

UNICA 6th PR & Communications Workshop

Programme of the geothermal tour



Programme of the Reykjanes Peninsula bus tour, 7 June 13:00

Meeting point: Entrance to the University Main Building.

The bus will take you to the breathtaking scenery of the Reykjanes peninsula, endless lava fields and geothermal areas. We will walk across the “Bridge Between the Continents” which connects the American and Eurasian tectonic plates and visit the Reykjanesviti lighthouse.

During our tour we will go to Reykjanes Peninsula and head to the geothermal field in **Krýsuvík**. We will drive along **Kleifarvatn** which is the largest lake on the peninsula, situated in the southern part of the peninsula on the fissure zone of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. On the peninsula you can pass a bridge that is exactly on the edge where two tectonic plates meet.

Our guide in the tour will be **Mr Snæbjörn Guðmundsson**, a PhD student at the University of Iceland and a writer as well as a teacher in the University of Youth and in the University Train. Snæbjörn is an author of the popular book *Exploring Iceland's Geology* as well as of several answers on the infamous Icelandic Science Web. He is among those that are branding the University of Iceland - empowering the force of student branding.

There are two areas with high temperature that can be found along Lake Kleifarvatn: Seltún/Krýsuvík and another one to the east. The lake's greatest depth is 97 m. As a consequence of a large earthquake in 2000, the lake began to diminish, and 20% of its surface has since then disappeared. The cracks that opened up during the earthquake have since then slowly filled again and by 2008 the lake regained its previous surface level.

The novel *Kleifarvatn* by the well-known Icelandic writer Arnaldur Indriðason was named after the lake.

Seltún is a so-called *solfatara* field. Sulphur has been mined at Krýsuvík from time to time. The latest attempt was made in the late 19th century by a British company, which set up its working base here but had to give up soon after. At Seltún, there are mud pools and steaming ground where some sulphur and also white and yellowish brown sulphates are deposited. The sulphates dissolve in water and become mottled and disappear in rainy weather. The largest mud pools are east of the road, one of them almost extinct and filled with mud washed in by the stream from the *solfatara* creek west of the road.

On the tour we will also visit **Reykjanesviti**, Iceland's oldest lighthouse. It serves as a landfall light for Reykjavík and Keflavík. The tower is a 31 metres (102 ft) tall construction, situated on the southwestern edge of the Reykjanes peninsula. The original structure was built in 1878; just eight years later the building was destroyed by an earthquake. In 1929 the current Reykjanesviti lighthouse, a concrete construction yet with traditional looks, was illuminated. Its focal plane measures 73 metres above sea level.

The lighthouse is located near an area of thermal activity, and steam from this source is often seen in photographs of the lighthouse. Very close to the lighthouse there is an enormous beach with bird cliffs. Several eruptions have been on Reykjanes and in the ocean close to the lighthouse. The Island Eldey which can easily be seen from the coast was formed in an eruption in the 13th century.