

Report from my studies in Iceland
by Philipp Jeske

As our aim was to go one time around the island, we had to find a car first. My colleague Diana Bologova luckily found a resident of Reykjavik on Couchsurfing who not only had a car, but was also glad to take a ride with us and was free for a couple of days. In our report, we decided to focus on the male part of the island. For that we found several protagonists, who live in different parts of the country and have different jobs. They represent the three main professions in Iceland, which builds the BIP of the country: fishery, farming and tourism.

On our first station, the capital of Iceland, we meet the Tomas Ragnarsson, a 31 years old musician and tourist guide.

He has an education as an electrician, but choose the carrier in tourism, because it brings more money. Every day he organizes three sea trips for tourists, guiding and entertaining the guests. The "Whale watching" boat is the main attraction for tourists in Iceland. We cannot find any whale during our trip, but i catch some good pictures of Tomas.

As we continue our journey, we reach Hofn at a moment when all the locals are still sleeping. Hofn is an Icelandic fishing town with about 2000 citizens. On the map it looks a bit separated from the island, situated between two gulfs. We meet Gunnar Orn Marteinsson, a 26 years old fisherman. He was born, grew up and now works in Hofn. "I need money and fishing is a much better job than the one you can get as an educated man on dry land," he says. Gunnar choosed fishing as a job that gives him the opportunity to leave Iceland twice a year and explore the world. I take a few pictures of him before his working day starts.

After 4 hours drive from Hofn we stop in a small village Djúpavogur on the East coast to ask for the direction. We choose a small house by the lake and knock on the door. Eylfur Gudjonsson is a 91 years old retired fisherman opens the door. All his life he worked on the boat and almost never been on the land. His wife passed away few years ago, now he lives by himself in a small house. His only income is the pension from the state.

Our next overnight stop is in the Myvatn region. The lake is a world heritage area and a famous tourist attraction. We meet Helgi Hedinsson, who, with his older brother Einar, moved from Reykjavik to 'the middle of nowhere'. They are running a small hotel business now, after building some hats surround by beautiful nature and animals. "We also have farm here. But now it's better to be in tourism, than in the agriculture sector. It simply gives you more money. We built the guesthouse by ourselves on the family land by the lake. I think, it's the most beautiful place in Iceland. Look, we can have breakfast on the terrace and enjoy the Northern light in the winter. What else do you need?" says Helgi. I take a picture of him sitting on a stone with his dog Tomas, his guesthouses in the background.

At the end of the next day we are out of gas. The closest town, Akureyri, is in 100 kilometers, so we stop near a random farm, by the mountain. The owner of it is Ari Teitsson, a 71 years old retired farmer. He was a president of the farmers association in Iceland for about 10 years. "Have you ever heard about the EU?", Diana asks him, while tucking up with petrol. Ari is looking at her, like she is speaking not English, but Chinese.

-European Union?

No answer.

-Demark is a part of European Union, do you know that?

No answer.

We are staying on the road, the only highway in Iceland. No cars are passing by. It's empty and peaceful. Here, on the North Coast of Iceland, I understand, that it is the first time in my life I meet a person, who never heard about the EU.