

## COMENIUS LIVE! SPAIN



The first meeting of Comenius Live! took place in Alicante (24 - 26.03.2014) and the main topic of discussion was the European economy and job market.

On the 23rd of March a group of students from our school, from 2f accompanied by professor Ewelina Smak and headmaster Barbara Wieloch took off to Spain. Six happy students (Dominika Dewicz, Joanna Trzeszczyńska, Beata Urbanek, Stanisław Godzwon, Maciej Krasieński and Zuzanna Konieczna) stayed in Spanish families for four days, having an amazing opportunity to meet and work with people from around Europe as well as get to know the Spanish culture and cuisine.

I may say that the welcome we received at the airport was very warm. The Spanish are very friendly, and apparently in the habit of hugging and kissing as a form of greeting. This attitude helped to get rid of the nervousness, and made all of the students quickly feel at home.



The first day was spent on getting used to the Spanish culture as well as mixing with other students. We received a warm welcome from the mayor of Alicante in the town hall, and spent the day on group work. In small groups we were investigating what is necessary for an individual of a certain profession in a certain country to be able to survive on the monthly salary, and moreover what things will he be able/willing to sacrifice. The task was preceded by a research done back in Poland. Each country was to prepare a list of professions and their monthly wages, as well as to fill the list of items in with their prices in respective countries. This enabled us to conclude where the “survival” is the easiest. It helped us to rethink what is essential to ‘make the ends meet’ and contrast it with our previous assumptions. The topics we investigated were also job opportunities for teenagers and pocket money. At the end of the day we took a long walk, and visited Santa Barbara castle located on a top of a hill. The view was just breathtaking.



The second day was dedicated to the idea of higher education. After having discussed in small groups what qualities make us more competitive as future employees, we made a promise to ourselves – everyone chose one thing that they want to work on. We taped it and decided to do all that we can in order to fulfil it. While ones promised to be more courageous or work on their foreign languages, others decided to embrace their inner charms and stay themselves. Afterwards, we visited University of Alicante. The lectures were to show us how does the university function, and what opportunities it creates for the students “in the long run”, so how it enables the student to find a well-paid job after graduation. The last point was a visit in a firm Jijona, which produces turrón, a Spanish candy made of honey, caramel and different types of nuts.



The last day of the project was the most interesting in terms of “the classes”. We had a chance to take part in a debate, moderated by an expert, an academic professor. There were three questions, that we were supposed to answer:

Is the university degree a ticket for a job?

Should all students take part in international internships?

Should all students take part in projects such as Comenius?

Opinions were varied. Depending on the country as well as on age, students presented different approaches to the matters of education and economy. The discussion enabled us to look at the matter from a wider perspective but most of all allowed us to see how our attitude differs depending on our nationality. It was quite surprising to learn how different experiences and background influence our point of view. All the pros and cons were listed on the board, but even then reaching the consensus was not an easy task. We could see for ourselves that making such decisions can be harsh. The question, who to choose, was rather tricky and triggered a stormy conversation. Then we visited an international company Panama Jack, and had a chance to learn something about their policies and market practices. All the hard work was ended, when we left off to the beach (or vamos a la playa, should I say?). The little picnic wasn't ruined even by the strong wind.

On the last evening before our departure our Spanish hosts organized International Party however all the students participating in the project, prepared some traditional dishes. In our case piernik and pierogi ruskie (which came to everyone's liking!) for this occasion. We spent a great deal of time laughing and joking, and were all amused by the magic show prepared by one of our colleagues Alvaro. But after the pleasant part came the least pleasant one – saying our goodbyes. When everyone started thanking everyone the atmosphere got more serious and more emotional. We took pictures and hugged all our newly-made friends, who were so kind and amazing. Everyone was very moved.

We left on Thursday morning, having spent some amazing moments in Spain and deeply regretting that our trip could not last any longer. We came home with a wider perspective, a better understanding of other people and European economy and job market, as well as newly-made friends.