from the airport to the guest house, was that there was a lot of work needed on our relationship with Tony. This was important both for Tony's relations with EFM and for his relationship with any future missionaries coming into the region. Stan posed the thought of this as more of a Luke 8 trip, a first, brief, foray into the region that the 12 and later the 72 would later spend more time in. We laid out three goals for our trip: first to improve our relationship with Tony and help him catch a vision for expanding his/EFM's work in the region beyond Hungary, second to scout potential new field sites, third for the future missionaries on the team to answer the questions "can we see ourselves working here" and "can we see ourselves working with EFM."

Our second day we went to Kolked, Hungary and met some of the leaders of one of the Roma congregations that Tony works with. We toured the house that he is converting into a church and had lunch with the leaders at their home. Then we picked up our interpreter in Serbia and drove to Sombor, Serbia. We did a prayer walk in the city center, talked with several people we met there, drove to a strip mall, and spoke to several people there, then returned to the Roma leaders' home and ate dinner with them. We spent the night back in Tolna.

Our third day we visited a different Roma leader in Kolked, then drove to Osijek, Croatia. Tony has been praying for this city for over 10 years but has never looked at starting a work there. We had lunch there, then did prayer walks in the city center and spoke to several people. We returned to Tolna that evening for dinner with the Freis at their home.

Sunday morning, we spent at the guest house, because a couple from Tony's congregation was in a serious car accident and he was ministering to the family. We left late morning, met up with two cars of young adults from the Tolna church, and caravanned to Vukovar, Croatia. We had a picnic lunch with the Tolna friends at the waterfront and then held a worship service in the park. A family from Osijek who we met the day before joined us in Vukovar. We ended the day with a team debrief at the guest house in Tolna.

Monday, we loaded up and drove to Budapest with Tony, he showed us a few sights and then we spent the evening with his daughter's family. They are leaders of the church plant that Tony pastors in Budapest. We talked and sang with them, then had a team debrief at a guest house near the airport. All of us flew out the next morning.

We felt that all three of our team goals were met. Our relationship with Tony was much improved at the end of the trip and he seemed excited about the possibility of new ministries beyond the border of Hungary. We scouted (though briefly) three potential ministry sites and felt strongly that we should look wider and deeper in the region. We felt that we had "man of peace" encounters in Sombor but much more clearly in Osijek. Finally, all three future missionaries on the team ended

the trip with the feeling that they could see themselves working in this region and could see themselves working with EFM.

C for Champions:

Vivian's burden for Europe to be reached and interest in going on another trip to region, Fred and Jonelle feel strongly that this region needs to be explored further, all three willing to recruit participants for next trip.

A for Affirmation:

We don't know because we haven't made a full Luke 10 trip yet.

N for Need:

We were on the edges of where we want to be but even on the edges, we sensed an openness to conversation about the Gospel and for deeper connections so while we can't affirm explicitly that in the areas we're going to go it'll be like this we do have a sense that there may be open doors and that it should be explored. Ukraine also has great need at this point due to the ongoing war with Russia and was initially had the championship of Jim LeShana.

Some stats from the Joshua Project:

- Serbia is 0.72% evangelical.
- Croatia is 0.42% evangelical.
- Bosnia-Herzegovina is 0.16% evangelical.
- North Macedonia is 0.17% evangelical.
- Montenegro is 0.26% evangelical.
- Slovakia is 1.46% evangelical.
- Slovenia is 0.21% evangelical.
- Ukraine is 3.62% evangelical.

G for Gifting:

"While we don't know the exact region that we should go to, I am fully confident that Fred, Jonelle and Vivian are gifted and able as God leads to be a part of this pioneering ministry" Stan. Gifts/skills needed may include hospitality, willingness to learn language, some kind of training in dealing with trauma/grief or reconciliation due to the conflict ridden history of the region.

O for Opportunity:

The soil seemed ready for good news where we were, but we are unable to answer about other parts of the region, though this whole area has extensive Orthodox and Catholic history and exposure which may make the soil more or less ready depending on the spot. Man of peace encounters in Sombor, where several people approached us in friendship instead of us initiating the contact, and Osijek, where our first two encounters were people giving us a partially used parking permit and cash for our next permit, our next encounter was someone giving us fruit for the baby from her garden and our third was with a waiter who was willing to let us leave the restaurant to exchange more cash when we didn't have enough to pay the full bill. We also had two especially welcoming local interactions including a young family who exchanged contact information with Tony and joined us for our outreach the next day in Vukovar. The region seemed open to Americans. We question whether this is a new field site for EFM or a branch of Tony's ministry.

Is this a CAN GO for EFM at this time?

Of the CAN GO criteria, affirmation is currently weakest, and gifting is strongest with need as an equal or close second.

Steps since trip met together to discuss other possible sites in region that are either on our hearts or seem to have great need.

Luke 10 Team Recommendation to EFM

We recommend sending another team to this region but further afield, at least a day's drive from Tolna. Tony has a heart and desire to do anything within a half day's drive of Tolna, so a new field should fall outside of that range. Possibly flying into Belgrade or Sarajevo. Of note, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Slovenia all have evangelical populations under 1%. Extend invitation to Tony to join team on future trip, as participant instead of host.