

## ERASMUS+ INTERNSHIP SUMMARY

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**School:** Déli Agrárszakképzési Centrum Bereczki Máté Mezőgazdasági és Élelmiszeripari Technikum, Szakképző Iskola

**Class:** 12Mg

**Place of Internship:** Quinta Vale Do Rio, Remelhe, Braga District, Portugal

**Internship Leader:** Sergio Armando Senra

**Profession:** Agriculture, Dairy Animal Breeding

**Project identification code:** 2024-1-HU01-KA122-VET-000219004

## WEEK 1

### Sunday, 22nd of September 2024: Arrival in Portugal

We departed at 7:00 AM from Budapest Liszt Ferenc International Airport after an hour of delay. Although our original flight schedule to Porto Francisco de Sá Carneiro Airport was affected, we remained excited. Upon arriving in Porto, we collected our luggage and passed through the restricted security area. From there, we boarded a bus bound for the Mobility Friends Campus in Gamil, near Barcelos, Braga District, Portugal.



The picture above shows our aircraft, registered SP-RZL, a Polish-registered Boeing 737-8-200 MAX operated by Ryanair's Polish subsidiary, Buzz Air.

After checking in at Mobility Friends in Gamil, we received the keys to our houses, unpacked, and settled in after the long journey. It was great to finally relax after hours of travel. In the evening, I joined some friends for a light soccer training session at the local pitch. It was a good way to stretch out and refresh ourselves after a day spent traveling.



### **Monday to Wednesday: Introduction to the Farm, Initial Tasks Familiarization**

On Monday, 23 September 2024, we were introduced to Sergio, the owner of Quinta Vale Do Rio, the farm where we will be working. Sergio walked us through the various aspects of farm management, explaining the tasks and routines that we would be involved in over the coming weeks.

After the introduction, we started working on our first tasks. We took a tour of the farm, checked the tractors and other equipment, and inspected the animals. It was a busy start, but the experience was fascinating. Every morning, we cleaned the feeding spots for the animals and replaced their food, ensuring they were well taken care of. The responsibility gave us a real sense of what goes into farm operations.

Every day before starting the tractors, we followed a pre-start checklist. This brief list included an exterior inspection to identify any new dents, scratches, or tire pressure issues. We also checked the lights (both interior and exterior), coolant and engine oil levels, as well as the steering system, brakes, and hydraulics.

One of the bigger tasks we tackled was preparing the shelter for the upcoming breeding season. This was a meticulous process, requiring us to clean and ready the space for the animals. The next few days were spent settling into a routine and learning the finer details of sustainable farming, from feeding schedules to machinery maintenance.





José, Sergio's brother, shared the rich history of their family farm during our visit in the first week. Born into a family of five brothers, José is one of only two who ventured beyond the agriculture industry. Now working in IT in Sweden, he returned home for a family visit but graciously took the time to walk us through the historical and cultural legacy of their farm and business.

The roots of their agricultural journey go back nearly a century when their grandfather became the first, and for a time, the largest farmer in their hometown of Remelhe. At its peak, the farm employed around 100 workers, cultivating the land and contributing to the local economy. Today, though their workforce has diminished to about 10 dedicated employees, they continue to manage the farm's operations, tending to corn and grass fields both on the farm and in surrounding areas, preserving the legacy of a family deeply intertwined with the land.

### **Thursday: Feeding Animals and Driving Tractors**

On Thursday, Mr. Senra allowed us to feed the cows and drive his tractors at Quinta Vale do Rio. He owns a Lamborghini, a John Deere, and two Deutz-Fahr tractors. We had the chance to drive the John Deere and operate the hydraulic front loader at the silo storage, after receiving proper safety training and systems instruction. He was impressed with our knowledge of



agricultural mechanics and told us the opportunities in Portugal if we consider to move to Portugal. Sergio said good mechanics are rare in the country, and we should check John Deere's professional opportunities.

