

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

SIULMARY GONZÁLEZ
VENEZUELA, UNIVERSIDAD DE LOS ANDES
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My stay in the Czech Republic was definitely one of the best experiences of my life. Being an international student of the University of Hradec Králové is an awesome opportunity as we get the chance to know a lot of different cultures and we are always interacting with a lot of nice people. I was an international student for two semesters (from February 2020 till February 2021).

At the very beginning of our stay, there was an event in which we could show a part of our gastronomy. Different international students and also local ones prepared food from their countries for this event, and it was amazing. This was one of the few face-to-face activities we could participate in.

Nevertheless, and despite the pandemic, the university kept offering us ways to keep interacting and showing part of our identities and knowledge. An example of this is the Flag Food Contest, an event in which we could create our national flags by using edible products or food. In my case, I created my flag with tequeños, empanadas, grapes, cheese, pepper, and tomato. I enjoyed this activity and, as I came third, I received many gifts from the International Office, the most welcoming, responsible, and efficient office of the university.



Regarding the courses, I took around 6 each semester and the professors were very nice and organized. I had the chance to study mostly courses from the Sociology field, and it was really helpful for me as I study Languages in my home university (which is very related to Cultural Studies). I felt very interested in most of the courses as we could be as critical as we wanted. Also, I could study a bit about Czech History and courses related to Totalitarianism, a subject that I am really interested in. I also took the Czech courses, which helped me survive with some Czech phrases these months. It is enough to survive, but definitely, this is a really complex language. However, I will keep learning it!

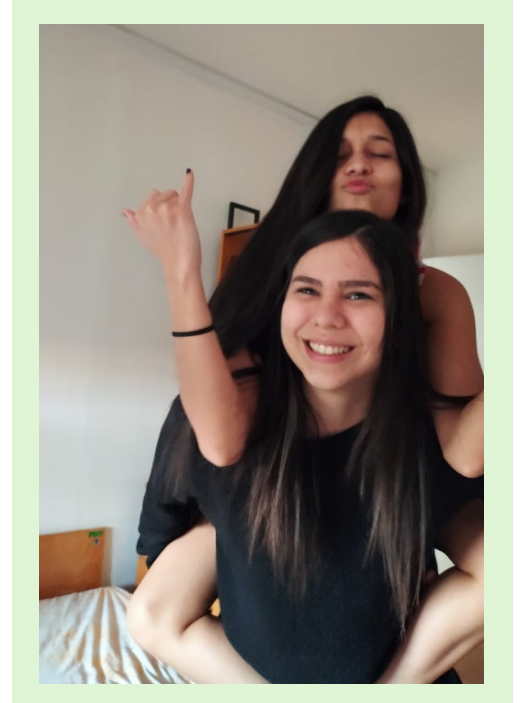


From the beginning, I was very curious and interested in knowing closer the Czech culture. Thanks to the university and the ESN, I had the opportunity to be part of online volunteering as a language assistant (in Spanish and French) for a couple of months in Gymnázium Komenského Havířov, a school located in Moravian-Silesian Region. I was supposed to interact with Czech students, mostly teenagers, but also kids and students who were going to take the Maturita Exam and who wanted to practice with a native speaker (Spanish). In the case of French, it was not necessary to be a native speaker but to have a good level in the language to make the students talk with foreigners. They were all very participative, and we could share our experiences in a foreign language. I had around 5 volunteering courses per week of 45 minutes each.



It was mostly conversational, and we could share cultural aspects about our countries; they asked me questions about the language or Latin America, I could show them presentations and prepare games or questions for them, etc. Most of them were from the Czech Republic, and there were some from Slovakia. The teachers (Martina Vykrentová, Müllerová Tereza, and Dalimil Šebesta) were incredibly kind and welcoming people. Teacher Dalimil and I were even interviewed by the Czech National TV (ČT) to talk about this project.

Regarding the accommodation, the dormitory is a nice place for an exchange, and I had the opportunity to live with my lovely Venezuelan friends. This was one of the best things that happened to me during my stay in the Czech Republic, as the quarantine was even something positive with them by my side.



I am more than grateful for this experience, for these two amazing semesters, for my professors and my courses (most of them were incredibly enriching), for the people I got to know, for all the places I visited, and all the things I discovered and learned.

This experience definitely made my world perspective wider and made me realize the importance of doing what you really love in life. It made me feel even more interested in discovering new cultures and horizons, in keep studying, and I consider it brought a better version of myself. You are always surrounded by different languages, different ways of living and thinking, and much more.



I would highly recommend any student of the world to come and study at Hradec Králové! It is probably the best city in the Czech Republic, very modern, but at the same time quiet, full of nature (if you like photography, this is your place), with very affordable prices, with a lot of facilities, and from which you can easily travel thanks to its geographical position, meaning that you can always go to Prague and other amazing cities like Kutná Hora, Český Krumlov, Plzeň, and many others.

