

I arrived in Hradec Králové in September and am now leaving in June, after nine months of living here. This time has been full of new experiences and incredible memories I would not change.

Coming to a new country alone for the first time was nothing short of intimidating, but instead I decided to take it as a challenge, as the perfect opportunity to see what I could do after moving out for the first time.

The language barrier also felt scary, but switching my perspective to it being a chance to learn a new language made it exciting. Finding out how similar some words are in Czech and Spanish came as a welcome surprise, and learning how to pronounce some basic phrases, bus stops and city names was certainly a fun puzzle to solve.

As a Spaniard, it was a big culture shock to see how some differently some things are done here in Czechia, like greeting other people with a handshake instead of two kisses; or being able to go out for a walk at 04:30 in the morning with sunlight outside, several hours earlier than usual for me. But culture shocks are not always negative! Seeing people getting together in pubs to hang out was a very heartwarming sight.

Academically speaking, these two semesters were memorable. I love how you are able to choose each and every one of your courses, being able to replace them if needed to better fit your personal schedule. There is a wide range of courses to choose from, and the ones I decided on were highly enjoyable, several of them taking one step further from traditional theoretical approaches and rather using more contemporary and practical points of view to study the contents of the subject. This seemingly subtle change made the studying experience much more pleasant to my liking.

However, the Erasmus+ exchange is not limited to merely studying; it also includes the opportunity of visiting unknown places and unlocking new friendships.

The public transport network of Czechia makes it very easy and affordable for people to travel within the country and also to other neighbouring states, even

for student budgets. Any idle weekend can become an escapade to other European capitals or picturesque cities and villages full of historical charm.

Living on the university dorms is a foolproof way of meeting new people, whether they are from your home country or foreigners. You move in and the next thing you know, you are making plans to spend time with people from all over the world. I personally made friends with people from places like Ghana and Czechia, amongst others. Making memories with them is definitely an unforgettable part of my stay here, one that will stay with me for years to come.

In summary, I would like to conclude that my Erasmus+ stay in the Czech Republic has turned these past 9 months into a wonderful episode of my life. If given the chance to choose my destination once more, I would not hesitate to repeat my choice of coming to Hradec Králové.