### **Language Learning: 20 New Polish Expressions**

This week, I dedicated time to learning 20 new Polish expressions, which has been both a fun and enriching experience. I chose Polish as the language to learn abroad because I am already fluent in English, and I've always wanted to learn Polish due to having many friends from Poland.

At the campus, I've already made friends with a few Polish people: Mateusz, Oskar, Zuzanna, and Ula. Learning the language has allowed me to communicate better with them and has deepened our friendship. The expressions I've learned range from daily greetings to terms commonly used in our farming tasks. Mastering these phrases is helping me feel more connected and integrated with both my Polish friends and the local culture.

Hello.	Cześć.
How are you?	Jak się masz?
What's your name?	Jak masz na imię?
Where are you from?	Skąd jesteś?
I'm from Hungary.	Jestem z Węgier.
I'm from Poland.	Jestem z Polski.
I am 18 (eighteen) years old.	Mam 18 (osiemnaście) lat.
How old are you?	Ile masz lat?
Do you want to go for coffee with me?	Czy chcecie isc ze mna na kawę?
What do you work?	Czym się zajmujesz?
Good morning!	Dzień dobry!
Good night!	Dobranoc!
Please.	Proszę.
Thank you!	Dziękuję!
Yes.	Tak.
No.	Nie.
Excuse me!	Przepraszam.
I don't understand.	Nie rozumiem.
Can you help me?	Czy możesz mi pomóc?
What time is it?	Która jest godzina?

With these new Polish expressions, I feel more confident starting conversations and interacting with others in their native language. Simple phrases like "Cześć" (Hello) or "Jak się masz?"

(How are you?) help me break the ice and initiate casual conversations. Phrases such as "Jak masz na imię?" (What's your name?) and "Skąd jesteś?" (Where are you from?) allow me to connect with people on a personal level.

These basics enable me to navigate day-to-day interactions, whether it's thanking someone with "Dziękuję" (Thank you), or politely asking for assistance with "Czy możesz mi pomóc?" (Can you help me?). These key phrases are my first steps toward becoming more immersed in the Polish language and culture.

## WEEKEND TRIPS, ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

On Friday, we began with an OLS Language Exam to assess our English proficiency at the start of the trip, aiming for a proper comparison of our before-and-after language skills. I was pleased with my performance, achieving the highest level, C1. In 2022, I had already passed my C2 language exam through EF Set.



After the test, we had lunch and then set off for the nearest beach at Apúlia. While there, we spotted several bird species, such as ruddy turnstones and herring gulls. My mentor teacher, Dr. Peter Farkas, has extensive knowledge of wildlife, and we had a great time discussing the lives of these animals. We also took photos of the ocean panorama and the waves.





On Saturday, we visited Valença in northern Portugal, where we crossed the Portuguese-Spanish border over the Minho River via the Ponte Rodo-Ferrovária de Valença bridge. We briefly entered Spain to take a picture after crossing the border, and it was a unique experience to stand on the land of both countries at the same time.

After our quick trip to Spain, we explored the Fortaleza de Valença, an old fortress. We celebrated my classmate Tamás Kántor's birthday, bought some souvenirs, and had lunch at a pilgrim restaurant inside the fortress. Later, we headed to Viana do Castelo. Unfortunately, the Santuário de Sagrado Coração de Jesus (Monte de Santa Luzia) was closed due to an old-timer car race. Instead, we spent time at the port of Viana do Castelo, where we were lucky enough to catch the start of the race, making the experience even more fun.



On Sunday, we traveled to Porto for sightseeing. In the morning, we took a boat trip along the Douro River, where we saw the iconic Ponte Luís I bridge and later explored it on foot. The bridge is unique as cars travel on the lower level, while the metro runs on the top. A fun fact: when the metro is approaching, pedestrians must move to the other rail or the sidewalk, but when there's no traffic, you can walk along the metro tracks.

