

**I respect myself,  
I accept others.**



Anti-discrimination guidebook for students and workers employees  
of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

Edited by:

Prof. Katarzyna Dudka (Ombudsman for Academic Rights)

Prof. Agnieszka Lewicka-Zelent

PhD Anna Bieganowska-Skóra

PhD Anna Stachyra-Sokulska

PhD Agata Świdzińska

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## **A word from His Magnificence Rector of UMCS**

### **We are open as a University**

Respect for others is one of the most universal and fundamental values that should be fostered. It is also an inalienable right of everyone. A university, due to its educational and research mission, is a place where the importance of human dignity should be particularly emphasised and conveyed not only to the society through academic discourse, but also by being an example to be followed.

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin is a community created by academic teachers, administrative staff and students. Everyone is an important member of this academic community and makes a significant contribution to the development of their *Alma Mater*. Joint work requires us to build good and respectful interpersonal relationships, the aim of which is to create a welcoming environment for all.

UMCS is a place open for discussion, where people with different views can meet and share them in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. Each of us is personally responsible for adopting a kind attitude towards other members of the community in which we live.

I believe that we will continue to do our best to create an empathetic and respectful academic community that is open to every individual.



His Magnificence Professor Radosław Dobrowolski

## *The key to the uniqueness of UMCS is our diversity*

### **Instead of an introduction**

Dear Readers,

we encourage you to familiarise yourselves with this publication prepared with the entire community of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin in mind. The publication is addressed to all of us, because it is us who make the university an exceptional place. We are the ones who create our university's reality which is unique thanks to our work to build our community and its distinctive image, a space for openness towards other people, regardless of where they come from, what gender they are, how old they are or what they look like. Thanks to our diversity and individuality we make our University an original and unique place.

The aim of this publication is to raise awareness of our uniqueness, but also of the risks caused by this. We hope it will serve as a contribution to reflect on the words we say, the emotions we express in our behaviour and the actions we take. We suggest constructive solutions to difficult situations we may encounter in our relations with other members of the academic community.

According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

It is important to always remember that we all have human rights, among which the high position is occupied by the right to dignity, respect, equality, help, compassion and freedom from harm. We need the other person - the one who harms us - to be able to close an unpleasant stage of life and start another, better one; to obtain redress and answers to difficult questions "Why was I harmed?", to reconcile and forgive ourselves and others. When someone hurts us, it means that their needs are also unmet and they expect our support to change their behaviour towards us. This way of perceiving our community proves how connected we are and how much we need each other. This is why it is so valuable not only to declare, but also to live the values of respect, tolerance, equality and justice, which form the basis of positive social relations. However, if there is an abused person among us, let them take care of themselves, and if they are not strong enough, let others support them, and not be afraid to react firmly and signal the violations observed.

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin gives space to express oneself in an assertive way, to respond empathically to other members of our community, but also to take responsibility for one's behaviour in a mature way, to right the wrong done, to forgive oneself

and others. It arranges activities that make it possible to strengthen our unity perceived as a summer garden full of unique species of flowers. What we feel, think and how we behave determines the uniqueness of our Alma Mater.

## **1. Understanding others**

### **1.1. Diversity**

Each of us is different and therefore unique. Even twins who look almost identical and behave similarly acquire knowledge about the world around them in a different way and interpret their experiences differently. The real power of living in a society lies in the diversity of its members.

The concept of diversity is interpreted in many ways and refers to the aspects in which people differ in terms of: age, gender, race, ability, education, knowledge, experience, skills and competences, personality, temperament, beliefs, value system, culture (Walczak, 2012).

It is typical of our times that every day we meet people who are different from us. It is important that what makes us different should become the material that creates the diversity and richness of the society, an expression of "respect for every human being without exception, which is the basis of an ethic of peace, security and intercultural dialogue". (Mayor, after: Nikitorowicz 2000, p. 166). The way to do this is to accept that it is natural to be different and that "most of the differences that are central to human life do not exist naturally - it is people who establish them and carefully guard them". (Douglas, after: Bauman 1996, p. 63).

The contemporary "new world" is described as a "global ecumene" in which "creolisation of culture" is taking place (U. Hannerz, 2006). This means that we all benefit from different ethnic cultures and nobody represents only one of them. In various places we encounter a physical mixing of different cultural patterns, and the residence of representatives of different ethnic groups in one place shapes the ethno landscape of that place. Under the influence of migration and cultural change, these landscapes are dynamic (A. Appadurai, 2005).

Everyone is familiar with the term "multiculturalism" which in common parlance means the existence of many cultures in one area. The existence of cultures and people next to each other has usually taken place under conditions of asymmetry, inequality of development opportunities and chances for interaction. This created social problems, differentiated social statuses and caused inequalities in life chances. Andrzej Szahaj (2003), looking for the beginnings of thinking about multiculturalism, mentions the year 1915 when Horace Kallen wrote about the need to move away from the ideology of assimilationism to "cultural pluralism". Kallen depicted cultural pluralism figuratively as an orchestra in which each instrument is different, each has its own tone and timbre, its own melody to play, and yet each works together with another instrument to produce a wonderful harmonic whole. Thus, according to this concept, each ethnic group should be an instrument preserving its unique identity, but ready to

play together in an orchestra - a diverse society. The hope for multiculturalism - according to M. Golka (2010) - is "to perceive and accept 'cultural synergy' (...) which is supposed to enrich the effects achieved by a team consisting of various elements. (...) It probably occurs wherever there is cooperation (even competitive cooperation) which is usually a positive-sum game, but not wherever there is conflict which can be a negative-sum game. A homogeneous society is perhaps 'more comfortable' for political reasons, but a multicultural society is arguably more creative" (p. 137).

Openness to each other, mutual respect and recognition, focus on a person - these are the factors that condition positive viewpoints and attitudes (cf. Piotrowicz 2009, p. 312). They enable the realisation of *communitas* - a model of the society being a community of individuals differing from one another in physical and intellectual resources, who despite these differences "feel equal due to a sense of belonging to a community". (Turner, after: Sulima 2000, p. 59).

Lublin is a city with multicultural traditions and is referred to as the Gate to the East. Here, on the 1st of July 1569, the Union of Lublin was concluded, establishing the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Here, multicultural, multilingual and multireligious influences were mixed. The memory of these events is borne by Lublin's architecture, as well as by many places in the region. Appreciating the past that shaped this place, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University strives to create the conditions for the development of all open-minded people.

Universities that are open to social diversity are market competitive and successful. They provide opportunities for experiences that prepare students to function in a diverse world (Astin 1993; Bowen and Bok 1998). Diversity of interaction has been shown to be positively related to mutual understanding (Antonio 2001; Chang et al. 2006; Denson and Chang 2009), leadership skills (Antonio 2001), general academic skills and self-efficacy (Denson and Chang 2009), personal development (Hu and Kuh 2003), cognitive ability (Chang et al. 2006; Nelson Laird 2005), self-confidence (Chang et al. 2004, 2006; Nelson Laird 2005), civic engagement (Bowman 2011), well-being (Bowman 2010), a sense of belonging to the university (Locks et al. 2008) and overall satisfaction with the functioning at the university (Chang 2001).

According to the principles of inclusive culture and related diversity management, a conscious action to use and value the diversity of people makes it possible to create an environment in which the potential and talents of all people are appreciated and engaged in the process of achieving the organization's goals (Kandola, Fullerton, 1994, Tulshyan, 2016). In diversity management, it is crucial to recognize that everyone is different, there is not one good role model and the idea of equality of everyone's skills and knowledge is not promoted (Stankiewicz, Ziemiański, 2012).





**The advantages of inclusive culture based on diversity include:**

- promoting innovation and creativity;
- solving problems by looking at them from many different angles;
- increasing flexibility;
- greater adaptability of the organisation;
- a supportive environment for mutual learning;
- improving interpersonal relations;
- improving communication;
- reducing conflicts;
- a decrease in the number of undesirable behaviours related to the lack of tolerance for diversity of views;
- improving the image of the institution;
- an effective organisational culture;
- creating equal opportunities (Katrinli, Atabay, Gunay, 2008, Klimkiewicz, 2010).

Despite the many advantages of social diversity, development of inclusive culture can be jeopardised by stereotypes and prejudices which consequently create grounds for discrimination.

## THINKERS' GAMES

Read the text below and answer the question: What does equal treatment mean to you?

### ALBERT - THE FAIREST TEACHER

Albert worked in the city centre and earned a lot of money. But as he walked from the subway to work in the morning, he noticed that there were people who had very little, as they sat in the street and asked him for some money. Sometimes he felt guilty that he had so much when they had so little. So from time to time he threw them some change. Albert's job was to invest rich people's money so that they became even richer. Sometimes he felt it was unfair that they were so unimaginably rich and he was just "well-off".

Thus, he would over-bill them sometimes because he knew they had so much money they wouldn't notice. One day Albert decided that he had had enough of this business world where people were not equal and he would find a job to help change that.

