So you were in Portugal, how was it? People have asked me that question dozens of times since I came back; and since I can't really sum it all up in a "small talk" making conversation, I'm writing this instead. When I first arrived in Porto with my classmates and teachers, I was thrilled. My body was pumping with adrenaline all over! A new country is basically a new world. Especially when you live in a small island cut in half where every neighbourhood looks the same and there's no actual big city... Anyways, I'm getting off topic! When we arrived at the airport our teachers went with the Portuguese teachers who came to greet them, and we (Petri, Christos and myself) were greeted by Ana Catarina Dias and her father, who drove us to the central square of Felgueiras. Then our hosts came to take us to their homes. Petri with Catarina, Christos with Beatriz Lopes and myself with João Goucho. So after a 15-minute drive we were at João's home. I knew that his family had a farm and grapes but I never knew the size of everything, and since it was 11.30 p.m, I couldn't really see the yard. We went inside quietly because everyone was sleeping. João's mother offered me cake, and then we went in João's room. We talked a little and then slept. The next morning was amazing. I woke up when João opened the balcony doors, and I saw at once what an amazing house he actually had. His yard is enormous! About 200m² of grapes, a chicken house and a bee hive! The grapes, as João told me, are his grandfather's. He produces the only biodynamic wine IN THE WORLD. It was all soooo green! I loved it! I just sat there observing everything for as long as I could! Then we had an amazing breakfast! João's mom made bread, jam and got honey from the bees she keeps! She is a true supermom! After breakfast João and I took a walk around his neighbourhood and then we walked around in Lixa. EVERYHTING WAS GREEN. It was amazing! I have never seen so much green in one village! I was shocked! You could actually feel the air being cleaner! I absolutely loved it! Later, we went at the train station to pick up Igor, our other roommate for the week who is from Hungary. So we picked him up and went back home. We played ping-pong, guitar hero and a little regular guitar and then we went to walk around in Lixa again. In the afternoon we spent our time at home untill bedtime. The next day we had the same amazing breakfast and then we went to visit a huuuuge castle! João said that it wasn't that big according to Portuguese standards but for Cyprus it was enormous! There we all met again with Christos and Petri. It was a relief to see them actually, since none of us had spoken greek in over 24 hours and we had never spent such a long time only speaking English! Of course we got used to it after a couple of days. When we left the Castle we went to a nice square to get a drink. Then we walked around and then went home. The third day was the day we went to school. We all got into this classroom and got shirts and nametags. Then we were divided into groups and the Portuguese students showed us around the school. After that we had some activities. I don't really remember what we did each day because it was a full program but here are some things we did: We played a game with chairs which was really fun and full of laughter, we had a lecture on fair trade and we went to a museum. In the remaining days we had the most fun! My highlights though are specific unrepeatable experiences! For example the treasure hunt around lixa was amazing. Running aroung the most beautiful of towns with beautiful people, cooperating to complete all the tasks... WOW! Riding bikes in Porto, along the seaside to the beach, where we stoped to go surfing!? I tried surfing for the first time in my life and loved it! I felt the ocean breeze on my face while riding my bike along the seaside with people who I had the opportunity to love during this amazing journey! It was out of this world! Absolutely fantastic! This whole experience was something I will never live again. I loved every single second I spent in Portugal and I will never forget any of it! I loved and felt loved by people who live thousands of kilometers away from my country. People so different, and yet so much like me. I thank every single person who participated, for their smiles, laughter and positive energy. But one special thanks to João's family, who welcomed me into their home, fed me and had me as their guest for a whole week. They made me their own son for a week, and I truly thank them from the bottom of my heart. The goodbye was hard. It was really hard. I will never forget anyone. I will forever love them all!

Sincerely, Stelios Charalambide