

MY STUDENT EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

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COLOMBIA

SUMMER SEMESTER 2020/2021 AND WINTER
SEMESTER 2021/2022.

Hello! My name is Victor Manuel Hernandez, a student of Sociology at Universidad del Rosario in Colombia. In 2021, I spent my fabulous Erasmus (specifically Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility) time in the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Hradec Králové, where I took subjects from the departments of Philosophy, Political Science, and Sociology.



When I arrived here, at the very first moment I felt at home. International students like Linda and ESN members like Michelle always helped me with uncountable problems and made my adaptation to this new experience easy. Due to COVID, I could not have face-to-face lessons in the first part of the year, however, when the situation got better, I started to take classes at the faculty and to recover my university life.

What is remarkable about the opportunity to study here at the UHK is the possibility to make friends with people from all over the world...

French, Russian, Venezuelan, Bolivian, Slovak, Turkish, and Czech people were part of those who I, emotionally, call my friends now. More than an academic experience, this exchange meant to me the opening to discover the world, as well as visions and perspectives of different people... This is why I think doing an exchange is, actually in the very literal meaning of the word, a change: a change of ideas, spaces, food, a change of yourself, and turning into a better person.



Thus, this is how I will tell you about my exchange experience from the perspectives that, until now, I have shared with wonderful people. At first, the discomfort about the use of a new language was extinguished by the empathy of international teachers and students. I think that as a sociologist, I pay particular attention to what is said and how it is said, and at the beginning, this was overwhelming. I paid attention to cultural differences and what we like and dislike. I learned to listen, to understand, and to be critical of what surrounded me. Even when at first it was complex because of the restrictions around the issue of the pandemic, once the situation got better, I started to live more and know the Czech Republic and other European countries. Parties, meals, and time with friends were getting more and more beautiful.

The University, specifically the International Office of the Philosophical Faculty, has a well-trained staff that is aware of the students and our needs. Teachers are comprehensive, and besides understanding you, they truly listen to you. Throughout my year of exchange, I grew academically in the aspect of understanding complex texts in English, as well as learning to write and properly structure my opinions and essays. In the same way, I shared academic spaces with students from different contexts under updated and necessary paradigms in university life. To conclude, the exchange meant to me a development of myself academically and socially, both points that helped me to grow and consider different points of view for my professional life. I am very happy that the University has generated this possibility of making dreams a real chance!