Therefore, he went back to university and qualified as a teacher. And when he started teaching and came to school, he wanted above all to treat everyone equally. So he made an effort to learn everyone's names - the smartest, the naughtiest and the quietest - at the same time. He smiled equally at everyone in school. He put in the same amount of effort to get to know everyone. He took the same amount of time to help everyone learn. Every time someone answered a question well, he said the same thing: "good job". He gave everyone the same assignments... and the same amount of time to complete them. When a student did something wrong he would get the same punishment. He gave everyone the same marks for their essays. At parents' meetings he told all the parents the same thing. Albert was pleased with himself and convinced that he was doing a good job of treating his pupils equally. It therefore saddened and surprised him when each of the students, equally angry, said the same thing to him, "It is not fair that you treat us..."

*Based on material by Jason Buckley from the subscription newsletter [www.thephilosophyman.com](http://www.thephilosophyman.com) The Philosophy Man Ltd, 7 Tower Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3NR, UNITED KINGDOM*

## 1.2. Stereotypes – prejudices – discrimination

### Stereotypes



It is not possible to understand what discrimination is without addressing its source - stereotypes.

**Stereotypes** can be seen as simplified and generalised judgements about other people. They are often formed on the basis of one feature of a given person, and then a given view, opinion or judgement is generalised, i.e. attributed to all members of the group to which this person belongs (Wosińska, 2004). Stereotypes function as mental heuristics, i.e. "handy, simplified theories of a social group that provide a ready interpretation of reality and relieve us from thinking". (Kofta, 2004, p. 15).

#### What are the characteristics of a stereotype?

- its subject is a group of people;
- it is transmitted verbally through the process of upbringing and socialisation to subsequent generations, which correlates with mechanical repetition;
- it is long-lasting and resistant to change;
- it has an evaluative character which prevails over logic;
- it is associated with a certain word or phrase which activates its content;
- it is absurd, preposterous, poor in content;
- it is characterised by low relevance to reality;
- the judgments passed are simplistic and generalised;

- it is characterised by coherence, which means that it forms a part of an ideology;
- it is subjective in nature, which is contrary to accuracy (Weigl, 2005).

### What are the mechanisms that contribute to stereotyping?

The causes of stereotypes are numerous (Macrae, Stangor, Hewstone, 1999; Nelson, 2003; Weigl, 2005; Aronson, 2009; Zacharz, 2016), but they can be classified into four basic groups of mechanisms: cognitive, affective, socio-motivational and cultural (Macrae, Stangor, Hewstone, 1999).

Mechanisms			
Cognitive	<b>Categorisation</b> is a response to the limited possibilities for cognitive information processing. If a person is placed in a given category (group), the observer assumes that he or she has many characteristics of the members of that group (e.g. students from Poland vs. students from abroad, students from the city vs. students from the countryside).	<b>Fundamental attribution error</b> is a distortion of social perception. It consists in making inferences about the characteristics of other people on the basis of their behaviour. In turn, these judgements are generalised to include others (e.g. a female university lecturer will be a better tutor of the year than a man because of her caring attitude, empathy etc.).	<b>Apparent correlation</b> is a belief that there is a relationship between variables that are in fact weakly correlated or not correlated at all. People pay attention to distinctive traits and, on the basis of one negative/positive trait, characterise all members of a group and give it a positive or negative status (e.g. a university employee is an addict so it means that he or she is also a perpetrator of mobbing and domestic violence).
Affective	<b>Classical conditioning of stereotypical emotions</b> means that if a person is associated with a particular emotion, it can be expected that further emotions of the same nature will follow. Emotions of a positive or negative nature are then associated with a particular group.	<b>The phenomenon of exposure</b> consists in the fact that repeated and unforced exposure to a stimulus strengthens positive attitudes towards it (e.g. iterative repetition that students of state universities are better prepared for their professions than students of private universities)	
Socio-motivational	<b>Social identity and the content of stereotypes</b> - perceiving one's own group much more positively compared to other groups (e.g. all academic staff act ethically like me, but students are unfair, unjust)	<b>Stereotypes also provide justification for the <i>status quo</i> of one's own group.</b> They are created, for example, to justify intergroup role relations.	

Cultural	<p><b>Social learning</b> Children learn stereotypes through observation and imitation, e.g. media images, listening to jokes about students who do not learn enough: "Two students are talking: - How should I write to my parents that I failed my exams again? - "Write:..." - replies the other one. - "The exams are over, nothing new with me!"</p>	<p><b>Conformism</b> Stereotypes transmitted in the society reflect social norms about thinking, feeling and behaving that people consider to be correct (e.g. stereotypes related to student life).</p>	<p><b>Social roles</b> Social roles are imposed on groups as a result of e.g. discrimination, and the fundamental attribution error initiates and sustains stereotypes consistent with these roles (e.g. the Dean is male or male students use drugs).</p>
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When pointing out the determinants of stereotypes, it is worth remembering that their basis is language and communication in a given culture, because the process of acquiring, maintaining or introducing potential changes in a particular community takes place through them (Macrae, Stangor, Hewstone, 1999).

### **What functions do stereotypes have?**

Stereotypes have different functions, among which the most frequently mentioned are cognitive, egotistical and identity functions (Weigl, 2005).

#### ***The cognitive function of stereotypes***

A stereotype is a tool for replacing or supplementing lack of information, or reducing an excess of information. Information processing continues until the stereotype is confirmed. It is frequently a mechanical process of valuation in which extreme judgements are expressed. If information is ambiguous, it undergoes cognitive transformation in such a way that it becomes consistent with the stereotype.

***The egotistical function of stereotypes*** consists in justifying the actions of a particular person. Self-esteem increases in a person invoking a stereotype.

***The identity function of stereotypes*** refers to the formation of stereotypes of another group together with the autostereotype of one's own group. A member of a group experiences increased similarity to other members of the group to which he or she belongs. At the same time such a person subjectively perceives a greater difference between their own group and a foreign group. The feeling that a person thinks in the same way as other members of their group promotes the cohesiveness of the group, and belonging to it strengthens the person's sense of security and reduces anxiety.

Stereotypes are certain carriers of culture, but not infrequently they are used in bad faith to humiliate other people (Bartmiński, 2011). Cultural stereotypes have a broader scope than individual stereotypes based on experiences of a person who is in contact with a particular group. Stereotypes form collective knowledge, commonly shared and applied in a community (Chodkowska, 2011).

#### **THINKERS' GAMES**

##### **Labelling - a stereotype is like a sticker on a book**

Everyone has tried (or knows someone who has tried) to peel a sticker off an apple, a pear or other fruit, or maybe off a book bought as a gift. It is not an easy task. The sticker immediately sticks to the fingers, leaving an adhesive residue on the surface from which it is removed. The residue is unsightly and difficult to remove. A stereotype can be compared to such a sticker. It is difficult to remove. It becomes a stigma.



### **Prejudices**

A stereotype forms the basis of **prejudice** understood as "a hostile or negative attitude towards some distinguishable group, based on generalisations derived from false or incomplete information" (Aronson, 2009, p. 298). In the colloquial Polish language prejudice is referred to as superstition (Wosińska, 2004).

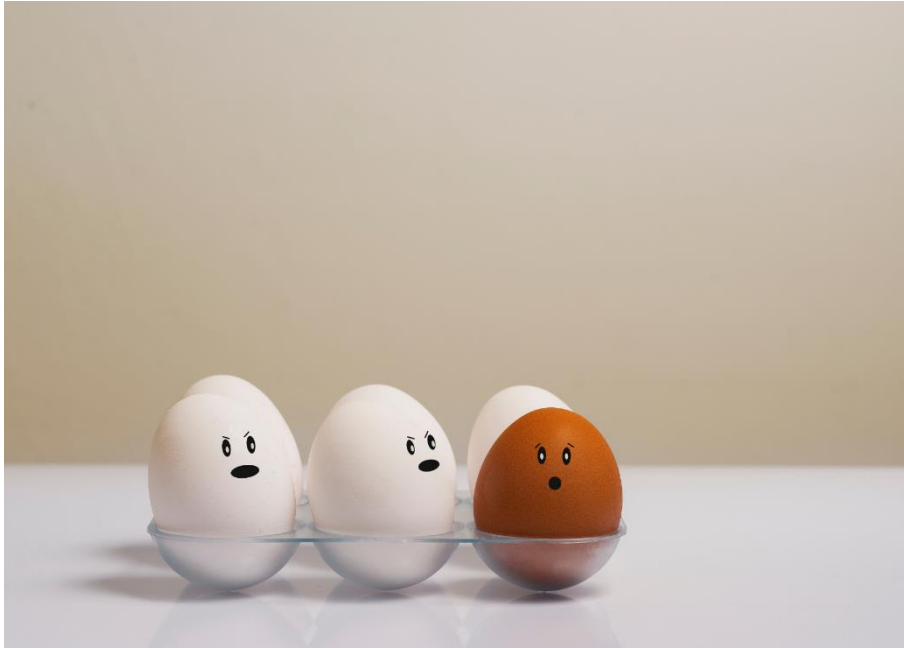
Prejudice like any attitude consists of three components:

- cognitive (it is usually a negative stereotype, a set of beliefs about a particular group, e.g. a lecturer judges everything from a scientific point of view, only in an objective way);
- affective (emotions felt towards a particular group, e.g. dislike felt towards lecturers who are not emotional);
- behavioural (behaviour towards members of a group, e.g. ridiculing lecturers).

