

Hi everyone! I'm an Italian student currently doing my Master's degree, and I spent my Erasmus exchange here in Hradec Králové during the second semester. Looking back, I can honestly say it has been one of the best decisions I've ever made.

The activities organized by ESN are incredibly diverse and well thought out. There is truly something for everyone. If you enjoy socializing and meeting new people, you will love the pub quizzes, themed parties, and international dinners where everyone brings a dish from their home country. If you are more of a nature lover, there are hiking trips to the beautiful forests and hills surrounding the city. No matter what your interests are, ESN makes sure that no one feels left out and that every student gets the chance to explore both the city and the region in a fun and safe way.

I personally think that Hradec Králové is an excellent place to have your Erasmus experience. It is a small city, far away from the chaotic and overwhelming energy of bigger metropolitan areas. You do not have to spend hours on public transport just to get from one place to another. Everything is close by, which gives you a sense of calm and safety that I really appreciated. At the same time, the city is not boring at all. It has just the right balance between being quiet and being lively.

Hradec Králové is perfect in every season. In winter, you can go watch exciting ice hockey matches, as the local team has a very passionate fan base. You can also have snowball fights or go ice skating on the outdoor rinks. In summer, the city transforms completely. You can have lovely picnics by the lake, go for long walks in the nearby woods, or simply sit in one of the many parks with a good book and an iced coffee. There is also a beautiful riverside area where people gather in the evening to chat, play music, and watch the sunset. So, no matter when you come, Hradec Králové truly offers an all-inclusive experience for every taste and season.

Another great advantage is the location. Prague and other Czech cities are easily reachable thanks to an excellent and affordable public transport system. You can take a train or a bus and be in Prague in less than two hours. Moreover, because of Hradec Králové's central position in Europe, it is also very easy to reach all the neighbouring countries for weekend trips. Whether you want to visit Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Dresden, or Krakow, you can do it without spending too much time or money on travel. This makes your Erasmus experience even richer, because you get to explore not just the Czech Republic but a big part of Central Europe.

The courses offered by the university are numerous and very interesting. There is a wide selection of subjects that you often do not find at your home university. I personally took courses that I would never have had the chance to take back in Italy, and this broadened my academic perspective a lot. The professors are always kind and helpful. They understand that you are an international student, and they take the time to explain things clearly if you don't understand something. The Erasmus coordinators are also very supportive. They never leave you feeling lost or alone, and this is an incredibly important thing to have, especially considering that living abroad and being far away from your own country and family can

sometimes feel a bit scary or overwhelming. Knowing that someone has your back makes all the difference.

The university campus is very large and, honestly, quite aesthetic. It is well-equipped with modern facilities. There are interesting leisure zones where you can relax between classes, including a chill-out area with comfortable sofas, a gaming zone with consoles and board games, and a very nice coffee shop just a few steps away where you can grab a cheap but delicious coffee or a quick snack. The study spaces are also good, with plenty of natural light. So, whether you want to study, rest, or have fun with friends, the campus has a place for you.

If you have the opportunity to live in the Palachovy Koleje dormitory, I recommend you take it. You will share the flat with four to six other people, which might sound like a lot at first, but trust me, the friendships and the memories you will make there are absolutely unforgettable. Living with people from different countries teaches you so much about other cultures, and you will likely end up finding friends for life. Right in front of the dormitory, there is a small park where students often gather for spontaneous picnics, barbecues, or just to hang out in the evening. There is also a basketball court, so if you enjoy playing sports, you can easily organize a match with your friends. The atmosphere is very friendly and welcoming, and you never feel alone.

In conclusion, Hradec Králové offers a great Erasmus experience that is definitely worth trying. It gives you the perfect combination of academic quality, student life, nature, culture, and travel opportunities. If you are thinking about where to go for your exchange, I truly believe that Hradec Králové should be high on your list. You will leave with great memories, new friends, and a real love for this small but wonderful city in the heart of Europe.