

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

KATIA AVILES, PERU

"My UHK experience"



Studying at the University of Hradec Králové during the winter semester was the lacking experience of my college life. The university gave me a chance to take part in an amazing academic but also a cultural experience. It was hard getting used to living in a foreign country with a very different language but it was an opportunity to learn how to be independent and to meet new people -who later helped me to make this time away from home easier.

Being one of my last semesters in college, studying in the Czech Republic gave me the chance to broaden my perspective within my career, learning new theories and the realities of Central Europe. Knowing new content from the European perspective allows me to have new tools to analyze and further develop myself in my career. There were many options for courses in the Philosophical Faculty. Even if there were courses about Latin America, I preferred to take courses that would teach me something I never thought I would learn, such as European Social Systems or Czech Language.

Living in Hradec Králové was not only beneficial academically but it was an enriching experience for me as a person as well. I was able to discover a very different culture. It was hard to get used to not understanding most of the things, but I was glad to know that I could manage to live in another city by myself. I also discovered Czech food and I'm glad to say I really enjoyed it. That was something I didn't expect as I am very fond of Peruvian food, but it was easy to love Czech cuisine. As someone who really likes learning new languages and speaks three languages fluently, it is hard to admit that learning Czech was way harder than I expected. It is a very complicated task but it was a funny process. Somehow, I managed to pass the Czech exam and also survived in the Czech Republic (nemluvím česky is always a useful phrase).



Definitely, the best thing about studying in Hradec Králové was the opportunity to be able to meet great new people from all over the world. My roommates, flatmates, and neighbors were the ones that made this experience unforgettable. Not only because you have people who also understand what you're going through, but also because you are not alone and you get to make friends that will last a lifetime. It is also a cultural experience to live together with people from different cultures. It is hard to imagine that countries that are so close to each other and also speak the same language are so different from each other. This is how I learned, not only about the Czech Republic but also about other Latin American and European countries, even Asian. I even managed to make Czech friends who cooked Czech meals for me, driving me to love Czech food.



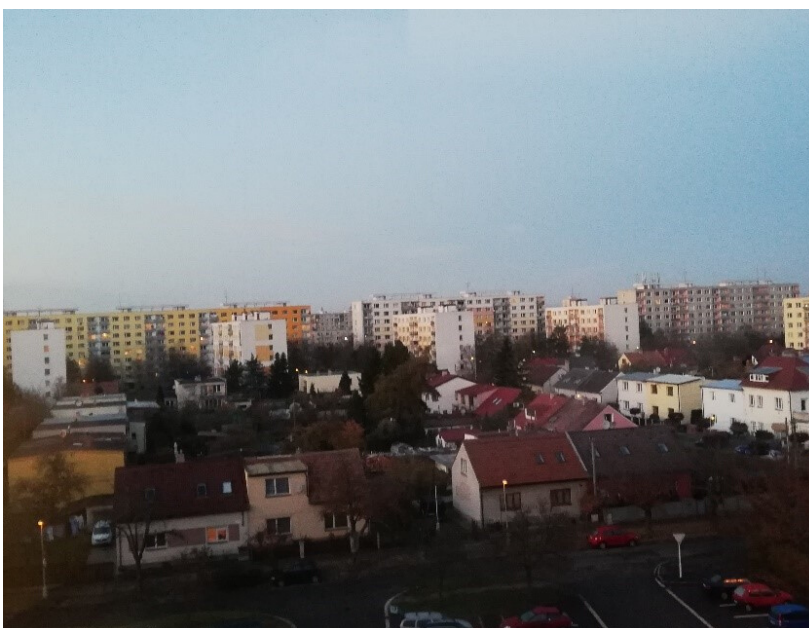
Additionally, there are some other advantages of living in Hradec Králové: it is very easy to travel inside and outside the Czech Republic. There is always a chance to visit Prague, although there are some other destinations that are worth visiting and are not well known. Also, coming from another continent, the Czech Republic is the perfect location to live in if you want to travel. I managed to travel over 7 destinations during the semester.



Hradec Králové has become a really important city for me for practical and sentimental reasons. It has a perfect size if you like a peaceful but fun life. It is not too small but you can still walk almost everywhere, especially from the dorms to the faculty. It's nice to walk around the big main square and through the small streets. It is not super crowded and noisy like Prague, but you can still find things to do. And if you are missing the messiness of big cities, you can always go easily to Prague, but you'll want to come back soon. Hradec Králové is the place where I spent not only a semester but where I lived my best experiences, memories and where I met the most amazing people. Definitely, this was an experience I will not forget and a place I want to come back to.



Lighting up the Christmas tree in Hradec Kralove



The View from Palachova