#### **THINKERS' GAMES**

##### **UNEXPECTED CHANGE OF PLACES**

Imagine that you wake up tomorrow morning with a changed identity. You are a homeless person. Everything else remains the same. Imagine what your life could look like now and how it could turn out. Think about what you would have to change and how others would react to this change.



### **Discrimination**

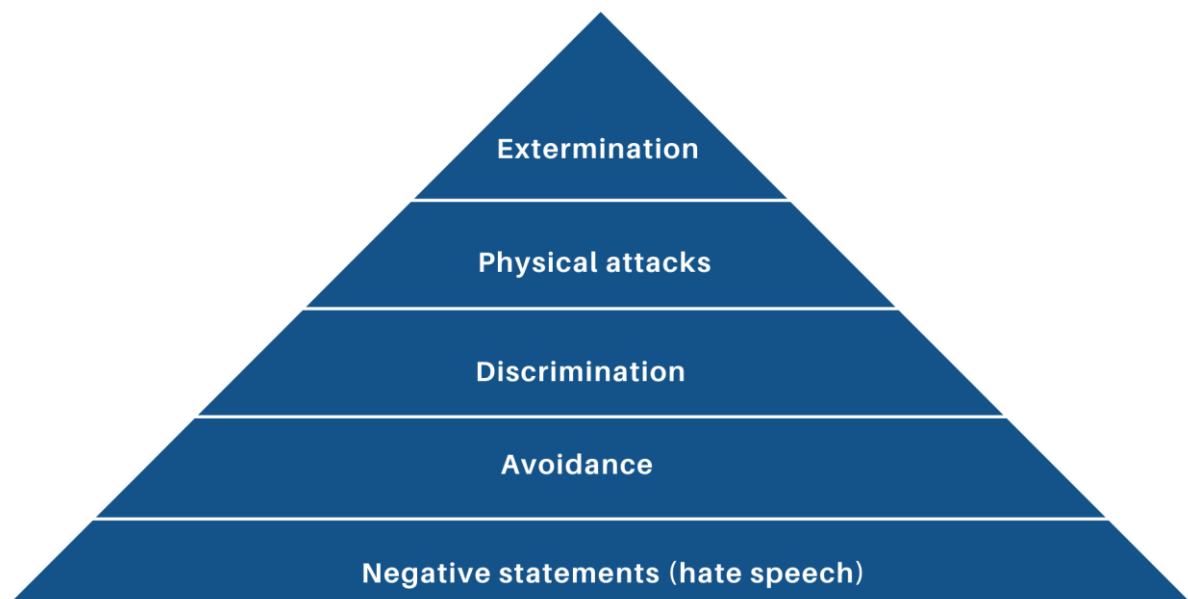
When prejudice takes the form of behaviour, it becomes an act of **discrimination**, understood as "an unjustified negative or even harmful action directed against another person or group, resulting from the perception of that person or group as being different from one's own". (Wosińska, 2004, p. 469). However, it is worth knowing that it manifests itself both overtly (e.g. we observe aggressive behaviour of Polish students in well-known social media towards students from another country) or covertly (e.g. a student insults and ridicules a female colleague because, according to him, women should "sit at home and not study" and each time he behaves in such a way without witnesses) (Teutsch, Stoch, Kozakoszczak, 2017).

- Discrimination at a university can occur at the following levels:
- **interpersonal** (Expressed in unfair, prejudicial treatment of a person or people in relations with them, e.g. aggressive behaviour towards employees from another country);
- **institutional** (Current legislation allows unequal treatment of people from certain groups. It is expressed, among others, in unfair division of rights and opportunities, e.g. according to the regulations of university X, a student with a disability cannot take part in a published grant) (Sielska, 2015).





Gordon Allport (1954), an American psychologist, described five stages of behaviour that are characterised by increasing harm and aggression towards a group discriminated against. They form the so-called "pyramid of hatred" which represents the process of escalation of negative behaviour if it is not interrupted in time.



Source: compiled from publication: G.W. Allport, 1954.

First stage - **negative statements** which include stereotyping phrases, jokes and hate speech. This content, while seemingly harmless itself, can lead to more violent behaviour.

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Example 1. *Statements such as:*

*Old people are intolerant.*

*A woman's place is in the kitchen.*

*Let us love each other as brothers, let us charge each other as Jews.*

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Second stage - **avoidance** by representatives of a majority of the presence and company of a person or people belonging to an excluded group. Avoidance can contribute to widening differences, social exclusion and loneliness.

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Example 2. *Karol, who has autism spectrum disorder, appears in the class. When Zosia's parents find out about this, they ask the school management to move their daughter to another class.*

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Third stage - **discrimination**, i.e. intentional and unjustified unequal treatment of a person or people from an excluded group, depriving them of the possibility of full participation in social life, e.g. by limiting access to education, work, professional promotion.

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Example 3. *The lecturer, who knows that Igor took part in the Equality March, lowers his exam grade, despite the fact that the student obtained an appropriate number of points.*

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Fourth stage - **physical attacks**, i.e. assault and battery, murder, as well as acts aiming at destroying the property of a person or people from an excluded group (vandalism, arson).

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Example 4. *A Nigerian man was attacked in the city centre without any reason by a group of unknown people. They broke his nose and dislocated his arm, after which they fled.*

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Fifth stage - **extermination** - is an attempt to completely or partially get rid of a specific group of people from a given area using violence (lynchings, pogroms).

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*Example 5. The Holocaust that destroyed not only individuals and families, but also the entire communities and cultures that had been developing over the centuries.*

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### **What behaviour does a person who discriminates against others display?**

A discriminator uses immoral behaviour. He or she shows aggression and violence.

In legal terms, **any violence is a crime**, which means that the perpetrator should be held responsible and should be informed that there is no society's consent to such behaviour.

The psychological aspect emphasises the emotions and feelings of people experiencing violence, as well as the mechanisms and relations between the discriminated and the discriminators.

**Violence** is "all intentional acts that violate personal freedom of an individual, contribute to physical or psychological harm to another person, and go beyond the social norms of interpersonal contact". (I. Pospiszyl, 1999, p. 16).

What pushes perpetrators to violence?

- losing control over their emotions and behaviour;
- compulsive need to maintain control;
- feeling of power over another person;
- sense of helplessness;
- desire to obtain benefits and satisfy their needs;
- their ignorance (Pospiszyl, 2008);
- lack of empathy (Lewicka, 2006);
- stereotypes that reinforce their antisocial attitudes.



## **What violence should we not experience in an academic environment?**

**Physical violence** – any intentional violation of the bodily integrity of a person, e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting.

**Psychological violence** violates the personal dignity of a person discriminated against, e.g.: insulting, name-calling, judging, assessing, criticising, intimidating, threatening, ridiculing, disrespecting, blackmailing.

**Economic violence** is related to violation of property rights, e.g. intentional destruction of property, using property without permission, looking through documents or correspondence.

**Sexual violence** is forcing a person discriminated against to engage in sexual activity against their will, without their consent, e.g.: coercing into sex, forcing unwanted sexual practices, comments on intimate matters, judging sexual performance or appearance (Helios, Jedlecka, 2017).

**Harassment** is “unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an employee and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment with regard to the employee”. (Article 18<sup>3a</sup> § 5 of the Labour Code, Journal of Laws 2020.1320, consolidated text).

**Sexual harassment** is “any unwanted conduct of sexual nature or relating to the sex of an employee, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the employee, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment with regard to the employee; such conduct may comprise physical, verbal or non-verbal elements. (Article 18<sup>3a</sup> § 6 of the Labour Code, Journal of Laws 2020.1320, consolidated text).

**Mobbing** is “actions or behaviour concerning an employee or directed against an employee, consisting in persistent and long-term harassment or intimidation of an employee, making the employee feel undervalued in terms of professional usefulness, causing or aimed at degrading or ridiculing the employee, isolating him or her or eliminating him or her from the team of co-workers.” (Article 94<sup>3</sup> § 2 of the Labour Code, Journal of Laws 2020.1320, consolidated text).

**Cyberbullying** involves deliberate and intentional use of information and communication technology for repeated hostile conduct by a person or people, with the intent to cause harm (Belsey, 2008).

**Cyberbullying is:**

- Masquerading - creating fake social media profiles in order to harm another person;
- Flaming - aggressive discussion in a chat room or newsgroup;
- Abuse - repeated aggressive, ridiculing messages sent to a person discriminated against via telephone and/or the Internet;
- Cyber-bullying - constantly attacking, threatening a person, passing on confidential messages to others;
- Flood - sending numerous unwanted messages to the recipient;
- Sexting - sending material with sexual or intimate content or images without the recipient's consent;
- Trolling - sending false, embarrassing information about a person discriminated against, replacing photos, adding comments, changing status, etc.;
- Identity theft - a discriminating person impersonates a person discriminated against in cyberspace;
- Happy slapping - unexpectedly attacking people and filming the entire event in order to upload the compromising footage to the Internet;
- Cyberstalking - using the Internet and other electronic media to harass a person, e.g. sending gifts over the Internet, observing on forums (E.Sowa-Behtane, [https://cod.ignatianum.edu.pl/images/Dokumenty\\_w\\_PDF/cyberbullying---konferencja-KO.pdf](https://cod.ignatianum.edu.pl/images/Dokumenty_w_PDF/cyberbullying---konferencja-KO.pdf), accessed on 01.07.2021).