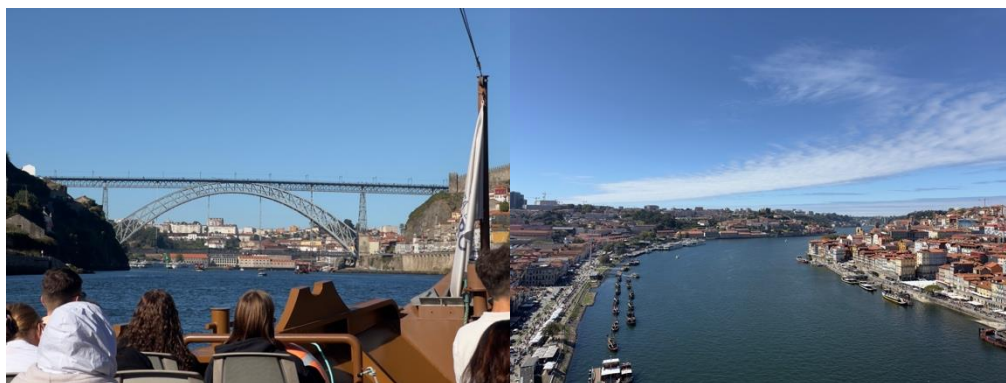
After the boat ride, we visited Porto Cruz for a wine tasting, where we were offered a special discount on their wines. We then had lunch at Barris Do Douro Restaurante. Later, we climbed up to Jardim do Morro and crossed the top of the Ponte Luís I. It was incredibly windy—I almost lost my phone—but the view was spectacular despite the challenging conditions.



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## WEEK 2

### 30 September 2024

We arrived at Quinta Vale do Rio just before 9 a.m. and had a quick chat with Michael, Sergio A. Senra's brother. He instructed us to clean up the old food from the feeding area and prepare the space for the feeding machine. Once the cleaning was complete, we headed over to the silo storage to remove the harmful, bacteria-affected part of the silage and transport it to the cornfield. Our task was to fill the loader spoon of their John Deere tractor, which Michael then used to haul the silage to the field. In the afternoon, we assisted Sergio by creating a barrier along a designated route, helping guide the cows as he moved them to another cabin.



### 1 October 2024

We arrived around 9 a.m. and began our routine task of cleaning the feeding spots, much like we do every day. Once the cleaning was done, we helped Sergio again by removing the affected silage and transporting it to the field. In the afternoon, we assisted with setting up a metal barrier at a breeding cabin, ensuring it was securely installed with proper precautions in place.





### **2 October 2024**

As usual, we started the day by feeding the cows and ensuring the feeding areas were clean. However, due to the heavy rain in the afternoon, all outdoor activities were canceled, giving us a rare break from the usual work. Despite the downtime, it allowed us to recharge for the next day's tasks.

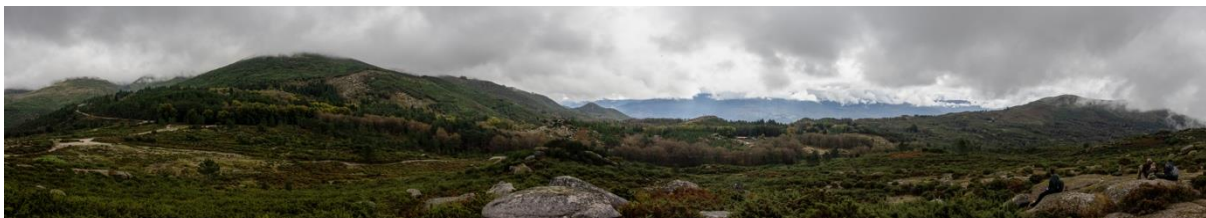
### **3 October 2024**

We ventured out with José, Michael, and Sergio to another farm that the Senra family rents. Our main responsibility here was feeding the bulls, as this farm is specifically used for breeding and selling bulls for their meat. In recent years, meat prices have surged, and the family saw a great business opportunity to expand into this sector. There is also a small field next to the cabin on this farm, which was empty during our visit, but it may be used in the future for additional crops or pastures.

