


MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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As students from a public university in Colombia, we are used to seeing the student exchange programs in Europe as something that only can be afforded by wealthy students, and I was not one of them. Nevertheless, one day in 2020 - the strangest year in my life (and I guess it was for all of us), one email would change my life forever: I was accepted for the scholarship from the University of Hradec Králové in the Czech Republic to study one semester there. I can even remember the voice in my head while I was reading the email from Tomáš, the coordinator of the International Office, telling me: "Yes, you won the scholarship, and now I will ask you for some documents to make faster the visa process." I was speechless. That day, in October 2020, my experience as a student from the Philosophical Faculty of the UHK started.

I could try to describe the whole experience as an international student, and I could not tell you all because doing a student mobility abroad is indescribable, unforgettable, and especially: an eternal feeling. Nothing matters there, it is only you and your university, your friends, your life as a dream, your life in a timeless place as Hradec Králové, as the people who are there to make you feel welcome, loved, young, alive. My experience was just amazing, and so far, my time there was the best time of my life. I am pretty sure that if my mobility was the best experience in my 20 years is because I have met incredible people who made me happy every day. I will be always grateful to my friends who became my family, for being part of my exchange, and now for being part of my life. If you are going abroad, sometimes you can feel fear of being alone, but you will never be alone.



I am also grateful to the UHK because they made everything easier. The International Office and the ESN organization were always there to help me even when I used to mess up some things. Studying in a different country, while the world is facing the worst pandemic of the year, is such a difficult challenge, but they made everything easy. They gave me the confidence to know that there was always someone I could turn to, and mainly they were always nice and respectful. The UHK and Palachova Dormitory, even when I just spend a short time there, were my home, and I will carry this experience always in my heart.

In my motivation letter, I wrote: "going out also makes my way home", and now I am surer about it: I found a home. Thank you UHK for making me feel welcome and supported, for this opportunity that changed my life forever. Thank you for showing me that other ways are possible.

I could not be more grateful to you all, and I hope to see you again soon.

