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# Gender Studies Welcoming Events 2024

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At the end of September, a two-day series of Welcoming Events for new Gender Studies students took place. The Welcoming Events were organized by current Gender Studies students as well as alumni, some of whom are part of the safe space kolektiv, an intersectional feminist group at Charles University that, among other things, advocates for a safe and supportive environment on campus. The events took place on 27-28 September 2024, the third year of such events. Due to the participation of international students, formal communication was conducted in English. The events were supported by the Faculty of Humanities with a one-off financial contribution and the Faculty supported the connecting of Czech and English students.

### **First day: introduction to the faculty and ice-breaking activities**

The program began with a tour of the Faculty of Humanities building, with an opportunity for new students to learn about the important facilities and services offered by the Faculty. The tour was followed by fun ice-breaking activities aimed at building friendships among new students. This was followed by an informal FAQ session including information about the study programme, sharing of study experiences and tips, and space for questions. This session was enriched by the direct experiences of current students and alumni of the programme. Specific challenges faced and how to successfully overcome them were discussed. Particular attention was paid to mental health and maintaining a balance between academic responsibilities and personal life, especially in relation to work obligations. Practical advice was shared on issues such as effective semester planning, thesis writing, use of support services and professional development advice. The programme of the first day was concluded with a group visit to the vegan restaurant Střecha, where introductions and sharing of first impressions of the faculty and studies continued in an informal setting.

### **Day Two: Trip to Karlštejn**

The second day of the Welcoming Events was dedicated to a joint trip to the Karlštejn region, allowing the newcomers to spend a day in nature while continuing to build collective spirit outside the university environment. The route led from the village of Karlštejn, through the quarry of Malá Amerika, to Bubovice waterfalls, ending the hike in a restaurant in the village of Srbsko. Even though the weather was not very favourable for the nature walks and it rained for over half of the trip, it did not prevent the students from further bonding and strengthening the sense of community. Moreover, the wet weather turned out to favour mushroom picking!

### **Evaluation of the Welcoming Events**

The Welcoming Event accomplished its goal of new students getting to know not only their fellow students, but also to the faculty environment and the values that Gender Studies promotes. On behalf of the Welcoming Events organizing team, we hope that the events created a friendly and safe atmosphere that will make it easier for students to begin their studies and make friendships with each other.