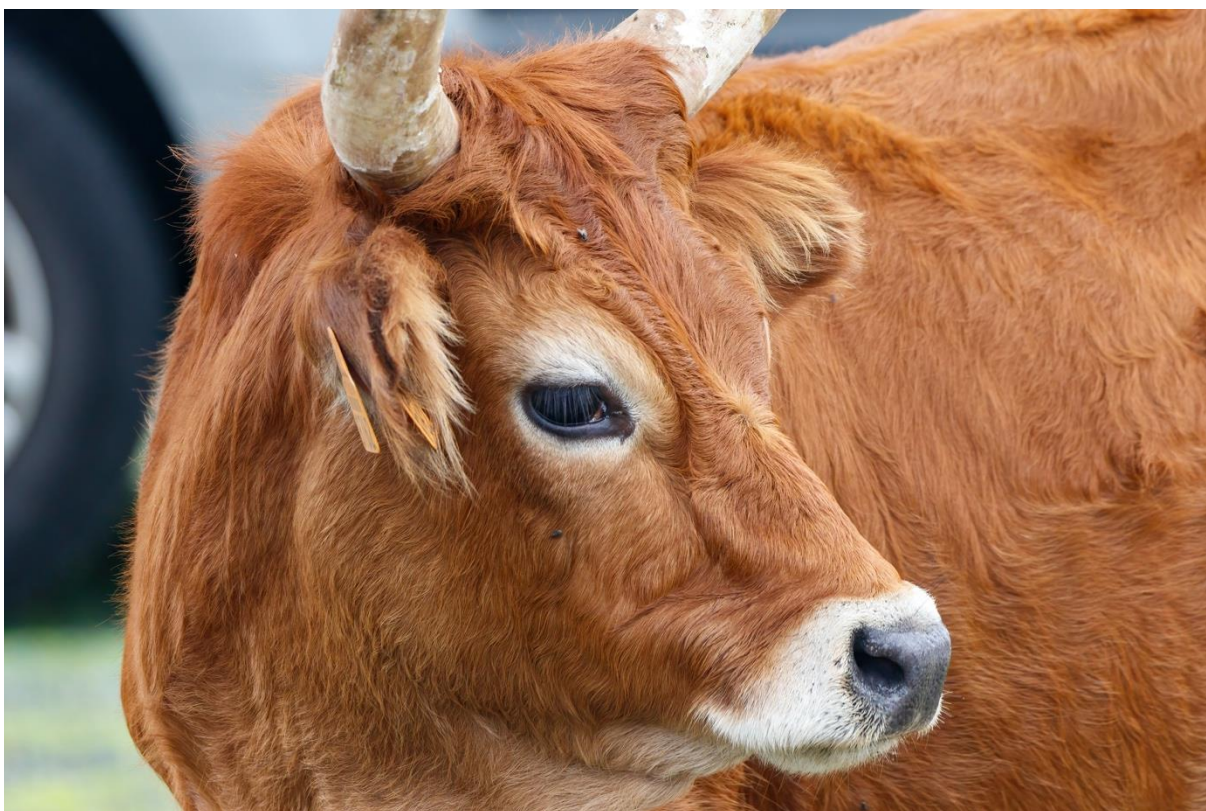


## WEEKEND TRIPS, ACTIVITIES, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

On Friday, we explored Peneda-Gerês National Park in northern Portugal, reaching an elevation of about 750 meters above sea level. One of the highlights of our visit was the Baloico do Mezio, situated in Arcos de Valdevez. The view from that vantage point was absolutely breathtaking, allowing us to be level with the clouds.



When we were walking, we saw Portuguese mountain longhorn cattle on the trails.



After our visit to the National Park, we headed down to Soajo for lunch, where I spotted an Iberian wall lizard basking on a rock. It was very relaxed, allowing me to take a close-up picture of it. After lunch, we walked about fifteen minutes from Soajo's town center to Cascata do Poço Negro. During the walk, Adilson, our tour guide, shared insights about the area's history and a

few facts, including recent forest fires.









