

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

ÍSIS COUTINHO MACHADO, BRAZIL

"My stay in the UHK"



My name is Ísis and I was an exchange student from Brazil. My stay in Hradec Králové was a wonderful surprise in my life. I was not expecting or planning that; I got the offer at my University and, since that day, a lot of things changed in my life. Since the beginning, everyone in the International Office was very helpful. I communicated with them during the previous four months of my arrival, and they helped me with all the details, which I am thankful for. The arrival was also great; Maria, another international student living in Hradec, was there to pick me up in Prague, and I felt that I was not alone, even though I was away from my home and my family.

The exchange was a watershed in my academic life. During the semester, I had excellent teachers, and courses that encompassed exactly my area of research in my undergraduate degree (studies on nationalism and national identity). By the end of my degree, the experiences of this exchange led me to professional paths that I had previously ruled out - or not even thought about.

I arrived full of doubts, and I imagined that during this period I would have the greatest experiences traveling and meeting international friends - which I obviously had - but the most significant result I had was related to my career choice, which I will follow from now on.

An exchange is an enriching moment in which we find ourselves more autonomous, independent but also small when you face such a large and diverse world. The negative aspect of this, undoubtedly, was related to the language. Czech is a very difficult language, not only because it is not widely spoken around the world, but also because of its extremely complex grammar and almost unpronounceable sounds for foreigners. Nevertheless, Czech people were also kind about it - and about everything else. When I first arrived, I was afraid of the "coldness" that I heard about Czechs, but actually, everyone that I met was super kind and polite to me. In that sense, the Summer School was a very good opportunity to learn more about the Czech culture, history, and language, which I think was the best way to get more familiar with the country, and also helped me to survive -with the basics I learned of Czechs- for the following months.



I took this photo of the city during a visit to the White Tower (Bílá Věž), in the center of the city.

The semester I spent in the Czech Republic was unforgettable; I lived the most diverse experiences, from traveling around the country, spending my weekends with a Czech family, spending Christmas in Prague experiencing all the Czech traditions, meeting friends from all around the world, practicing not just Czech language but also English and Spanish, I believe that everything was perfect. I hope I will come back one day. Thank you, Czech Republic. Thank you, Hradec Králové.



Photo of me during a visit to the Kuks Hospital in the Summer School trip.

