

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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ARMENIA

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I am Artur Mkhitarian and I come from Armenia. I am a last-year Bachelor's student at Yerevan State University. I am doing my Erasmus+ mobility (within the International Credit Mobility project) in Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, and I can say that, undoubtedly, I am living the second-best time of my life. You might ask why the second and not the first? Well, it is my second semester in the same wonderland because I extended my studies here for one more semester... But let me start from the beginning.



Doing an Erasmus mobility in pandemic times sounds like a journey in the dark, with obstacles rather than freedom. Thus, many students are questioning if such mobility will be worth it in the end. Especially for me, it was much harder because of the opportunities my home university gave to me: I did not have a range of options to choose where I wanted to study abroad, there was only the option of the University of Hradec Králové. But later on, I understood that it was my destiny; it was the beginning of an unforgettable experience.


Remember that you shouldn't stay where you are if the mindset, restrictions, people, and ground there stop you from growing. All you need is to take a deep breath, close your eyes for a moment, and think of a person you would like to be, and start shaping your future the way you want it. The world is too big and too beautiful to live life in one place and I would encourage anyone and everyone to live abroad, travel the world, and chase all your dreams. A new life. It's like one of the many trips you could go on, but with a different feeling... Your heart is pumping so fast, and you are a little bit sweaty, as you know this time, this journey involves many other aspects. You are going abroad, how exciting that is! You are about to face a lot of adventures and challenges. All these things were the ones that came to my mind and after closing my eyes and imagining, then it became true. I did what I wanted and even what I could not see in my best dream.



How excited I felt when the University of Hradec Kralove, at the end of the first semester, offered to prolong one more semester and, of course, I agreed to extend my study here... By going on Erasmus, I have already made a big change in my life.

But I wondered: why not take this further? I would recommend, then, to do at least one thing more that is on your never-have-I-ever list and make your Erasmus even more unforgettable! Go skydiving, join that ridiculous contest, or something totally different. No matter what, be sure that there won't be any regrets later.

On the other hand, the education system and the way the university staff is paying attention to you from a lot of small and simple things to creative and productive classes was a new motivation for me in a new period to set bigger goals. Besides this, I also discovered one hidden desire for me, and it was traveling alone, which made me trust myself more than ever. It started from the small city of Hradec Králové, where I found a lot of places that at first sight might not seem attractive, but for me, they were fundamental to think about new steps and to go ahead to explore more. The magic of traveling alone is often hidden, underlined, and I realized it only after the initial fear was gone and I explored this city, learned all its secrets, heard all that it had to whisper to me - only to me. You can't not fall in love with it. Each country has its own culture and social norms, while its people come from different backgrounds with different mindsets than yours. This adaptation to a new culture may be overwhelming to some. Therefore, before choosing an Erasmus destination, you should take some time to think about what you want to gain from this experience; getting out of your comfort zone, exploring new things, meeting new cultures, or living the best of your life in a foreign country that feels like home. There are things you can do only during a certain time in your life and never again. If you don't do it now, you might never get a chance to do it. Eventually, people only regret the things they did not do, not the ones that they did, so what is there to lose? Just give it a try.



If for many people the past year meant a time of darkness and lack of perspective, for me it was a year of hope. A year of counting down to the best part of my life, at least that is what every student who prolonged his or her study says. It is not insane to think of how things might be better in a year, we should admit it - we have all dreamed about this near future, free of illnesses and restrictions.

The person who took off from that airport is not the same person who will land back there. My life has shifted so much in so many ways between those two flights... and I have changed. I have adjusted myself, my personality, and my actions to my surroundings.