In the middle of the picture, there is a forest that was on fire a few weeks ago. It was disheartening to see the impact of so many natural disasters this year, including this one.



On Saturday, we visited Ponte da Barca in the morning. Here we had a sightseeing trip and a bit of free time around the city. The main attractions were the bridge and the Monumento a Fernao de Magalhes in the town. I've bought a few souvenirs there and went to a local store to buy breakfast and kill time because it was raining and I didn't have proper clothes for wet weather.







In the afternoon, we traveled by bus to Ponte de Lima, located in the Viana do Castelo District. For lunch, we dined at a local restaurant, enjoying a delicious meal of chicken with rice and salad. Unfortunately, the rain in Ponte de Lima prevented us from exploring some of the outdoor attractions. However, during the breaks in the weather, we took the opportunity to visit the historic bridge. Interestingly, the city's name translates to "Bridge over the Lima," as "ponte" means bridge in Portuguese, and "Lima" refers to the river itself. We also visited a beautiful botanical garden located next to the church.



In the picture above, you can see the beautiful Lima River, the historic Ponte Romano-Gótica bridge, and the charming area of Ponte de Lima Arcozelo.

On Sunday, our itinerary included visits to the cities of Guimarães and Braga, both of which are located near our campus in Barcelos. The road trip to Castelo de Guimarães took just about half an hour, allowing us to enjoy the scenic views of the Portuguese countryside along the way. Upon arriving at the castle, our knowledgeable tour guide, Nuno, shared some fascinating historical insights. He explained that the castle was originally constructed in the 11th century as a wooden fortress. Around 300 years later, in the 14th century, the French, in collaboration with the Portuguese, rebuilt the castle using stone, transforming it into the robust structure that stands today. This transformation marked the transition from a defensive stronghold made of wood to the imposing stone castle that now dominates the landscape.

Adjacent to the castle, we had the chance to see the statue of King D. Afonso Henriques, the first King of Portugal. The statue is a tribute to the king who played a significant role in the foundation of the Portuguese nation. It was a powerful reminder of the country's rich history and heritage.









After exploring the historic sites of Guimarães, we were given some free time to wander around the charming streets, soak in the atmosphere, and we grab a bite to eat. Later in the afternoon,



we continued our journey to the city of Braga, where more cultural and historical experiences awaited us.

In Braga, due to the rainy weather, we had some free time to explore the city on our own. I chose to walk around with my teacher, and despite the drizzle, we managed to see the historic heart of Braga. One of the highlights of our walk was spotting a unique plant species, the *Echinocactus grusonii*, also known as the golden barrel cactus. This cactus is not only visually striking but also quite rare and valuable, especially in Eastern Europe, making it a special find for plant enthusiasts like me.

During our stroll, we admired the Arco da Porta Nova, which, for me, was the most spectacular sight in the city. This impressive gate, built in the late 18th century, stands as a symbolic entryway to Braga's old town and is a fine example of Portuguese Baroque architecture. Historically, Arco da Porta Nova was not just a decorative structure but also served as a ceremonial gateway for dignitaries visiting the city.

Braga itself is one of Portugal's oldest cities, with a history dating back over 2,000 years. It was originally founded by the Romans in the 16th century Before Christ under the name Bracara Augusta, serving as an important administrative center in the Roman Empire. The city's deep historical roots are visible in its numerous churches, ancient buildings, and charming streets. Despite the rain, the historic ambiance of Braga was captivating.

Before leaving, I took the opportunity to buy some souvenirs for my relatives, making sure to take a little piece of Braga's charm home with me.







Arco da Porta Nova, Braga



## Language Learning: Progressing to Complex Expressions

After the second week of my language learning journey, I began to feel much more confident and fluent in Polish. By practicing basic expressions and mastering common phrases, I was able to build a solid foundation in the language. Encouraged by this progress, I decided to take my learning to the next level by challenging myself with 20 more complex expressions.

