



Hello Romane and Renia,

we are very happy that you came to our school and we could meet you, have conversations in English, learn about your cultures and just to hang out. Unfortunately, the Corona Virus forced all of us to stay at homes and contact each other only via Internet.

So, we thought that we might ask you some questions and get to know you a bit better. Here are a few of them:

Marta: Jak wam się podoba polska kultura i obyczaje? **How do you like Polish culture and customs?**

Renata: I think what I like in Polish people the most is the national self-awareness (consciousness). Maybe it's because of our common history but the Polish lifestyle, the culture and the customs, people's attitudes, the gastronomy are really familiar and homely for me. When I went out somewhere, I didn't feel foreign or lost.

Romane: I think I discovered only a small part of Polish culture and customs. I liked the little I saw. In Istebna, during a seminar with other volunteers, I visited an old wooden house where a man played old instruments. It was really nice. I like wooden churches and colorful houses like in the city center of Wroclaw. I also like Polish people lifestyle and attitude. I feel people stand together and they are helpful.

Marta: Czy smakuje wam kuchnia polska? Jeżeli tak to co? **Do you like Polish cuisine? If so, what?**

Renata: When I was younger I was really fussy. I've overcome this bad habit. But there is one food which I don't like. Cabbage is a very national food in my country and I think it also is in Poland. So first I was scared but finally I found really tasty meals. One of my favourite is the croquette with cheese and mushrooms.

Romane: Yes, I like Polish cuisine because there are a lot of vegetables. I tasted very good soup and I like smoked cheese.

Marta: Czy miałyście problem w porozumiewaniu się, nie znając języka polskiego? **Did you have a problem in communicating without knowing Polish?**

Renata: About the communication, I think among people from different countries, talking with each other is always hard at first. But there are a lot of ways to manage this problem. It may be finding a common language or using a phone or just asking somebody for help. But at the same time we can use not only the verbal way of communication but the non-verbal as well. If you're searching for something in the city, just a few words are enough and people can show you the good direction.

Romane: Sometimes it was hard to communicate, especially at the beginning of my project. This is a bit frustrating not to understand conversations and won't be able to have one with people around you. But I knew this challenge was part of my experience and I spoke English with many people. I also learned the basics in Polish, I had lessons and thanks to them it was easier to communicate.

Marta: Jakie miałyście plany przed pandemią, których nie mogłyście zrealizować? **What were your plans before the pandemic that you could not implement?**

Renata: I didn't know that it will happen and quarantine was really really hard for me and for everybody. I think I didn't have big plans. I just wanted to continue working, travelling.

Romane: Before the pandemic I planned to travel and visit many places with my flatmate. I wanted to go to Krakow, Gdansk and go hiking in natural parks. I was also hoping to meet more Polish people and make friends. At the end of March I should have had a seminar in Warsaw with other volunteers but finally we did it online. In Warsaw I also wanted to visit European organizations and the French Institute to find a future job.

Marta: W jaki sposób znosiłyście tęsknotę za rodziną i przyjaciółmi? **How did you deal with homesickness ?**

Renata: Before the pandemic it was easy. I'm very family centered and I could talk to my relatives when I wanted and needed contact. It was very helpful. But now it's not that easy. When something bad happens just around us, I'm thinking of being with the family who may change things. I could help them and they could help me to get through the hard moments.

Romane: I've already travelled and studied abroad for a long time, so I was able to manage this. Now I am used to make video calls with my family and friends. I miss them sometimes but I know I will come back home. I enjoy living abroad because this is a unique and exciting experience. I love discovering new places and have challenges. For me, this is one of the best way to learn more about the world and myself.

Marta: Czego nauczyła was pomoc osobom niepełnosprawnym? **What did you learn by giving help to people with disabilities?**

Renata: Work with people is the hardest thing. Not everybody can be always disciplined and tolerant. Sometimes I had to fight against my demons and not lose my patience when I had a bad day. It was the first thing which I wanted to improve. And I think before the virus in a lot of cases I'd performed well. It's important because if somebody really wants to help others, first he has to learn the way how to do it.

