

Bielsko-Biala, Poland – Student's Report

Friday /Saturday, Saturday 23. November 2010, the trip

We left at exactly 2.21, on schedule, which made us deeply convinced that nothing in our journey could possibly go wrong. Our disappointment started upon entering an extremely smelly compartment; we completely wiped it over with antibacterial tissues so we could breathe. The next thing were construction works on the railway in Slovenia which caused us to miss the train we were supposed to catch and we were damned to wait for the next one for six hours in Vienna. It is important to emphasise how our teachers had better time than we did. After 28 hours, at 6.30 AM on Sunday, we finally got to Bielsko Biala.

Sunday, 24. November 2010, relaxation

Each of us used Sunday to spend time to get to know our host families. They took us places near their homes; the park, the ZOO, the mountains and so on.

Monday, 25. November 2010, introduction

We came to the school our hosts go to: the Mikołai Kopernik high school, which is one of the most beautiful schools in Poland. We got a short "tour de school" and heard of the legend of a student who killed himself for not being allowed to take exams in that school.

Then we attended the conference on "Piracy – what is it and what may the consequences be". It was held by members of the police who deal with Internet-related crimes. For instance, they imprisoned an IT student for being in possession of illegal software. They also confiscated his computer and charged him 250 000 €. An interesting fact we learned was that 99% of Internet users own some illegal software on their PC. Movies and music can be downloaded, but can be played for private purposes only! The most dangerous Internet crimes are identity thefts, money frauds and manipulations along with invading bank accounts.

Next, we were officially greeted in the Town hall by the Head for education of the town of Bielsko Biala. We received lovely gifts: maps of Bielsko Biala, books with important and interesting places in the town etc. We were also introduced with history, economics and culture of Bielsko. We were fascinated by the fact that 40% of the town money goes for education. They have a very low unemployment rate - only 3-5%, the most cars per person in Poland, but also the highest taxes in the country as well. The famous things from Bielsko are: Bolek & Lolek, Fiat 126, gliders (tiny planes), and, of course, tourism - historical and adrenalin sports tourism.

Tuesday, 26. November 2010

We were introduced to geographical and historical basics of Poland, the most important Polish scientists (like Marie Curie and Mikołai Kopernik), writers, musicians (like Frederich Chopin), sportsmen (Robert Kubica, Adam Małysz) and meals (like Pierogi and Żurek) during lovely presentations.

Later that day, we visited Auschwitz, the most famous concentration camp in the world where more than 2 million people were cold-bloodedly murdered. We found out that there are three camps-Auschwitz I, II and III, and that they vary in inhuman conditions, terrain, number of victims and experiments done on prisoners. We were so shaken by everything we heard and saw that we will never be able to learn history in the same way. We were part of the darkest part of it; unforgettable experience which we never want to repeat.

Wednesday, 27. November 2010

We visited the beautiful city of Krakow, which is filled with churches, art and life. We were especially delighted with the story of a competent young Queen Hedwiga. She christianised Lithuania without using force, united Poland, founded the first University in Krakow and was always worrying about the welfare of her people. Then we had some time on our own and we used it to get in touch with the local cuisine.

Thursday, 28. November 2010

We had our last project meeting in Poland, where we were introduced with the tasks we had to make to close the meeting. After that, some were competing in swimming, but we, the Croatian group just sat aside. Because we refused to take part in the swimming competition, we were forced to go bowling and we had a great time. For a decent farewell, we went to experience the night life of Bielsko, in spite of the chronic lack of sleep.

Friday, 29 November 2010

We couldn't believe that all that time had passed so quickly. Our hosts and we became friends and we didn't want to part. Luckily, there is Facebook, thanks to which we can still communicate. We are looking forward to February when we will finally see our new friends again.



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