

MAUTHAUSEN

When we arrived at Mauthausen concentration camp on the morning of 7 May, the place was packed with people from all over the world. We had the opportunity to walk along a path that led us to the 186-step staircase mentioned in Christian Bernadac's poem. This staircase leads to a granite quarry where the deportees had to perform forced labour. On the way there, we could imagine the hardships these people had to endure every day.

When we reached the foot of the stairs, we sat down on a meadow under the old granite quarry and listened to the story of the concentration camp. We learned that people from all over Europe were deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp. Between 1938 and 1945, an estimated 200,000 prisoners were imprisoned in Mauthausen, many of whom died from the inhumane conditions they were subjected to.

The camp was liberated by Allied troops on 5 May 1945, a few weeks before the end of the war. Not being able to visit the camp disappointed us a little, but it was still a moving experience and the atmosphere was very different.

After we had recovered, we went up the stairs and entered through a door that led to a square inside the camp. Here we witnessed a procession involving many Tuscan communities and other nations from around the world. At around 12 noon we returned to the bus to go back to Bad Ischl with the emotions of this unforgettable experience.

