

Fostering Mobility of Students with Disabilities

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Abstract International study experience offer unique opportunities and challenges generally, and for students with disabilities particularly. Students obtain new contacts, develop friendships, test their own abilities and skills, develop their independence.

For various reasons, not many students with disabilities participate in exchange mobility programmes. Demanding and time consuming preparation, lack of relevant information, need for many adaptations, societal and cultural differences between home and host country – these are a few reasons that prevent them from active participation.

Students with disabilities considering studies abroad should be provided with realistic information about the host university and living environment in the country. Very advanced preparation is essential. Flexibility in communication among stakeholders of the host and sending universities and creativity in providing adaptations and finding solutions are expected.

As a result, each opportunity for international education may be subject to the university's equal opportunities policy development and removal of existing barriers.

One of the latest initiatives to raising awareness and promoting dialogue on mobility of students with disabilities and increasing their number within the Erasmus programme is an international project *ExchangeAbility: Fostering mobility of students with disabilities*. Five universities from Estonia, Hungary, Cyprus, Belgium and the Slovak Republic and two international organizations UNICA - Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe and Erasmus Student Network will monitor study conditions, organize visits, meetings and seminars and exchange experience within the project programme. The site visits will serve as brief mobility schemes. In the project activities several bodies/ stakeholders, students with disabilities, universities, local authorities and student representatives will take an active part. Project results may help the participating and also other universities maintain cooperation and improve study conditions.

The paper will present aims, objectives, activities and expected results of the project.