How does the person who has been wronged or discriminated against feel and react? What are the consequences?

What does he/she feel?	How does he/she behave?	What are the consequences?
guilt	passively	has low self-esteem
embarrassment	becomes socially isolated	is physically and mentally ill
ambivalent sense of loyalty	submits to the discriminator	has impaired concentration
helplessness	abuses psychoactive substances	has nightmares
hopelessness	self-harms	exhibits orientation disorders
severe anxiety, fear	attempts suicide	has a depressed mood

depression	aggressively	exhibits behavioural disorders
fear	is stimulated	is socially excluded
terror	in a demanding way	
sadness	accepts "fate"	
despair	depends on the discriminator	
anger	performs stereotypical social roles	
lack of control	is excessively vigilant	
lack of faith in change for the better		
disappointment		

In a threatening situation people can react in two ways: task-based or defensive. A person with a **task-oriented** attitude approaches a threat as a problem to be solved. Therefore, he or she takes various steps in order to end a difficult situation. On the other hand, a person with a **defensive** attitude experiences very strong negative emotions. He or she is unable to find a rational solution. Such a person concentrates on reducing the unpleasant tension by unconsciously undertaking specific behaviour. This means that he or she uses various **defence mechanisms**, i.e.:

- denial - painful experiences are erased from the wronged person's memory;
- rationalisation - transformation of feelings and thoughts into those that can be rationally accepted;
- regression - behaving in a way characteristic of earlier stages of development;
- fixation - repeating an activity despite lack of positive effects;
- suppression - avoiding or escaping from thinking about and discussing negative experiences;
- fantasising - moving into an imaginary world where violence stops;
- retaliation - aggressive behaviour directed towards the discriminator or others;
- internalisation - internalising an inadequate, negative self-image;
- feigned reactions - adopting an excessively friendly attitude towards the discriminator;
- nullification of a previous action - inhibiting in a stereotypical way reactions to the discriminator's behaviour and replacing them with the opposite of the previous one (Mazur, 2002).



### **Who is discriminated against most frequently?**

According to the Polish Constitution, we are all equal under the law and have the right to equal treatment. However, some people experience completely different, worse, unjustified treatment than others in comparable situations. The only criterion for worse treatment, which is the reason for discrimination, is membership of a particular group. As can be read on the website of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment, such differentiation is most often based on sex, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or denomination, disability, age or sexual orientation (<https://www.gov.pl/web/rownetraktowanie>). Discrimination on the grounds of nationality or ethnic origin occurs when the unwanted conduct is related to a person's origin and "has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment".

Discrimination based on sex occurs when there is any differentiation, exclusion or restriction causing or intended to "prevent one sex from being granted or exercising – on a par with the other sex – human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural and civil life and in other areas". This is followed by discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, that is "unequal treatment, embarrassment, humiliation, or sexual harassment based on real or assumed sexual orientation". Discrimination based on religion, denomination or world view may also occur. In this case, "an apparently neutral regulation, criterion or practice puts him or her [that is a person of another religion, denomination or world view] at a particular disadvantage compared to other people, unless it is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means are adequate". A huge group of people

experience discrimination on the basis of disability. It is "an unjustified difference in situation or rights which affects people with various types of disability; unequal treatment which is not justified by law and not based on objective grounds". The last group of people mentioned in the catalogue of those at risk of discrimination are the elderly. Age-related discrimination "can take different forms and concern various aspects of social life, such as employment, income, access to health care, education and financial services, and participation in the decision-making process".

### **1.3. Anti-discrimination**

#### **How can discrimination be tackled?**

It is far easier to prevent discrimination than to redress its effects. D. Denes (2009) suggests that various social activities should be undertaken, such as:

- socially exposing people from discriminated groups;
- raising awareness among abused people in order to motivate them to defend themselves and to express their rights and needs;
- amending and enforcing laws that restrict opportunities to discriminate against other people;
- publicising shameful cases in the media;
- increasing the availability of information sources concerning people from groups at risk of discrimination - highlighting their potential and socially desirable characteristics, giving examples of their positive behaviour.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the effectiveness of the measures taken depends on ensuring appropriate conditions and compliance with certain rules, i.e.:

- mutual dependence;
- common objective;
- the same status;
- maintaining friendly informal contacts;
- promoting human equality.

Anti-discrimination interventions will not work if people do not have enough time to talk to each other, to be with each other (in addition to work or study environment), and they are highly burdened cognitively. Moreover, care must be taken so that a person discriminating against others does not feel too much of a threat to him- or herself or his/her self-esteem. It is also difficult to prevent discrimination when a person doing the harm shows a strong tendency to dominate others and to be authoritarian (Bedyńska, Dreszer, 2006).



The most lasting effects can be achieved through the upbringing of children and young people to respect values, because in the future they will prefer prosocial values aimed at another person and they will follow them in their relations with other people. In this context, **tolerance**, which is the basis for upbringing in the family (Godawa, 2013) and school, including higher education (Kwapiszewski, 2007), becomes particularly important. "A priority task is to develop a culture of tolerance manifested in the acquisition of knowledge about other people, awareness of sources and motives of their behaviour, understanding the otherness of another person, respect for one's own and another person's dignity, ability to resolve conflicts, capability for dialogue, argumentation, discussion, and acceptance of the pluralism principle" (Chałas, 2003, p. 232). **A tolerant person** is able to free him- or herself from dogmas that prevent them from going beyond the established borders, from xenophobia and megalomania. He or she is aware of differences and similarities between people, and is open to others. He or she treats otherness as something interesting, stimulating, friendly and helpful in understanding people and the world (Nikitorowicz, 1995).

It is worth minimising the strength and scope of intolerance because it contradicts people's dignity (Lewicka-Zelent, Skrabacz, Karłyk-Ćwik, Lasota, Trojanowska, 2019). Intolerance destroys the individuality and diversity of people's behaviour, reinforces aggression and contributes to marginalisation which corresponds to social isolation, fear of otherness and ostracism (Łukaszewski, 1984).

Developing an attitude of tolerance is possible by making young people sensitive to the needs of others. **An empathetic person** strives for justice and equality, is open and communicative. He or she likes being around other people, supports them and gets pleasure from contact with them. He or she is a good companion in difficult moments (Lewicka, 2006).

### **Why does the university promote equality language?**

Language is a system of meanings and contents, a carrier of norms and rules considered to be general and universal, and not just a means of communication between individuals. Language shapes thinking about the world. Verbalisation of thoughts, emotions and views is a result of learning the linguistic behaviour of one's own environment, group or more broadly: culture. In this sense, language is an organiser and a guardian of the social system and a way of expressing identity. The organising function of language makes it possible to order the complex elements of reality and to name them.

Automatically and unconsciously absorbed information represents current social beliefs, as well as linguistic habits. Language can serve to confirm membership of a group, to

emphasise prestige, to point out differences and thus to express a certain value system. A number of linguistic rules and commonly used expressions help maintain the dominance of a majority ethnic group, and exclude people of other origins, such as black people. Consequently, language can be exclusionary, discriminatory, sexist, ethnocentric or racist, that is insensitive to differences. It transmits and sustains stereotypes and prejudices.

Linguistic habits are a permanent feature of everyday conversations, which makes it difficult to perceive the non-neutrality of the words used. The use of linguistic labels, often hurtful and insulting (e.g. Negro, cripple, old maid, gypsy), is often combined with micro-inequalities: contemptuous gestures, grimaces, disregard in voice and posture. A racist and ethnocentric language is hurtful, contains simplifications, and influences the assessment of people to whom it often applies derogatory labels. Linguistic patterns of behaviour are reinforced by jokes, songs, films and memes. The escalation of deliberate verbal and written statements depreciating individuals or groups develops into hate speech motivated by prejudice.

Equality language, also known as inclusive language, "is a proposal to change the existing system of language used by the majority. It aims to highlight the presence and include the perspectives of people from previously marginalised groups, and to create more equitable and inclusive language norms that reflect the diversity of the world" (Cieślukowska 2010, p. 102). Using equality language requires breaking out of habitual linguistic behaviour. "Equality language is characterised by an innovative application of the existing rules and does not conform to the rules that reinforce the status quo, it introduces new words and shows the old ones in a hitherto unknown light. It challenges the neutrality and sometimes also the legitimacy of using certain terms. It is backed by equalitarian, less popular assumptions, norms and values, creating a more just world order". (Cieślukowska 2010, p. 102).

The aim of equality language is above all to counteract the exclusionary function of language, and to highlight the presence and include the perspectives of people from previously marginalised groups. It is then possible to recognise diversity, to highlight and appreciate the presence of hitherto disadvantaged groups, and to create a fairer reality.

The use of equality language consists in:

- recognising and valuing the presence and contribution of marginalised groups,
- highlighting the complexity of human identity,
- separating people from the problem or their temporary life situation,
- avoiding repetition of depreciating and stereotyping phrases,

- replacing ethnocentric names with ones that show different perspectives or are neutral and/or give a more precise message about different groups and their environment (Cieślakowska 2010, p. 107).

It is worth considering whether what is said about other people or groups is just one known and reproduced story about them and what is the source of these stories. As a renowned Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adiechie said: "One story breeds stereotypes. And the problem with them is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story the only story".