I'm learning Polish.	Uczę się polskiego.
Do you speak English?	Czy mówisz po angielsku?
Can you repeat that, please?	Czy możesz to powtórzyć, proszę?
How much does it cost?	Ile to kosztuje?
Where is the nearest bus stop?	Gdzie jest najbliższy przystanek autobusowy?
I'd like to order a coffee.	Chciałbym zamówić kawę.
Excuse me, where is the restroom?	Przepraszam, gdzie jest toaleta?
I'm lost. Can you help me?	Zgubiłem się. Czy możesz mi pomóc?
What's the weather like today?	Jaka jest dzisiaj pogoda?
I need a doctor.	Potrzebuję lekarza.
I like reading books.	Lubię czytać książki.
What time does the train leave?	O której godzinie odjeżdża pociąg?
Could you show me on the map?	Czy możesz mi to pokazać na mapie?
Where is the best restaurant here?	Gdzie jest najlepsza restauracja tutaj?
What is your favorite food?	Jakie jest twoje ulubione jedzenie?
I like traveling to new places.	Uwielbiam podróżować do nowych miejsc.
I'm not feeling well.	Nie czuję się dobrze.
Do you have any recommendations?	Masz jakieś rekomendacje?
How long will it take?	Ile to potrwa?
Can I pay by card?	Czy mogę zapłacić kartą?

These new expressions go beyond simple greetings and everyday phrases; they cover more nuanced conversations and practical scenarios that one might encounter while exploring a Polish city. By incorporating these phrases into my vocabulary, I now feel equipped to navigate a Polish city on my own, without needing to rely on English.

Learning these complex expressions means I can comfortably interact with locals, order meals in restaurants, ask for directions, and even engage in small talk with people I meet along the way. I can confidently handle everyday situations like shopping in stores or asking for help in case of an emergency, all without constantly needing to pull out my phone to check the map or use a translator app.

Not only has this helped me communicate more naturally, but it's also given me a deeper appreciation for the Polish culture and language. I'm no longer just a visitor trying to get by—I'm able to connect with the local people and fully immerse myself in the experience. This progress has made my journey in learning Polish both exciting and rewarding, and I'm looking forward to adding even more advanced expressions to my repertoire.

## WEEK 3

### 7 October 2024

We started our day at Quinta Vale do Rio, where we continued our routine tasks of cleaning the feeding areas and preparing the equipment. This time, we focused on ensuring that the feeding machines were operating efficiently and that the cows were being properly fed. In the late morning, we joined Michael in inspecting the fields to check for any signs of damage. Later in the afternoon, we assisted Sergio with a task to improve the pasture's drainage, ensuring the fields would remain in good condition despite the frequent autumn rains.

### 8 October 2024

We arrived at the farm around 9 a.m. and immediately got to work on clearing the remaining silage from the storage areas. This was a crucial step in preventing any contamination from spreading to the new batches of feed.



In the afternoon, we joined a workshop led by Michael, where we learned about the different types of grains used for feeding and how their nutritional content varies. This was a great opportunity to deepen our understanding of livestock management and the importance of a balanced diet for the animals.





### **9 October 2024**

The morning started with our usual chores of feeding and checking the health of the cattle. After that, we worked on maintaining the fences around the grazing areas, ensuring they were sturdy and secure. During the afternoon, the weather cleared up, allowing us to take part in a practical session on soil management techniques. José demonstrated the proper way to test soil pH levels and explained the best practices for enhancing soil fertility to maximize crop yield.

### **10 October 2024**

We began the day with some light maintenance work on the equipment in the storage area. By mid-morning, we joined Sergio in organizing the feed supplies and preparing the next week's feeding schedule for the cattle. In the afternoon, we took a trip to Barcelos to visit the local market, which was a highlight of the day. The market was bustling with activity, and I had the chance to buy some souvenirs and sample traditional Portuguese foods. The variety of local produce and artisanal goods gave us a deeper insight into the regional culture and traditions.

