

## My Erasmus Experience

Being the only Maltese student on Erasmus in the Czech Republic was both an exciting and intimidating experience. Coming from a big, close-knit family, I had never truly lived on my own before, so arriving in a new country at the age of 19 filled me with nerves and uncertainty. Everything felt unfamiliar—the language, the routines, and the independence that suddenly rested entirely on my shoulders. At first, the distance from home was overwhelming, and I often questioned whether I had made the right choice.

Over time, however, I began to open up. I met people from all over Europe, as well as students from Asia and Latin America, all bringing different backgrounds and perspectives. Some, like me, were experiencing living abroad for the first time, while others were more experienced and confident, having already studied or travelled extensively. Being surrounded by such a diverse group made the experience richer and helped me feel less alone. I made friends, went to parties, explored new places, and gradually became more comfortable stepping outside my comfort zone. Slowly, I came into myself, gaining confidence both socially and personally. Academically, my time at UHK – the University of Hradec Králové – was equally rewarding. The classes were genuinely interesting and introduced approaches that felt fresh and engaging. The presence of visiting lecturers was especially valuable, as it offered perspectives and opportunities that I would not have encountered at my home university.

Overall, this Erasmus experience has changed me for the better. It made me more independent, more adaptable, and more confident in myself and my abilities. Living and studying abroad showed me that I can handle new challenges on my own, and it has made me far more certain and enthusiastic about the possibility of studying abroad again in the future.