This is because by singling out people from the social background we automatically divide the world into "us" and "strangers", and most often we classify the latter as different, worse, on the basis of the "only story" (cf. Parchomiuk 2010, p. 77). As a result, this socially defined otherness, which is already present in the language, attributes an apparent identity to the members of a particular group. One feature makes all of "them" identical: usually negative, extreme, unpredictable, homogeneous as a whole. On the other hand, "we" are unique, diverse, individual, positive (cf. Wolowicz 2009, p. 186). Assigning the labels "us" and "them" increases psychological distance, even when this division is based on trivial and irrational criteria (Jarymowicz 1992). Educational activities manifested in the care for language should lead to the creation of a subjective I-Thou relationship, characterised by openness to each other, mutual respect and cognition, and focusing on a person (cf. Piotrowicz 2009, p. 312). This is extremely important, especially in times when we encounter on a daily basis someone who can be classified as "other than me".

### **Linguistic savoir-vivre**

We construct our perception of the external world by means of language. It is language that sets the boundaries and outlines of all human cognition (J.G. von Herder, after: P. Szarota, 2006, p. 48). As E. Kołodziejek writes: "it plays an important role in thinking, influences the behaviour of an individual and a group, shapes interpersonal relations. Language is also a reservoir of cultural traditions, value systems and moral norms adopted by the community. In the meanings of words and in grammar, in cultural clichés and stereotypes, the experiences of a community, its needs, attitudes and judgements about the world are transmitted from one generation to the next". (<https://etykajęzyka.pl/etyka-jezykowa-i-komunikacja-niedyskryminacyjna/>).

People classified as Others are assigned by us the status of "not-self" - someone who is in opposition to our subjectivity. We attribute strong traits to ourselves: the ones that guarantee us social recognition and acceptance. We assign the opposite traits to others - weak notions, with negative overtones. The name given automatically activates the content of a stereotype; by classifying someone into a named category, we get a whole range of features and evaluations connected with that name. The effect of a social programme contained in a name can be friendly and caring behaviour, but also: anxiety, fear of contact, withdrawal from it (cf. K. Błeszyńska, 1999, p. 61; S. Byra, 2010, p. 36). It is not uncommon that a name, activating a stereotype, discourages us from getting to know a given person or a group of people, from establishing and maintaining contact with them. By using inappropriate words we can offend someone, create unwanted tension. It is therefore advisable, and even desirable, to reflect on language; how to make it sensitive, how to convey the essence of things. It should be remembered that language is alive and changing, and that particular terms used and present in the official discourse not long ago have become obsolete and replaced by new ones. As linguists point out, various guidelines concerning sensitive language should be seen as a suggestion, a possibility, and we ought to be alert to changes in language.

Generally speaking, the principles of equality language (as exemplified by the Active Citizens Programme training) can be expressed in the following 6 rules:

1. Speak simply.
2. Do not reduce a person to a single characteristic (e.g.: disabled, unemployed).
3. Use feminine endings.
4. Use gender-neutral language.
5. See causality in language.
6. Avoid stereotypes and ethnocentrism.

Referring to individual groups of people at risk of discrimination, specific linguistic principles and guidelines may be reduced to the following:

According to Prof. E. Kołodziejek, our language should respect the dignity of another person and should convey respect and solidarity. The specific ethics of language is expressed in the following “do’s and don’ts”:

**Dos:**

✓ tell the truth

**'Don'ts:**

X don't hurt another person with hostile and degrading words

- ✓ speak in a way that makes the other person feel safe
- ✓ listen to others with goodwill.
- ✗ don't lie or manipulate,
- ✗ don't close yourself to dialogue,
- ✗ don't be prejudiced.

Source: <https://etykajezyka.pl/etyka-jezykowa-i-komunikacja-niedyskryminacyjna/>

An extensive catalogue of rules of linguistic savoir-vivre with regard to particular groups of people at risk of discrimination, updated on an ongoing basis, created under the auspices of the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights and the Council for the Polish Language, and developed by the representatives of particular communities, can be found at: <https://etykajezyka.pl/>



#### 1.4. Good practices

Silent and passive reactions to discrimination and violence support them. We can choose how to react, as well as the strength of opposition to discriminatory behaviour. The very fact of making a person aware of the type and scale of an act can stop negative verbal and non-verbal actions against disadvantaged people or groups.

The university is a place for acquiring broad competences: knowledge, skills and attitudes. The knowledge acquired is based on critical thinking and search for truth. The ability to separate facts from judgements about facts shapes open and reflective attitudes. Consequently, we are able to see the nature of the problem and the emotional state of the people

involved in the conflict more quickly and easily, react appropriately, and reduce or eliminate discrimination.

A reaction referring to a person discriminated against is an appropriate intervention. Micro-affirmations, introduced and popularised by Professor Mary Rowe, respond to the needs of a discriminated person.

### ***REACTION TO MICRO- INEQUALITIES AT WORK OR AT UNIVERSITY***

"Look at Paul! How he dresses! There is a dress code in our company and he thinks he can wear what he wears in his own country."

#### **1. Emphasise the good intention of the speaker, explain the consequences of the act.**

##### **Intervention:**

"I appreciate that you pay attention to Paul and are interested in him, but his style of dress and background have nothing to do with our work. It would be nice if you appreciated his commitment and competence."

#### **2. Clarify, ask a question.**

##### **Intervention:**

"How does what you say about Paul relate to what we are supposed to be doing?"

#### **3. Interrupt and redirect.**

##### **Intervention:**

"Wait, what are we talking about here? Let's get back to the substance of our meeting."

"Wait, let's not talk about Paul's clothes and background, after all we are supposed to finish writing the report."

#### **4. Emphasise universality (of behaviour, style).**

##### **Intervention:**

"You know, Paul likes original clothes, but I don't think it has anything to do with his background. Many people, also in our company, try to look original."

#### **5. Emphasise uniqueness.**

##### **Intervention:**

"Yes, indeed Paul looks very different to us. He intrigues me a lot and I like his original approach to clothes."

#### **6. Use feedback**

When you want to respond more forcefully than with a brief comment, use full feedback:

Facts: Say what specific behaviour is discriminatory.

Emotions: Describe the emotions and feelings this behaviour evokes in you.

Consequences: Show and make the person aware of the consequences of discrimination.

Expectations: Specify what changes in attitudes and behaviour you expect from the person.

**Intervention:**

"I feel embarrassed (emotions) when you refer to Paul's background (facts) because it upsets me and possibly him and makes it difficult to focus on the task (consequences), I request that we should stick to our work (expectations)".

More in: M. Branka, D. Cieřlikowska, Warsztaty antydyskryminacyjne. Podręcznik trenerski, Kraków 2010.

[https://www.nigdywiecej.org/docstation/com\\_docstation/62/antydyskryminacja.pdf](https://www.nigdywiecej.org/docstation/com_docstation/62/antydyskryminacja.pdf)

## **1.5. Anti-discrimination at UMCS**

- adaptation of the buildings and specialised equipment of the university in accordance with the current needs of the academic community, following the principles of universal design,
- use of inclusive, equality language,
- continuous training of teaching staff in the area of special needs of students,
- offering support of assistants, while at the same time ensuring that assistants themselves are provided with substantive aid and supervision by the university,
- in registration questionnaires for every sporting and cultural event organised by the UMCS an additional point concerning special needs should be included (and a sign language symbol should be placed in invitations, posters and other announcements),
- paying attention that disability issues are raised at scientific events, through discussion of this subject, self-advocacy and co-organization of events by people with disabilities.

### **Practical actions involving:**

- adaptation and arrangement of lecture halls - setting up benches so that a person using a wheelchair or crutches can move around the room without hindrance,
- acknowledging a possibility to record lectures and classes - motor and language difficulties sometimes make it difficult or even impossible to take notes efficiently,
- adaptation of examination forms,
- availability of materials.

### **1.5.1. Organisations and institutions for counteracting social problems**



RZECZNIK PRAW OBYWATELSKICH

### **The Commissioner for Human Rights: Marcin Wiącek, PhD - 8<sup>th</sup> term of office**

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights

al. Solidarności 77

00-090 Warszawa

phone: (+48) 22 55 17 700



fax: (+48) 22 827 64 53

mail: [biurorzecznika@brpo.gov.pl](mailto:biurorzecznika@brpo.gov.pl)

www: <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/>

Helpline: 800 676 676 (Monday 10.00-18.00, Tuesday-Friday 8.00-16.00; free of charge for landline and mobile phones)

### **What does the Commissioner do?**

The Commissioner's task is to ensure that the freedoms, rights and obligations of a human and citizen enumerated in Chapter II of the Polish Constitution are respected. In short, it can be said that the Commissioner verifies whether the rights of citizens are recognized and respected by state institutions; whether the actions of offices and various institutions towards citizens are in accordance with law; and whether people, institutions and services do not neglect matters reported to them. Furthermore, the Commissioner's duties include: dealing with cases of people being treated less favourably because of who they are, that is discriminated against, and preventing it. The Commissioner checks whether and how the ratified UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is applied in Poland. Moreover, the Commissioner's task is to counteract mistreatment of people in places where they are dependent on others (e.g. in prisons, detention centres, nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals).

