

web platform on the Hanse Passage website. In the final phase, project participants will build a network of experts in each region and among regions.

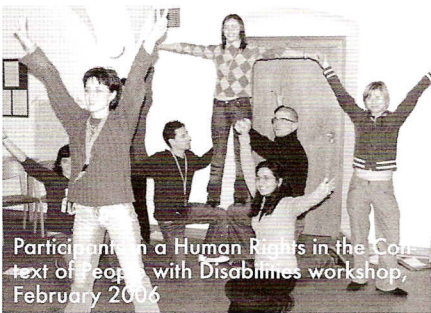
PROGRESS is co-financed by the European Union under the aegis of the European Social Fund, and by the Foundation for the Study of Culture and Education.

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## EQUALITY AND INCLUSION: Project Chance and Human Rights in the Context of People with Disabilities

Our disability projects, Project Chance and Human Rights in the Context of People with Disabilities, are the brainchild of ULS student-activist Damian Dudala. Damian's projects are geared toward bring the issue of disability into the discourse of human rights with particular respect to higher education. Students with disabilities faces a variety of barriers as they pursue their studies, and indeed, for many people those barriers are simply too high for them continue their education past high school. Thus his projects take a three-pronged approach, researching and documenting the barriers to education, developing educational opportunities to train students and activists on these issues and how to overcome them, and outreach to promote equal access to education as a basic human right.

Project Chance, which began in 2004, was geared toward issues that attend hearing impairment. It started as a workshop series, Encounters with Human Rights, which introduced ULS students and local NGO activists to the concept and the history of human rights in the context of people with disabilities. Since then, in addition to a second round of the workshops and a forum for informal meetings between ULS students and administrators, the project has expanded to include a conference, People with Disabilities and Education, held in Wrocław in May 2006. The conference was designed as a forum for sharing preliminary research on disability issues common to learning institutions. The obstacles to learning for students with disabilities are multifaceted; they can be logistical and architectural, but they also include lack of Sign-language interpreters or note-taking services as well as lack of awareness on the part of instructors and university administration. To address these issues, the conference brought together 85 participants from all over Poland. The conference sessions addressed pedagogues, psychologists, and other academics interested in alternative modes of access to higher education for youth with disabilities, and also in 'best practices' at universities, which have long experience with this issue. The conference was the result of a collaboration with the Department for People with Disabilities of the Marshal's Office of Lower Silesia. The Department, which acts as regional advisor and advocate for a variety of public and private institutions who face issues of access for people with disabilities, also partners with local groups to disburse European Union funds.



Participants in a Human Rights in the Context of People with Disabilities workshop, February 2006

Damian has since expanded his project portfolio to organize activities that more broadly address the issue of disability in all its manifestations. The first step in this direction was the training course, Human Rights in the Context of People with Disabilities. The training session brought students from Italy, Turkey, Romania, Spain, Poland, France, and Luxembourg together to discuss their shared concerns with intolerance, harassment, violence, and the general discrimination and marginalization of people with disabilities. The objective of workshop was to introduce participants to the concept and the international documents of human rights, and

to develop strategies to assert the human rights of people with disabilities in response to these problems. IISCE is currently working with the Marshal's Office to pursue European Structural Funds to expand its training component through the creation of a cross-border training network which would educate a cadre of local disability advocates on promoting awareness of disability.

As part of his project outreach activities, Damian, the project coordinator, also travels widely to present the results of the project's research findings at European conferences on disability and education. In the fall, he will go to Bradford, UK, on an ERASMUS student exchange in order to study and to pursue comparative research on the Deaf community there.

Project Chance runs under the patronage of the Council of Europe, and is financed by the European Commission under the aegis of the YOUTH Program and supported by the Polish Association for Human Rights Education. Human Rights in the Context of People with Disabilities is financed by the YOUTH Program in conjunction with the Marshal's Office of Lower Silesia, and is supported by the Polish Association for Human Rights Education.



### Syllabus: European Identity Seminar

Raymond Bach, professor of French literature and academic director of the Syracuse University Strasbourg Center in France, leads a group of about thirty students on an annual interactive study tour of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. The course is conceived as a tour through the *Mitteleuropa* of yesteryear, an area of fuzzy borders, mixed populations and heterogeneous societies, German economic and cultural domination, a strong Jewish presence and a largely cosmopolitan culture. On stops in Berlin, Wrocław, Prague and Nuremberg, students are asked to read the landscape around them, sifting through its layers for traces of the multicultural pasts that history has obscured. Lectures by the professors (including two colleagues from Strasbourg) and guests lecturers are delivered *in situ*: students learn about Czech-German relations as they traverse the Sudetenland, or about the contemporary art scene at Wrocław's converted brewery-cum-art center. A prelude to a semester abroad in Strasbourg, the course gives American students a first-hand glimpse into the world they will spend the semester studying.

#### Lectures:

Shifting Borders, Changing Identities at the German/Polish border

Gender Issues in Socialist and Post-socialist Poland

Communist and Post-Communist Architecture in Prague

The Jewish Past in Wrocław

Constructing a City's Identity: The Case of Wrocław

#### Field trips:

Nazi Party rally grounds in Nuremberg

City Brewery Arts Center in Wrocław

Gross-Rosen Concentration Camp Stasi Museum in Berlin