

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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Erasmus+ has been the best and most formative experience of my life. Coming from a capital city, I was excited to experience living in a smaller town, and at first, it was a big adjustment. There isn't a lot of nightlife here in Hradec, but we still managed to have great nights together. Whether it was a get-together in one of the apartments, a night out at Matty's, or a train ride to Prague to go to clubs, we took any chance to hang out together and meet new people.



I'm so happy I got to meet so many different people of various nationalities and personalities, religions, and cultures. My mind was broadened, and my knowledge of the world expanded. Though not everything was smooth sailing, and I had a first bad experience of roommate living, given the fact that they were all from the same nationality and I felt excluded, I was able to change apartments in the middle of the semester and live with my new best friends. Zion from South Korea and Marta from Spain (carrying over from the first apartment) and me, joined Ling, a Chinese student already living alone. My living experience changed from bad to the best. Living with your best friends is so much fun: you go from cooking together, to having karaoke and dance parties, to having a communal juice that you take turns buying for everyone.

On Erasmus, I experienced love, friendship, and loss. And this made me mature in so many ways. From watching my friends go through hard times and supporting them through it, to myself going through hard times and feeling supported in return.



The people of Palachova became a family to me. All the people I made connections with from so many different countries: Antonia from Romania, one of the strongest persons I've ever known, Zion from South Korea, the most hilarious and caring friend I could ever wish for, and an ambitious bet accomplisher, Marta from Spain, a protective and kind friend who is always there for me when I need her, Märt from Estonia, a very unique and loyal friend who went to Budapest just to be there for my birthday, and finally Noemi from Spain/Sweden, a sweet and logical person who will always remain close to my heart.

I will forever remember all the trips we did, the endless hours on the train to get to Vienna, Budapest, and Berlin, and all the places we visited in the Czech Republic. All the people we met during those travels: from a Chilean backpacker to a group of Egyptian friends on a Europe trip with whom we played cards and got an invitation to go visit them whenever we wanted, to two American cousins that decided to do a spontaneous European trip, to two Spanish independentists who wanted us to give our name to free Catalonia in exchange for the photo we asked for. And an American who had come for love and was moving to Norway to be with the girl he wanted...

All these stories that they so readily shared with us made our trips so much more interesting. All the laughs, the running jokes, the tears, and the love that we shared. But there's no reason for them to remain just memories, and even though our Erasmus is coming to an end, we will preserve the friendships we have built, and this will not be a goodbye forever.

So, to anyone reading this, I urge you to go out, make friends and connections and do all the ESN events because this experience will be the best you will ever have, and the people you meet make all the difference. Make sure you pick your friends wisely and you won't ever feel lonely or homesick. Because you will feel you have made your own second family here. And when you find them don't let them go, cherish them and take them with you when you go back home.