### **11 October 2024**

On Friday, we visited Torre Marco, the largest distributor of John Deere tractors in Portugal. We traveled to Macieira da Maia, near Porto, to explore the company's facilities. During our visit, we delved into the history of John Deere and learned about the evolution of their machinery. We had the chance to see various agricultural and forestry tractors on display, and we also explored a range of gardening equipment. A notable difference from the machinery in Hungary was the presence of specialized harvesters designed for vineyards and olive groves, which was a unique addition compared to the equipment we're used to. This experience broadened our knowledge of the agricultural industry and the specific needs of different types of farming in Portugal.











I went on a walk with the Hungarian teachers around the vicinity of the campus in search of a special salamander, known as "*Salamandra salamandra ssp. gallaica*"—commonly called the Fire Salamander in English. As we wandered through the area, we were hoping to spot this unique species in its natural habitat. Just after sunset, during the blue hour, I captured a beautiful



photo from the top of the mountain.





During our exploration, we came across a "Triturus pygmaeus" (Southern Marbled Newt) near a small pond. We were determined not to stop until we found the elusive fire salamander. Fortunately, within a few minutes, we discovered the species almost at the same spot we had been searching, which was an exciting moment for all of us.



On Saturday, we packed our bags and made the most of our last day by enjoying some time at the football field and swimming pool. I took the opportunity to thank the Mobility Friends staff by giving them small gifts as a token of appreciation. We took a few farewell pictures and

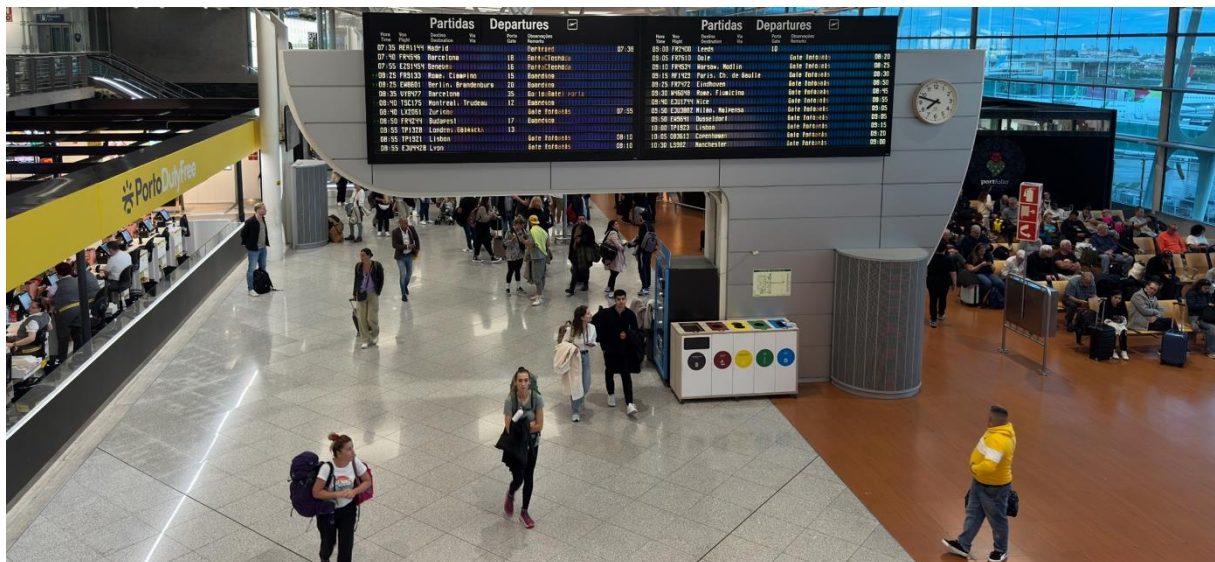


shared a heartfelt chat with them. Later, we went to the local shops one last time to pick up some sweets and drinks to bring back home. In the evening, we invited our Polish friends over for a farewell party at our place.





