**INTERVIEW WITH STUDENT VALENTINA AMIRA AL KATAH**

**Q 1**. **What is your origin?**

I used to live in Romania. My father is from Syria and my mother is from Romania.

**Q 2. When did you arrive in Cyprus and who accompanied you? How old were you then?**

When we first came to Cyprus, I was 6 years old. I came with my grandmother and we stayed for one year. After one year we left Cyprus and we returned to Romania, where my parents were. When I was 10 years old I returned to Cyprus with my parents.

**Q 3. Why did you move with your family to Cyprus?**

For economic reasons, we came so that my parents would find a job here.

**Q 4**. **What were your feelings when you arrived in Cyprus?**

The first time I felt fear because I came without my parents. I was afraid of the unknown. But I felt happy too, because I came to another country and I saw a different way of life. I missed my parents and my country, because I think that anyone feels more homely in his own country.

The second time I felt better because I had an idea of the country I was coming to and also the whole family came together.

**Q 5**. **Did you feel any cultural differences when you came to Cyprus? If so, can you describe a few differences?**

Yes, there was a big difference. In Romania I lived in a village and I used to go with my grandfather to the fields. In Cyprus I stayed in a block of flats in the city. I had no friends and I felt alone.

The food was different, especially during the holidays (Christmas, New Year's Eve, Easter) in Romania we had a party in the village square. We did not have that in Cyprus. We spent the holidays alone at home.

There was also a difference in money. For example, 20 euros in Romania is a lot of money, you can buy a lot of things. In Cyprus it is very easy to spend 20 euros.

There are no particular differences in the way we dress.

When we moved with my parents to a village in Cyprus, we lived in a house with a yard. I feel better in the village than in the city.

**Q 6. How did you feel during the first days you went to school in Cyprus and how do you feel today?**

At first I felt a little bit of fear, I didn’t know anyone and I was having difficulty with the language. I didn’t understand Greek very well then.

But, I liked the school, the building was nice. I immediately met other classmates and I felt good because I was not the only one from a foreign country. There were a lot of kids from other countries and we became friends.

Today I feel better at school, I have friends and I can speak Greek well. I became friends with children from Cyprus as well, but my relationship with children from other countries is better because we share similar feelings. Some people speak the same language.

**Q 7. Describe an event that you experienced which caused you shock.**

The second time I came to Cyprus, when I was in fifth class of the Elementary School, i wasn’t good at school lessons. I had low grades and my other classmates didn’t want to play with me. I felt alone and sad. Then, in a Maths exam, I got to 84/100 and then my classmates began to talk to me. Then I felt joy and I was motivated to learn the language well and to study more to get better grades.

**Q 8. Would you like to go back to Romania?**

I would like to go on holidays, but I wouldn’t want to stay there permanently. Now I have friends here in Cyprus and I'm better at school lessons. If I go back to Romania I will not be this good at school lessons and I won’t have any friends.

**Thank you very much Valentina.**

**The interview was taken by students Vasiliki Chrysiliou and Ioanna Aristodemou.**

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