### **How to ask for help?**

The Commissioner can be approached by any Polish citizen or a foreigner (in the case of a complaint against a Polish institution), a group of citizens or an organisation who claim that the state has violated their rights or that they are treated unequally because of who they are; and by people deprived of their liberty who wish to complain about inhuman treatment.

A request to the Commissioner can be made:

- in person: at the Commissioner's Office or branch offices;
- in writing: Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, al. Solidarności 77, 00-090 Warszawa
- via Internet: through an electronic form: <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/wniosek/index.php?jezyk=0&poz=1>
- in sign language (the Polish Sign Language and the Sign Language System): <https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/content/zloz-wniosek-0>



**The Ombudsman for Children: Mikołaj Pawlak**

**Office of the Ombudsman for Children**

ul. Chocimska 6

00-791 Warszawa

phone: (+48) 22 583 66 00

Children's Ombudsman Helpline: 800 12 12 12 (24 h)

fax: (+48) 22 583 66 96

The office is open Monday to Friday from 08.15 to 16.15.

e-mail: [rpd@brpd.gov.pl](mailto:rpd@brpd.gov.pl)

www: <https://brpd.gov.pl/>

**What does the Ombudsman for Children do?**

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Act on the Ombudsman for Children, the Ombudsman's tasks are aimed at ensuring full and harmonious development of the child, with respect for the child's dignity and subjectivity. This is possible by ensuring that the child is protected from all forms of violence, cruelty, exploitation, demoralisation, neglect and other forms of ill-treatment. Ombudsman for Children is an independent institution with the powers of control, warning and initiating actions for the maximum protection of children's rights.

**How to ask for help?**

A request to the Ombudsman can be made:

- in person: at the Ombudsman's Office, ul. Chocimska 6, 00-791 Warszawa
- in writing: Rzecznik Praw Dziecka, ul. Chocimska 6, 00-791 Warszawa
- by phone

**The Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment: Anna Schmidt**

ul. Nowogrodzka 1/3/5

00-513 Warszawa

phone: (+48) 22 661 15 80

e-mail: [sekretariat.BRT@mrips.gov.pl](mailto:sekretariat.BRT@mrips.gov.pl)

www: [www.gov.pl/web/rownetraktowanie/napisz-do-pelnomocnika2](http://www.gov.pl/web/rownetraktowanie/napisz-do-pelnomocnika2)

### **What does the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment do?**

The Office's catalogue of tasks is very broad. In short, it includes: monitoring and evaluation whether the principle of equal treatment is respected; taking action to ensure equal treatment, protect against and counteract discrimination; popularising the issue of equal treatment and raising awareness in this area, as well as broadly understood cooperation on issues related to equal treatment and counteracting discrimination in the national and international arena.

### **How to ask for help?**

There are several ways to lodge a complaint or an application with the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment:

- in person at the Ministry of Family and Social Policy – ul. Nowogrodzka 1/3/5, Warszawa, Monday to Friday, from 8:30 to 15:30
  
- in writing:  
Ministerstwo Rodziny i Polityki Społecznej  
Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Równego Traktowania  
ul. Nowogrodzka 1/3/5  
00-513 Warszawa
- by e-mail: [skargi.wnioski@mrips.gov.pl](mailto:skargi.wnioski@mrips.gov.pl) or [info@mrips.gov.pl](mailto:info@mrips.gov.pl)
- and in the Registry Office of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy.

Complaints and applications, irrespective of how they are delivered, **must contain name and address (with postal code)** of the complainant or applicant. According to the regulations, anonymous letters and e-mails, as well as those without a postal address, shall be left unanswered.

## **The Office for Foreigners**

Registry Office (open Monday to Friday from 8:15 to 16:15)

ul. Taborowa 33

02-699 Warszawa

<https://udsc.gov.pl/>

## **What does the Office do?**

As we read on the Office's website, it is "a central organ of the government administration competent in matters of foreigners' entry into, transit through, stay in and exit from the territory of the Republic of Poland, granting international protection in Poland, providing social assistance and medical care to people seeking such protection, granting asylum to foreigners, giving consent for tolerated stay and granting temporary protection, with the exception of matters reserved for other authorities".

## **How to ask for help?**

The Office can be contacted in person, by phone or via an electronic form:  
<https://udsc.gov.pl/kontakt-2/formularz-kontaktowy/>

Assistance of a sign language interpreter can be requested (the need should be reported 3 working days before the planned visit to the office and the subject of the conversation should be specified). Visually impaired people can use documents in enlarged print.



## **The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People: Paweł Wdówik**

The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People

ul. Żurawia 4A

00-503 Warszawa

phone: (+48) 22 461 60 00

e-mail: [sekretariat.bon@mriips.gov.pl](mailto:sekretariat.bon@mriips.gov.pl)

www: [www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/](http://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/)

### **What does the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People do?**

The duties of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People comprise supervision over performance of tasks under the Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities of 27 August 1997. These tasks include initiation and implementation of actions to reduce the effects of disability and barriers that make it difficult for disabled people to function in the society. The Plenipotentiary performs his or her duties with the assistance of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People. One of its sections is the Department for Social Communication and Promotion. The responsibilities of this Department correspond to the subject matter of this publication, namely:

- replying to citizens' letters;
- investigating cases resulting from citizens' complaints;
- intervening in cases reported by citizens;
- providing explanations and advice to citizens who contact the Office in person or by phone.

## **How to ask for help?**

The Plenipotentiary can be contacted in person, by phone, videophone or via an electronic form:

<https://www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/p,61,kontakt>

The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People receives visitors personally on the first and third Monday of each month. Appointments should be made by phone (22 461 60 00) or by e-mail ([sekretariat.bon@mrpips.gov.pl](mailto:sekretariat.bon@mrpips.gov.pl)).

The Office provides services for deaf people with the help of an online sign language interpreter. Online contact form or fax (22 461 60 02) can also be used.

Address of the Office:

Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Osób Niepełnosprawnych  
ul. Nowogrodzka 1/3/5  
00-513 Warszawa

**The European Ombudsman:** <https://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/pl/home>

**The European Court of Human Rights:**

<https://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=applicants/pol>



## **Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights**

ul. Wiejska 16

00-490 Warszawa

phone: (+48) 22 556 44 40 Monday to Friday, from 10:00 to 14:00

fax: (+48) 22 556 44 50

e-mail: [hfhr@hfhr.pl](mailto:hfhr@hfhr.pl)

www: [www.hfhr.pl](http://www.hfhr.pl)

## **What does the Foundation do?**

The HFHR is an apolitical organisation working to protect and promote human rights. It continuously implements legal programmes which include strategic litigation and free legal aid for Polish citizens, refugees and members of national minorities. Another task of the Foundation is to monitor the law-making process and the work of public institutions. Moreover, the HFHR runs training courses on human rights and their protection, and on effective actions for human rights for participants from outside Poland. The most known project of the HFHR is an international film festival WATCH DOCS Human Rights in Film – an event during which documentary films devoted to human rights are presented. It is one of the world's two largest film events dedicated to human rights, presenting documentaries in which commitment to rights of an individual is combined with the art of film-making.

### **How to ask for help?**

Legal advice is provided only in response to cases concerning potential violations of human rights, reported BY LETTER. A letter should contain: details and the course of the case, as well as copies of the most important documents related to the problem (all documentation of the case is destroyed after its completion).

Legal assistance provided by the Foundation pertains to the rights of the following groups of people: witnesses, suspects, victims, detainees during peaceful assemblies, Polish citizens, refugees and migrants, foreigners, journalists and bloggers, and employees of social organisations (in the context of contacts with the services).



**Homo Faber**

### **Homo Faber Association**

Office: The University College of Enterprise and Administration in Lublin, room 108 (next to the Dean's Office, first floor)

ul. Bursaki 12, 20-150 Lublin

Open: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from 9:00 to 15:00

e-mail: [info@hf.org.pl](mailto:info@hf.org.pl)

www: [www.hf.org.pl](http://www.hf.org.pl)

All activities of the Homo Faber association are aimed at making Lublin a city "where everyone feels free and safe and fully enjoys their rights, regardless of their gender, ability, national and ethnic origin, "race", skin colour, psychosexual orientation, religious beliefs, world view, political opinions, property, age or any other feature".

As part of its activities, the Association runs three programmes:

*Anti-discrimination:* in this programme anti-discrimination training courses are offered for representatives of many social and professional groups. The system: [www.lublin.naprawmyto.pl](http://www.lublin.naprawmyto.pl) has been launched for the purpose of reporting hate speech cases and striving to eradicate them. There is also an Anti-Discrimination Support Centre where anyone experiencing ill-treatment can get help free of charge. Advice is also available in English and Ukrainian.

Support can be obtained by phone: 602 430 868 or email: [antydiskryminacja@hf.org.pl](mailto:antydiskryminacja@hf.org.pl)

It is also worth mentioning that the Association runs the Social Mediation Centre. Appointments can be arranged by phone or email (602 430 868, from 9:00 to 15:00; [mediacje@hf.org.pl](mailto:mediacje@hf.org.pl)).

*Integration:* a programme comprising a broad range of actions for the integration of immigrants.

*Film:* an educational programme in which anti-discrimination education is provided through movies: film festivals, meetings with experts, discussions and workshops based on films.

