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Lublin

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International Relations

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Lublin's Partner and Friend Cities

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Name: **Partnership agreement**

Signing a contract: **24.11.1998**

Population: **Population: 93 502**

Viseu, Senhora da Beira, eternamente bonita,
Fidalga e sempre romeira,
Duma beleza infinita..."

This nostalgic anthem of Viseu is known even to the youngest residents. It refers to the city's rich history and famous celebrities. It is sung mainly by folk and academic ensembles during most cultural events. We had an opportunity to hear it in Lublin where it was interpreted by „Infantuna”, a group of students and graduates of Viseu's universities and colleges. Dressed in costumes from the epoch of the Great Discoveries, they sing and play traditional Portuguese melodies frequently permeated by saudade (longing) and a tone of melancholy. Viseu is the capital of the Dão Lafões region and has a population of almost 100,000. It has been Lublin's sister city since 1998. Situated picturesquely in northern Portugal, it is surrounded by three mountain ranges, including the country's highest Serra da Estrela. Although Viseu is one of the largest cities in Portugal, compared with Lublin, it seems quite small. Its origins can be traced to the time when the Romans inhabited the land. Even then Viseu was an important junction of trade routes and the Romans founded a camp there for their troops commanded by Viriatus (today this place is called Cava de Viriato). The heart of the city is a well-preserved old town with a medieval cathedral whose patio is paved with azulejos. Although the sight of white and blue tiles that cover the walls of churches may seem surprising to us, to the Portuguese this decorative material is something obvious, just like the fact that Sunday mass is said in every church only once (but at different hours). The Old Town in Viseu is full of old cobblestone streets winding between historic houses. To this day in some buildings there are various shops, bars and restaurants. It should be remembered that in Portugal, as in the Mediterranean countries, people observe the custom of an afternoon siesta. You can forget about doing shopping or dealing with formalities in public offices or banks at this time of the day. This is when most people usually go to lunch. It has become a tradition that whole families (sometimes even three generations are represented) eat out together on Sundays. After a square meal a real Portuguese will not deny himself a cafezinho which is very strong coffee served in a tiny cup. As in Poland people go out for a walk on free afternoons, in Viseu you will not see very many people strolling in green spaces or resting in parks. Much more popular are meetings in bars, and in summer, on esplanades outside bars, in the open air. Most of them can be found, as in Lublin, along the main pedestrian precinct in the city, leading to the Town Hall. On warm evenings these bars are full until late at night, they are alive with music and the buzz of conversation. The Portuguese are open, cheerful and usually easy-going people. They always find time for their families and friends. They are extremely hospitable and never hurry. Let us also remember that they understand punctuality differently than the Poles, so do not come too early, if you do not want to wait. It is worthwhile visiting Viseu in September to see St. Matthew's Fair (Feira de S. Mateus). St. Matthew is the patron saint of the city. During this event you can buy regional products, see special exhibitions and stalls that sell clothes, furniture and folk art. During Feira there is always a funfair and a stage on which concerts take place almost every day. When you get hungry, try some of the local delicacies, farturas, or fried stuffed pastries. These festivities which last a whole month are also a chance to admire a wonderful fireworks display, usually before midnight... although sometimes fireworks are set off also in daylight.

Drivers will find numerous roundabouts in Viseu – the city is said to have the largest number of roundabouts in Portugal. Every year the residents choose the most beautiful one. If you plan a trip in the environs, be prepared that a thirty-kilometre bus ride may take two or even three hours. But instead you will be able to see charming mountain villages which can be sometimes reached only by one, narrow and winding road...

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