



Holland, Canada and Poland – common commemoration of the World War II victims.

In the period April 22-24 Mikołów hosted a group of 70 guests from Holland and Canada, including 40 cyclists. The visit was organized within the undertaking called *Frank Graham Cycle Liberation Tour 2015*. Frank Graham is one of still living veterans of the World War II fighting among other things for liberation of Beuningen town – partner town of Mikołów.

The participants of the Cycle Liberation Tour 2015 commemorate the victims of the World War II visiting the Nazi concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dresden, Bergen Belsen and Westerbok (Poland, Germany, Holland). A big part of the tour is covered on bicycles. As Mikołów is located near Oświęcim the representatives of Beuningen our partner town asked Mayor Stanisław Piechula to help in organization of the Polish part of the event. At the same time they invited two young persons from Mikołów to participate in the whole tour. Deputy Mayor Bogdan Uliasz came up with initiative that a cyclist group from Mikołów would take part in the visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was a great opportunity to enter new international relationships. That was the way a 14-cyclist group representing the 1st High School joined the foreign peloton. Cyclists escorted by police of Oświęcim cycled their route. They were officially welcomed by authorities of Oświęcim and Mikołów at the beautiful market square in Oświęcim. Then the group cycled on to Auschwitz Museum. After the visit they went to Birkenau Museum where official ceremony commemorating all who died in the camp and the ones who fought for its liberation was held. In his speech Deputy Mayor Bogdan Uliasz appealed to young people to keep the memories about the developments that took place in Auschwitz years ago and to pass this knowledge to the next generations. This is the only way the mankind may avoid the disgraceful mistakes of the past.

In the evening the group came to the Botanical Garden. A meeting by the fire was good to calm down after this emotionally difficult visit. Early the next day (April 24th) guests and two young representatives of Mikołów: Patrycja Długajczyk and Tomasz Stachurski continued the tour to Dresden.

Common commemoration of the victims by young people from Holland, Canada and Poland was a great history lesson and opportunity to tighten the relationships. Our town gained new enthusiasts – the guests really enjoyed their stay here and promised to come back to Mikołów.

Below you will find 2 films about the event we have received from Holland.