Romane: First I was impressed by the motivation and great attitude of some students. It was a good exchange or trade, because they were happy to receive my help and I felt useful and happy too. I learned that despite the difficulties, the most important part is to do your best to adapt to the situation and see the positive sides of it. Everyone evolves differently and it is important to respect that. I also learned it is essential to have a good team and to support each other. I felt good energy with the students and the teachers.

Marta: Jaka jest pierwsza czynność, którą zrobicie po powrocie do domu? **What is the first action you will do after returning home?**

Renata: I want to spend a lot of time with my family and my friends. But I don't have a lot of plans. I just want to be with them after a long time of separation.

Romane: When I go back home I will hug my family members and spend more time with my grandparents.

Marta: W jakim wieku można w waszym kraju zdawać prawo jazdy? **At what age can you issue a driving license in your country?**

Renata: The first step is a first-aid exam. Everybody can do it at any time (even 14 years old), it doesn't matter, but it has to be done before the driving exam. After that, they have to study and pass an exam. Young people can pass this exam 3 months before their 17th birthday. And after this they can start the driving lessons when they are 17 years old. Then they have to take 30 or more (if the teacher tells them to) lessons. And the final part is the practical driving exam.

Romane: In France you can get a driving licence from the age of 17. However, you have to wait until you are 18 years old to use it and drive on your own. From 15 years old you can begin driving lessons and then start the « guided driving » which means that you can drive with an adult, usually your parents.

Marta: Jakie miejsce podoba się wam we Wrocławiu i dlaczego akurat to miejsce? **What place do you like in Wrocław and why this place?**

Renata: I always feel relaxed and happy by a lake or a river. I really like the island in the city. Just sitting in a calm and quiet place, watching boats and listening to the bells sound from the cathedral. And there is a park just next to the ZOO with a Japanese garden. Romane found it. We went there once. It was so beautiful and we spent the whole afternoon there.

Romane: I enjoyed Ostrów Tumski, especially the Cathedral street. I went there during the sunset, the colors were warm, someone was playing an old instrument in the street. In front of me there was a huge and beautiful cathedral.

Marta: Jak spędzacie czas wolny? **How do you spend your free time?**

Renata: In my free time I read books, watch films, series, talk with my friends, paint, draw, walk outside, cook, ect.

Romane: I spend a lot of my free time doing sport. I swim, sometimes I run, and I do small strength exercises and when I have the possibility I go horse riding. I also love cinema, series and exploring new places with friends.

Marta: Czy jesteście zadowolone z wykonywanej pracy? Co najwięcej sprawia wam radości? **Are you satisfied with your work? What do you enjoy the most?**

Renata: Yes, I'm satisfied. I enjoy a lot of parts of the job. I like very much when I'm at the primary school during "świąteczna", sport lessons, I like to help in the "sekretariat" and generally I like everything..

Romane: Now it is not possible to say I am satisfied with my work because of this unusual situation. My work is completely different at home. Everything is online, I do not have contact with a lot of students and I cannot help as much as I did at the schools. But before the pandemic I enjoyed my work. It was a new and interesting experience. What I liked the most was the individual sessions with the students. I felt it was a good way to discuss, get to know each other better and practice English. I also enjoyed to teach French to some students.

Marta: Dziękuję Wam bardzo za wywiad i w imieniu moich koleżanek i kolegów ze szkoły życzę Wam jeszcze dobrego czasu w Polsce. Nie żegnamy się jeszcze. Mam nadzieję, że się wkrótce zobaczymy znowu w realu ☺ **Thank you very much for the interview and on behalf of my friends from school I wish**

you continue having such a good time in Poland. We are not saying goodbye yet. I hope to see you again in real life soon 😊