On 13th October 2024, the Hungarian group began their day bright and early, waking up at 5:00 a.m. to prepare for their journey back home. We gathered at the reception area to wait for the bus, which arrived at 5:45 a.m. to take us to Porto Francisco de Sá Carneiro Airport. The bus ride was smooth and quick, lasting about 50 minutes, as we encountered no traffic on the highways.



Once we reached the airport, we completed the baggage drop and passed through the security checks without any issues. From there, we headed straight to gate 17 to board our Ryanair flight back to Budapest Liszt Ferenc International Airport. After three incredible weeks in Portugal, it was bittersweet to be heading home. Our departure from Porto was from runway 17, following the BELDU9L Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedure. We initially climbed to FL100 (10,000 feet) before ascending further to our cruising altitude of FL370. The flight lasted approximately three hours, during which we approached Budapest via the VAJDI2T Standard Arrival Route (STAR). Our landing was smooth, with an ILS approach guiding us onto runway 13R.



## CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the past three weeks in Portugal, it's evident that this journey was not just an opportunity for agricultural work but also a remarkable adventure filled with learning, cultural immersion, and unforgettable experiences. From the moment we landed in Porto and embarked on our journey to Quinta Vale do Rio, every day unfolded with new discoveries and challenges, enriching our understanding of sustainable farming practices and Portuguese culture.

The sense of community at the Mobility Friends Campus fostered a supportive environment where we bonded with fellow participants and local residents. Interactions with Sergio and his family provided profound insights into the intricacies of farm management, which was both eye-opening and rewarding. Engaging in daily routines, from feeding the cows to driving tractors, allowed us to appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes into running a farm. Our hands-on experience underscored the significance of sustainable practices and animal welfare, connecting us more deeply to the land and its history.

Among the many highlights, crossing the border from Portugal to Spain on the picturesque Ponte Rodo-Ferrovial de Valença was a memorable moment. Standing on the bridge, with one foot in each country, symbolized the seamless blend of cultures and histories. This experience was a perfect representation of the rich tapestry that characterizes the Iberian Peninsula.



Equally exhilarating was our hiking trip to Peneda-Gerês National Park, where the breathtaking views from the Baloico do Mezio left a lasting impression. Reaching an elevation of 750 meters, we felt a profound sense of connection to nature, especially as we spotted local wildlife and reflected on the impact of recent natural disasters on the landscape. This experience reminded us of the fragility of ecosystems and the importance of conservation efforts.

Our excursions to towns like Guimarães, Braga, and Ponte de Lima further enriched our journey, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the historical and architectural wonders of Portugal. Each city we visited revealed a unique story, from the imposing castle in Guimarães to the charming streets of Braga, where we marveled at Baroque architecture and the vibrant local culture. These explorations were complemented by the culinary delights we savored, further deepening our appreciation for Portuguese traditions.

As I navigated daily life at the campus, the commitment to learning Polish added another layer to my experience. Engaging with friends from Poland and mastering new expressions not only enhanced my language skills but also fostered deeper connections with my peers. It was inspiring to see how language can bridge cultural divides and facilitate meaningful interactions.

In conclusion, my time in Portugal has been a transformative journey, filled with personal growth, cultural exploration, and invaluable hands-on experience. As I return home, I carry with me a wealth of knowledge, unforgettable memories, and a renewed passion for sustainable agriculture and cultural understanding. The friendships forged and lessons learned will undoubtedly influence my future endeavors, reminding me of the beauty of exploration and the importance of cherishing the moments that shape our lives.

We owe a special thanks to Déli Agrárszakképzési Centrum, Déli ASzC Bereczki Máté Mezőgazdasági és Élelmiszeripari Technikum, Szakképző Iskola, Erasmus+ by the European Union, Mobility Friends, and Quinta Vale do Rio for making this experience possible. This opportunity was truly unforgettable, and we will always cherish the memories made during our time in Portugal.

Photos below by Mobility Friends.

