From 16th to 30th June 2018, at the International Olympic Academy in Olympia, the 58th International Session for Young Participants took place. The International Olympic Academy is located on the Peloponese Peninsula in the vicinity of the largest open-air sports museum – ancient Olympia, where the first Olympic Games were held. The Olympic complex included a sports stadium, gymnasium, palestra, baths and religious buildings, including temples: Hera and Zeus. In 1989, the archaeological sites of Olympia given on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and the International Olympic Academy is the world’s centre of research on Olympism.

The first day of the session was devoted to the arrival and accommodation of participants, coordinators, lecturers and organisers in Athens. This year’s edition was attended by 160 participants from all over the world (including most European countries, USA, Canada, Australia, China, New Zealand, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Colombia, Argentina, Bangladesh, the Cook Islands and Virgin Islands). Among them, there was one representative of Poland: Arkadiusz Włodarczyk (recommended by the Polish Olympic Academy) – researcher at Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, doctoral student and a member of the Olympism Department of Bronisław Czech University of Physical Education in Kraków.

The next day of the session was charged with content related to Greek culture, thus all participants went to Acropolis and visited the museum. The last point of the trip was the Panathenaic Stadium – the venue where the first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896. In the evening of 17th June, all participants took part in the opening ceremony of the 58th session, attended by the President of Greece himself, and in the evening, a lavish dinner was served to the participants. The next morning, the participants went to Olympia by buses, stopping at Delphi and visiting the local museum, stadium and the remains of the temple complex, where the famous oracle of Delphi was located. Late in the evening, the participants of the session reached Olympia.

The participants spent nearly 1.5 weeks (from 19th to 28th June) in Olympia, where they visited the archaeological part of the city, practiced various kinds of sports and traditional games, acquainting themselves with the cultures of different countries during social evenings. Dances and artistic activities were held, and above all, the participants studied Olympism from the Antiquity to modern times. The idea of the session for the young participants is to introduce them to Olympism and the Olympic movement. The International Olympic Academy conducts education in the field of the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement in its broadest sense, and in particular, aims to motivate participants by using their experience and knowledge acquired during the session to promote Olympic values in their home countries.

Since 2013, the International Olympic Academy has been formulating a main subject related to Olympism, which is dealt with by the participants of all sessions in a given year. The subject discussed during the 58th session for young participants was “Athlete as a role model”. On the first day of the stay in Olympia, Prof. Konstantinos Georgiadis (Honorary Dean of the International Olympic Academy) officially welcomed each participant and lecturer, and the opening ceremony of the scientific part was honoured by the speech of Isidoros Kouvoulos, President of the International Olympic Academy. The session itself consisted of two cycles, during which participants had the opportunity to listen to lectures given by eminent professors from all over the world, dealing with the history and sociology of sport in their research, as well as its philosophical and ethical themes. Among the lecturers were Prof. Stephen G. Miller, Prof. Ingo- mar Weiler, Prof. Cesar Torres, Prof. Leslie A. Howe, and also titled Olympians like Kipchoge Keino. Each lecture was followed by a discussion during which participants asked the speakers questions. Lectures and conclusions from discussion panels were used in discussion groups into which the participants were divided. Each group, led by two coordinators, had to formulate two questions in a cycle, concerning the main topic of the session and then answer them on the basis of lectures and their own knowledge and experience, later presenting the results of work in a lecture summarising each cycle. Participants
wondered, among others, whether the Olympic athlete should be a “better” role model to follow and should be expected to do more than other athletes in connection with the promotion of Olympic values, and whether is it easier for Paralympians to become role models because of their dysfunctions and social compassion.

As already mentioned, in addition to participation in lectures and discussion groups, participants could present their country’s traditions and culture during social evenings, take part in sports events, try their hand at literature and poetry workshops or artistic activities, use the academic library or participate in the Olympic Day, which takes place on 23rd June each year around the world. The central event of the Olympic Day after lighting the Olympic torch and the relay with the flag of the academy, was a approx. 1,000 m run. According to the idea that it is not the place that counts, but participation, time was not measured, everyone received only a commemorative diploma without distinguishing the winner and rewarding the leading places. In addition, the participants took part in lectures on films about the Olympic Games and visited the historical archive devoted to the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Among the participants of the session were also Olympic athletes, who had the opportunity to present their experiences of participating in the Olympic Games.

After both series of lectures and the presentation of conclusions by the discussion groups, a closing ceremony took place, during which each participant received commemorative diplomas signed by Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee. Two weeks spent with people from all over the world allowed to forge great friendships and exchange of valuable experiences on the subject of Olympics in its broadest sense. The closing ceremony of the 58th session summarised the time spent in the ancient Olympia – the cradle of the Olympic Games – reflecting on the timeless values of the Olympics, instilling the motivation in the participants to spread universal Olympic values in accordance with the motto *Citius, altius, fortius*. 