

Eight women: Victoria, Sara, Agata, Małgosia, Olivia, Emilia, Karolina and Nikola together with Mr Arkadiusz Gniewek and his wife Anna – in such a group we set off to conquer Portugal.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018, we met in Tychy near the swimming pool and it was the beginning of a journey into the unknown. At the point, we have already known that this was going to be an unforgettable adventure. It did not matter how many times we had the apprenticeships. Everyone tearfully said goodbye to their families and friends, then only a journey to Warsaw and Ryanair took us from Modlin Airport to Faro, Portugal.

The first thing we saw when we got off the plane was the blue sky. A few moments later, after collecting our baggage, we met our guardian – Philip, the representative of the organisation "Bragamob." From the airport, he took us directly to the village, which for a month has become our home - Portimao. We got into our apartment and started unpacking the suitcases, to be able to move as quickly as possible to explore this beautiful town.

Nikola and Karolina worked as trainees at the Squash Apartments, and other girls: Agata, Sara, Wictoria, Emilia and Małgosia worked in the 'Mistral' restaurant. Trainees worked in various positions, performing the roles of waitresses, bartenders, kitchen helps or room cleaners. The first days were hard work. New places, new people, different cultures and nationalities. Later it was only better. People who were initially strangers to us, quickly became our friends. A place that seemed so different, soon we got to know inside out. And so, the weeks passed...

Our stay in Portugal consisted not only of work and visiting Portimao, our guardian Philip also arranged four wonderful trips for us. The first one already took place on July 7th. The whole group went to Zoomarine, which is a zoo combined with an amusement park, where everyone can find something for themselves: animal shows, sliding adventures, carousels. It was such a fun!

Another trip, a week later, amused us even more. We went to Slide & Splash Waterpark. In short: lots of slides, including a few that were breath-taking, it was fun from the morning till the evening. Despite the fact that the sun was behind the clouds, all of us were affected by it and we came back with a beautiful red tan, so the next day we treated our burns at home, avoiding the sun like real vampires. Only one of us dared to go outside to get the whole group some medication for sunburns (as it turned out nothing works better than cucumber compresses and aloe ointment!).

The third excursion was a boat trip to Benagil Caves - caves hidden in the cliffs. Our travelling companion was a beautiful parrot with which everyone could take a photo. The parrot was very polite throughout the cruise, and people enjoyed feeding it. The caves varied: some were larger, others smaller, but all of them nothing but beautiful! After watching the caves, it was time for a bath. We could get into the water in a place where there was no bottom, somewhere in the middle of the ocean, but to say that it was cold, is not enough. After all, the low temperature did not stop anyone from a good fun.

A day later we were transported to the 'end of the world', that is to the village of Sagres. When we got onto the cliffs, we saw only the endless ocean, blue sky and fog... and none of us was surprised that people in ancient times believed that there was nothing more beyond what they could see. It was a true journey to the end of the world. After a while, we went to the charming town of Lagos where we visited one of the most beautiful beaches and could see spectacular views.

Unfortunately, July 29th came far too quickly. It was a day of our homecoming, the end of our adventure in sunny Portugal.

During a month apprenticeship we have learned some discipline, order and understanding, we have broken language barriers, got some new knowledge and skills. We are grateful to the people from a foreign country (or perhaps not so foreign?) for such a great help and involvement in our education.

**We would also like to thank the headmistress, Ms Joanna Żebrowska, for the opportunity to work as trainees, and special thanks to our guardians, Mr Arkadiusz Gniewek and his wonderful wife Anna, for their care, concern, understanding and patience during the whole period of our stay abroad.**

*Agata Kajstura, Wiktoria Podkówka*