

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

ATHANASIOS EGYAKORH AFFUL

GHANA

WINTER SEMESTER 2021-2022

If I were to choose two words to describe my Erasmus+ experience in the UHK, they would definitely be 'exciting', and 'worthwhile'.

I arrived in the Czech Republic on the 12th of September, very excited and very open to the prospect of a life beyond the borders I have so long been used to. My expectations were, indeed, really high: I expected to see a beautiful country, to meet gifted and talented international students, to have an academic experience that would expand my horizon in my study area and create opportunities for further advanced studies and research. On the flip side, however, I initially harboured lowered expectations relative to racial discrimination, considering the fact that I am black and proudly black.



Largely, my expectations were met: the Czech Republic is a beautiful country, with some very beautiful cities and breath-taking architecture, especially in Prague. I found Hradec Králové very well-designed, very neat, and most importantly, very peaceful. The Erasmus program brought me into contact with some exceptional instructors in the Philosophical Faculty who both complemented and expanded my borders in the study of Philosophy; a most-satisfying experience. Contrary to my fears, I personally didn't experience obvious or overt racial discrimination: the many international students and the locals I interacted with were very welcoming and very much happy to help.

I must admit that 'having fun' wasn't part of my UHK to-do list initially, but I ended up doing some exciting stuff, including city-and-country-hopping, thanks to the Erasmus+ stipend. I got to visit Germany and Hungary and would have loved to travel more, but I could not due to the Covid pandemic and the resultant travel restrictions. On the whole, I have had a wonderful, near-perfect journey of learning and unlearning, meeting wonderful people, discovering, and embracing diversity, thanks to the UHK-Erasmus+ program, which I would gladly recommend to anyone who wants to experience the University of Hradec Králové and the Czech Republic.