A number of publications (leaflets, books, manuals) on human rights are available for download at <http://hf.org.pl/ao/index.php?id=26>.





Caritas  
Archidiecezji  
Lubelskiej  
**KRS 0000204819**

### **Caritas of the Archdiocese of Lublin, Migrants and Refugees Assistance Centre**

al. Unii Lubelskiej 15 (entrance from the Market under the Castle, 2nd floor, rooms 20, 21)

20-108 Lublin

Open Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 14:00

phone: (+48) 81 743 71 86.

e-mail: [lublin@caritas.pl](mailto:lublin@caritas.pl), [caritas@kuria.lublin.pl](mailto:caritas@kuria.lublin.pl)

www: <https://lublin.caritas.pl/centrum-pomocy-migrantom-i-uchodzcom/>

The assistance provided under the Project "New Home Poland" is addressed at foreigners staying in Poland and comprises: psychological and intercultural counselling, social assistance and medical support.

### **The Rule of Law Institute Foundation**

ul. Fryderyka Chopina 14

20-023 Lublin

phone: (+48) 81 743 68 00

fax: (+48) 81 743 68 01

www: <https://panstwoprawa.org/>

e-mail: [migrant@panstwoprawa.org](mailto:migrant@panstwoprawa.org)

One of the fields of activity of the Rule of Law Institute Foundation is the protection of human rights. The Foundation promotes the idea of free legal counselling which has been provided since 2004 to foreigners applying for the refugee status in Poland.

### **Legal aid to foreigners seeking international protection**

Assistance is rendered by lawyers in English, Ukrainian, Russian, Spanish and Polish. Appointments should be made by phone (Helpline for Refugees +48 606 703 933; +48 81 743 68 00, fax +48 81 743 68 01) or e-mail ([status@panstwoprawa.org](mailto:status@panstwoprawa.org)). As part of the legal assistance provided, the lawyers draft appeals against decisions of the Office for Foreigners, and help prepare relevant letters, applications and other necessary documentation.

Furthermore, the Foundation participates in the Lublin Coalition for Integration project which offers: legal integration counselling, integration guidance, seminars for foreigners and a partnership programme Login:Lublin (<https://loginlublin.pl/>).



### **Lublin Forum of the Organisations for Disabled People - Regional Parliament**

ul. Leszczyńskiego 23, room 14  
20-068 Lublin

phone: (+48) 81 533 10 22 (Monday to Friday, from 10:00 to 14:00)

www: <https://lfoon.lublin.pl>, [niepełnosprawni.lublin.pl](https://niepełnosprawni.lublin.pl)

e-mail: [lfoon.lublin@gmail.com](mailto:lfoon.lublin@gmail.com)

LFOON-SW is an umbrella organisation - an association of several dozen organisations working for the benefit of people with disabilities in the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

The mission of the Forum is to integrate the communities and organisations of disabled people and to promote their activities. LFOON represents the interests of people with disabilities and

their organisations on the local and national forums, undertakes regular information, counselling and training activities within the Information and Counselling Centre for People with Disabilities, upholds the rights of people with disabilities, and is a watchdog organisation. The Forum is also the publisher of the website [Niepelnosprawni.lublin.pl](http://Niepelnosprawni.lublin.pl) – Online Information Bulletin of People with Disabilities. An important element of LFOON's activity is the promotion and propagation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which contains obligations aimed at counteracting discrimination based on disability.

The most recent activity on the ground of counteracting discrimination is the participation of LFOON in the coalition which initiated a nationwide action "We change Poland". The initiative aims to create so-called "comfort places" across the country, where it would be possible to perform a daily hygienic routine of an adult with disability in a dignified and comfortable manner. Due to the lack of such places, a large group of people limit their eating and drinking or even stay at home in order to avoid performing these routines in unhygienic and disgraceful conditions.

In LFOON people with disabilities can receive the support of an educator, psychologist, lawyer or advice of the Careers Office free of charge. It is also possible to get assistance of a sign language interpreter. Support is provided at LFOON premises, by phone and via instant messaging. Therapeutic support is also addressed to parents and caregivers of people with disabilities.

### **Helplines for different groups of people**

**Disability helpline (+48) 81 747 98 21 (Monday to Friday, from 9:00 to 16:00) or face-to-face meetings after making an appointment by phone**

Psychologist Jan Arczewski

address: ul. Kalinowszczyzna 84

20-201 Lublin

e-mail: [telejan@wp.pl](mailto:telejan@wp.pl)

**Helpline for children and young people 116 111, operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free of charge <https://116111.pl/napisz/>**

**Helpline for adults in emotional crisis (crisis hotline) 116 123**

Advice from specialists **DAILY from 14:00 to 22:00.**

**Talking to a consultant is free of charge and the conversation time is unlimited.**

**Support line for people in mental health crisis 800 70 2222, [www.liniaawsparcia.pl](http://www.liniaawsparcia.pl)**

**24-hour toll-free line for callers.** ITAKA Foundation psychologists are on duty by phone, e-mail and chat.

**Helpline for elderly people / seniors** operated by the Little Brothers of the Poor Federation:

(+48) 22 635 09 54

– Mondays – 17:00 – 20:00

– Wednesdays – 17:00 – 20:00

– Thursdays – 17:00 – 20:00

**There are also consultations on Alzheimer's disease on Wednesdays from 14:00 to 16:00.**

**Feminoteka Foundation National Helpline for Women Experiencing Violence: 888 88 33**

88 or [pomoc@feminoteka.pl](mailto:pomoc@feminoteka.pl)

Monday to Friday, from 11:00 to 19:00

**National LGBT+ Helpline** (+48) 22 628 52 22 (Monday to Friday, from 18:00 to 21:00 or

[poradnictwo@lambdawarszawa.org](mailto:poradnictwo@lambdawarszawa.org))

**Crisis Intervention Centre**

Helpline, 24-hour psychological support, phone: 733 588 900

Intervention and Consultation Centre: 733 588 600

Monday to Friday, from 7:00 to 19:00 (On duty: psychologist-in-crisis, coordinator of the Intervention and Consultation Centre, social worker, therapist for intervention support for people in crisis).

e-mail: [pomoc@cik.lublin.eu](mailto:pomoc@cik.lublin.eu)

<http://www.cik.lublin.eu/dzialania.html>

**Lublin Association for the Protection of Mental Health**

Phone: 783 703 500, 783 403 200, 783 503 800

Monday to Friday, from 8:00 to 20:00

<http://www.lsozp.org/nasze-placowki>

**Toll-free support line for bereaved people of the “Suddenly Alone” Foundation: 800 108 108**

Monday to Friday, from 14:00 to 20:00

Thursday from 14:00 to 17:00 – a service on supporting children in bereavement for educators, teachers and guardians.

**Friends of Integration Association, Integration Foundation:** [www.integracja.org](http://www.integracja.org)

**Polish Forum of People with Disabilities:** [www.pfon.org](http://www.pfon.org)

**Women's Rights Centre:** <https://cpk.org.pl/>

**Autonomy Foundation:** <https://autonomia.org.pl/>

**Feminoteka Foundation:** <http://feminoteka.pl/>

**Trans-Fusion Foundation** <https://www.transfuzja.org/>

**Campaign Against Homophobia:** <https://kph.org.pl/>

**Karat Coalition:** <https://www.karat.org/pl/>

**Lambda Association:** <http://lambdawarszawa.org/>

**Pro Humanum Association:** [www.prohumanum.org](http://www.prohumanum.org)

**"Never Again" Association:** [www.nigdywiecej.org](http://www.nigdywiecej.org)

**Her Story Foundation:** <https://fundacjajerstory.org/>

**Foundation for Management Initiatives:** <https://fim.org.pl/>

**Amnesty International Association:** [www.amnesty.org.pl](http://www.amnesty.org.pl)

**Open Republic Association Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia:** [www.otwarta.org](http://www.otwarta.org)

**Support Centre for Immigrant Women and Men:** [www.cwii.org.pl](http://www.cwii.org.pl)

**Africa Differently Foundation:** [www.afryka.org](http://www.afryka.org)

**Foundation for Social Diversity:** [www.ffrs.org.pl](http://www.ffrs.org.pl)

**Coalition Against Hate Speech:** [www.beznienawisci.pl](http://www.beznienawisci.pl)

**Nomada Association for Multicultural Society Integration:** [www.nomada.info.pl](http://www.nomada.info.pl)

**uchodźcy.info website for refugees:** [www.uchodzcy.info](http://www.uchodzcy.info)

**Association for Legal Intervention:** [www.interwencjaprawna.pl](http://www.interwencjaprawna.pl)

**Society for Anti-discrimination Education:** [www.tea.org.pl](http://www.tea.org.pl)

**9/12 Association:** [www.9dwunastych.org](http://www.9dwunastych.org)



## **1.5.2. Institutional protection against discrimination at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University - a guide**

### **University anti-discrimination activities**

The University is implementing the project "Accessible UMCS" under the Operational Programme Knowledge Education Development 2014-2020, co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund. The main objective of the project is to increase the educational accessibility of UMCS addressed to people with disabilities through the implementation of solutions eliminating barriers in terms of structural, architectural, technological and procedural accessibility and educational support, as well as to raise disability awareness and competences among the University's staff with a view to providing high quality service and education to people with disabilities.

