

## **Our Erasmus Story in Hradec Králové**

If anyone had told us, before we left, that we would leave a piece of our hearts in a small town in Eastern Bohemia called Hradec Králové, we probably would have checked the map twice.

Yet, here we are, packing away the most intense months of our lives, lived between the classrooms of UHK and, above all, within the unforgettable walls of the Palachovy Koleje residence.

Anyone who has been there knows exactly what we are talking about: those evenings that started with a simple "let's just go say hi in the study room" and ended up discussing the meaning of life at dawn with Taiwanese, Spanish, and Turkish students.

### **The Academic Experience at UHK: Beyond the Borders of Knowledge**

A fundamental chapter of this journey was, without a doubt, our academic path at the University of Hradec Králové. From the very first lectures, we were struck by the extraordinary helpfulness and high level of professionalism of the professors, who were capable of turning every class into a genuine moment of cultural exchange. The courses proved to be incredibly educational, offering us the precious opportunity to explore and learn completely new things about Central Europe—a land rich in history, complexity, and charm. The lectures were never about passive listening: the teaching approach constantly pushed us to challenge ourselves, stimulating deep debates that allowed us to practice our argumentative skills and sharpen our critical reasoning. We return home not only with a suitcase full of memories but also with an open mind, ready to analyze the world from entirely new perspectives.

### **The Logistics Base and the "Grand Expeditions"**

Erasmus at UHK has a strange kind of magic: it gives you a cozy routine in Hradec, but it also plants a wild desire to explore inside you. Palachovy was our logistics base, the place where we planned our weekend trips in front of a laptop screen, fitting train and FlixBus schedules together with the precision of aerospace engineers.

From that room in Hradec Králové, a true tour of Central Europe began. We collected kilometers, laughs, and an industrial amount of anecdotes:

Krakow: Where we braved the freezing cold to admire the market square and warmed ourselves up with pierogi, discovering the magical charm of Poland.

Vienna: The city that welcomed us with its royal elegance, where we pretended to be sophisticated nineteenth-century ladies while actually hunting for the best deal on a slice of Sacher torte.

Dresden: A quick trip to Germany among majestic bridges and breathtaking architecture, perfect for a weekend of art and markets.

Budapest: With its rejuvenating thermal baths (our paradise after study sessions at UHK) and the legendary Ruin Pubs, where we danced until we lost track of time.

Bratislava: So close, so welcoming, with its castle overlooking the Danube and those old town alleys that looked like something out of a fairy tale.

### **Returning Home (The Bohemian One)**

The best part of every trip, however, was the return. When the train or bus pulled back into the station at Hradec Králové, we would look out the window and feel a strange but beautiful sensation: the feeling of coming \*home\*. Walking back toward Palachovy, passing the

reception, and finding the same friendly faces was the perfect ending to every single adventure.

Now that our Erasmus is coming to a close, we carry away with us, above all, the realization that boundaries, when seen from Palachovy Koleje, simply do not exist.

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