



## **Newsletter 4**

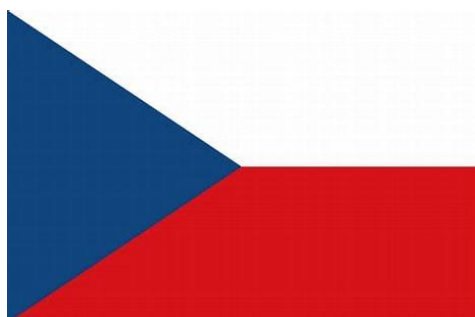
### **„Internationalization starts at home”**

**PPI/WTP/2022/1/00070**

"Meet my culture" events conducted in the form of presentations, lectures and workshops showing elements characteristic of a given culture. Workshops are held once a month for a minimum of four teaching hours. Both Polish and foreign students and academic staff were involved in the workshops. Entire groups of students are invited to participate in the events to ensure a high level of integration. The activities carried out contribute to increasing the adaptation and integration of foreign students and staff with the local community and have a positive impact on increasing the level of internationalization of the University.

The second important element supporting the integration process is an intercultural course conducted in the form of lectures and workshops, taking a practical form. Thanks to workshop forms, it allows participants to acquire specific competences and inclusion in activities. The course addresses issues related to overcoming barriers and stereotypes, building an open, empathetic and tolerant society. The course initiates the construction of a new academic community - open, aware, empathetic and understanding issues related to intercultural differences.

The Project co-funded by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange  
under the Welcome to Poland Programme (2022)



On Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, at the Senate Chamber of the University of Bielsko-Biala, took its place another meeting of the “Meet my Culture” cycle. This one was telling about the Czech culture.

After opening of the meeting and presenting the project “Internationalisation Starts at Home”, within the framework of which the cycle “Meet my Culture” happens, prof. dr hab. Libor Pavera from the Neophilology Institute of the UBB started his presentation, connecting online from Prague. Overcoming minor technical difficulties, in a long and interesting lecture he described the Czech history from the oldest times to nowadays, particularly focusing on the development of the Czech culture and its interferences with the overall European culture.

Then, next presenters were, physically present at place, Ewa and Mateusz Sznepka – siblings who study at the University of Bielsko-Biala, hailing from Zaolzie (Trans-Olza): a part of Cieszyn Silesia on the western part of the river Olza, which now is a Polish-Czech border. Many of ethnically Polish people still live on the western bank, some of them still cherishing the Polish culture, especially in its very specific, regional embodiment. This culture, in both festive and everyday version, was shown to the participants by the Sznepkas in their presentation.

The meeting ended with a small repast.

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On Wednesday, 10.04.2024, in the Chamber of Senate of the University of Bielsko-Biala, there was another meeting of the “Meet my culture” cycle. This time, it was about the Argentinian culture. The meeting has been opened by dr hab. inż. Tomasz Knefel, prof. UBB, Vice-rector for Student Affairs and education. Then, Ms. Aleksandra Hasiór and dr Dagmara Mika presented the programme “Internationalisation starts at home”, within the framework of which the “Meet my culture” cycle is included.

The next presentation, titled “Traces of Poles in Argentina”, was concerning the history and present day of the Polish community in Argentina, in particular, the group settled down in the province of Misiones, which is located in the North-East of the country, bordering Brazil and Paraguay. The presenters, Ms. Aleksandra Męćik-Blachińska and Ms. Nicoletta Monticelli, the student of Spanish Studies of the UBB, delivered a very interesting tale of the history and the present day of the Polish settlers and their descendants, as well as informed about their participation in economic and cultural life of Argentina.

After acquiring that knowledge, the participants of the meeting were challenged by an interactive quiz led by dr Natalia Wiśniewska. Those who gave the most of the

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correct answers in the shortest time, were rewarded by souvenirs. However, the quiz appeared to bring a lot of fun to all: the participants and even the non-participating observers.

The next point of the meeting was the presentation of dr hab. Carlos Dimeo Alvarez, prof. UBB, from the Institute of Neo-philology, who originally comes from Argentina. Together with Mr. Hugo Kowalczuk, also professionally connected in the past with our university and also an Argentinian, they took the participants of the meeting to a virtual walk in Buenos Aires. The presentation was adorned with many personal remarks and anecdotes of both the presenters, which made it very lively.

The ending part was a degustation. Prof. Dimeo Alvarez, together with Mr. Kowalczuk, prepared equipment used traditionally to brew mate – a beverage of huge social and cultural importance in Argentina. The participant also had a chance to taste dulce de leche, another tasty Argentinian speciality. The participants got involved in the degustation so deeply, that it was continued also when they had to leave the Chamber of the Senate due to another event scheduled there. That last point of the meeting was then continued in the common space of the Welcome Point.



On Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of May 2024, “Meet my Culture – British culture” took place. The meeting was opened by dr Dagmara Mika, who reminded to the participants the principles of the “Internationalisation Starts at The Project co-funded by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange under the Welcome to Poland Programme (2022)



Home” project, within the framework of which the “Meet my Culture” events were held.

The next presentation, titled “Humour as Essential Strand in British DNA” was delivered by dr Marzena Foltyn. She sketched out the history of the humour in the British culture and listed the categories in which its present manifested in the past and in which it manifests nowadays, proving that the humour is intrinsically woven in the fabric of the British cultural fabric. Then, Ms. Małgorzata Raułyk-Dumanow told the participants of the meeting about Wales – with a special consideration of the Welsh culture. The last presentation, given by dr Elwira Lewandowska, was an interactive quiz titled “30 Facts You Didn’t Need to Know About the UK”, during which the participants could check their knowledge about more or less known trivia about Great Britain.

The meeting allowed its participants to take a closer look into the nuances of the British culture, which can frequently prove themselves to be quite surprising.



“Meet my culture” workshops are held within the framework of the Project “Internationalisation begins at home”, co-financed by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange within the framework of the “Welcome to Poland” Programme (2022).

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