Within the framework of the Social Responsibility Strategy of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, methods have been developed to undertake and improve organisational changes at the university as a place open and friendly to people with disabilities, including the creation of an appropriate organisational culture and adoption of principles such as non-discrimination.

As part of the project, it is also planned to develop a Universal Design Strategy at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University that would present a concept of shaping the university space in all its aspects, including digital space, in a manner ensuring equal access both for people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in the society.

Anyone belonging to the academic community of UMCS who has experienced or witnessed unequal treatment, discriminatory behaviour or violence should immediately report it to the relevant institutions, as well as respond to it directly.

Below there is a list of units at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University which provide comprehensive support to people who have encountered problems with unequal treatment or violence at the University.

### **The Ombudsman for Academic Rights**

The Ombudsman for Academic Rights, referred to as the Academic Ombudsman, is an entity completely independent of the University authorities, established to assist in resolving conflicts between students or employees and the University authorities, as well as between members of the academic community.

The Ombudsman primarily aims to prevent and combat such phenomena as discrimination, mobbing, intolerance, harassment, academic fraud and other unethical behaviour. The Ombudsman acts both by intervening in individual cases, on the basis of complaints from members of the academic community (staff and students), and by creating standards to prevent negative phenomena and to limit the emergence of disputes.

The Ombudsman's activity is based on the ethical principles and standards developed by the International Ombudsman Association (IOA), which include:

**Independence** - the Academic Ombudsman is completely independent of the University authorities, reporting to them only in administrative and budgetary issues, and has access to all information and documents necessary to deal with a case.

**Neutrality and impartiality** - the Academic Ombudsman advocates for a fair resolution of a case, and does not take sides in any conflict. He or she does not derive personal benefits from finding a solution to a problem.

**Confidentiality** - identities of clients and other people who approach the Academic Ombudsman are confidential. Confidentiality can only be breached if there is an imminent danger or risk of serious harm. The Ombudsman can also be contacted anonymously.



**Informality** - The Academic Ombudsman works informally through such means as: listening, giving and receiving information, identifying and transforming problems. He or she seeks to resolve problems in an informal way, and analyses procedural irregularities and wider systemic problems. He or she participates as an observer in disciplinary proceedings, but is not a participant in formal proceedings within or outside the University. The Academic Ombudsman may also refer a case to mediation.

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**Contact:**

Prof. dr hab. Katarzyna Dudka  
Faculty of Law and Administration UMCS  
Pl. M. Curie-Skłodowskiej 5, 20-031 Lublin  
room 510  
e-mail: [katarzyna.dudka@umcs.pl](mailto:katarzyna.dudka@umcs.pl)  
phone: (+48) 81 537 52 44

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**Office for People with Disabilities and Psychological Support**

The aim of the Support Team for People with Disabilities is to make the University more accessible to people with different types of disability, including those experiencing mental health crises.

In addition to assisting in the process of acquiring knowledge, the support also includes initiatives that will contribute to the development in the physical, intellectual and social spheres.

**The Team's mission is:**

- integration of people with disabilities into the academic community
- creating equal educational opportunities
- removing barriers and tackling exclusion
- adapting the teaching process to students/doctoral students with different health needs.

**For whom?**

- for students and doctoral students with a disability diagnosis
- for the chronically ill
- for students and doctoral students experiencing mental health crises

- for students and doctoral students wishing to overcome barriers in the academic environment
- for academic and administrative staff of the University

**Support is provided in three languages: Polish, Ukrainian, Russian.**

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**Contact:**

"Helios" Residence Hall - room 8 or 9 (ground floor)  
ul. Czwartaków 13, 20-036 Lublin  
phone: (+48) 81 537-58-90  
e-mail: [punkt@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl](mailto:punkt@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl)  
www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/zespol-ds-wsparcia-osob-z-niepelnosprawnosciami,3222.htm>

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**"Alter Idem" Association of Disabled Students**

"Alter Idem" Association of Disabled Students is a student organisation which brings together students with disabilities and non-disabled students of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University on an equal footing.

The main objective of the Association is to integrate students with disabilities into the academic community, to activate them and facilitate their personal development.

The Association, in cooperation with the Disability Services Team, organises trips to conferences and integration trips, ensures the participation of its members in cultural events and undertakes activities aimed at abolishing barriers in the academic environment.

**For whom?**

- for students and doctoral students
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**Contact:**

"Alter Idem" Association of Disabled Students  
Femina Residence Hall (ground floor)  
ul. Mariana Langiewicza 20  
20-400 Lublin  
e-mail: [zsnalteridem.umcs@gmail.com](mailto:zsnalteridem.umcs@gmail.com)

www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/zrzeszenie-studentow-niepelnosprawnych-alter-idem-,6220.htm>

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### **SENSUM Support and Psychoeducation Centre**

**SENSUM** is based at the Institute of Pedagogy of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. The Centre offers free psychological and pedagogical support to students, doctoral students and staff of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University.

The Centre's offer is aimed at all students experiencing emotional crises and needing support in their mental development.

#### **For whom?**

- for students and doctoral students
- for academic and administrative staff of the University

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#### **Contact:**

www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/punkt-wsparcia-i-psychoedukacji-dla-studentow-sensum,9921.htm>

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### **Academic Support Centre**

The Academic Support Centre is a university-wide organisation which aims to:

- promote mental hygiene
- educate on mental health hygiene
- provide psychological support in the following areas:
  - ✓ experience of physical and psychological violence
  - ✓ alcohol and other psychoactive substance abuse
  - ✓ addiction to the Internet and gambling
  - ✓ eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, compulsive overeating and other)
  - ✓ mood and emotion disturbances (sadness, lack of motivation to act, anxiety, excessive anger, aggression and other)
- provide information on free health facilities where students can receive treatment/therapy.

Psychological counselling is offered by 4th and 5th year Psychology students, throughout the academic year, Monday to Friday.

### **For whom?**

- for students and doctoral students
- for academic and administrative staff of the University

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#### **Contact:**

Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology  
Institute of Psychology UMCS  
ul. Głęboka 45; room B.0.03  
20–612 Lublin

e-mail: [acw@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl](mailto:acw@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acw.umcs/>

Instagram: akademickiecentrumwsparcia

www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/akademickie-centrum-wsparcia,7589.htm>

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### **Office for International Students and Student Services**

The aim of the Office is to manage affairs of foreign students, to support the process of attracting international students, as well as to coordinate academic exchange programmes of an educational/training nature, in particular within the framework of Erasmus+ programme.

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#### **Contact:**

Erasmus Programme Office:

phone: (+48) 81 5375410

International student services team:

phone: (+48) 815372926

Duty hours: 8-15

www: <http://www.umcs.pl/pl/centrum-ksztalcenia-i-obslugi-studiow,1035.htm>

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### **Competence Development Office**

The Competence Development Office provides education, counselling and information for students, graduates and staff of UMCS aimed at their professional and personal development.

#### **Areas of activity:**

- educational, vocational and psychological guidance,
- training and workshops to develop social and professional competences,
- entrepreneurship education programmes,
- job placements, internships and apprenticeships,
- organisation of placements outside the course of study,
- cooperation with employers (implementation of recruitment projects, organisation of meetings, presentations of companies at the University, etc.),
- cooperation with labour market institutions and organisations,
- building relations and cooperation with UMCS Alumni.

Within the Competence Development Office there is a psychological and vocational counselling centre which provides assistance in the form of psychological guidance and counselling, as well as short-term individual psychotherapy. It offers support to people who experience difficulties due to increased levels of stress, anxiety, tension, have problems of an emotional nature, have difficulties in relationships with other people, seek support in crisis situations or simply want to develop and strengthen their self-esteem.

### **For whom?**

- for students and doctoral students
- for academic and administrative staff of the University

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#### **Contact:**

ul. Sowińskiego 12/5

20-040 Lublin

e-mail: [brk@umcs.pl](mailto:brk@umcs.pl)

[www.facebook.com/BiuroRozwojuKompetencji](https://www.facebook.com/BiuroRozwojuKompetencji)

Monday - Friday, 8.00-15.00

www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/brk.htm>

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### **Student Government Board**

The Student Government is a representative body of all students. The main task of the Student Government is to take care of the interests of the whole student community of the University. Through the implementation of various events and projects of a cultural character, the Student

Government facilitates integration of the student community. The Government Board also organises training courses, as well as integration and education trips for UMCS students.

Each Faculty has a Student Council which is a part of the Student Government. It is made up of students' representatives whose task is also to provide support in difficult situations.

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**Contact:**

UMCS Student Government Board  
Femina Residence Hall, Club Room  
ul. Langiewicza 20, 20-035 Lublin

Office hours: 8:30-15:00

Phone: (+48) 506 005 018

www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/zarząd-uczelniany-samorządu-studentów,4547.htm>

e-mail: [samorząd@hektor.umcs.lublin.pl](mailto:samorząd@hektor.umcs.lublin.pl)

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### **Doctoral Student Government**

The Doctoral Student Government is an organisation whose main task is to represent and look after the interests of the doctoral student community of the University.

The activities of the Doctoral Student Government are carried out on two levels: faculty and university-wide.

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**Contact:**

"Amor" Residence Hall  
ul. Radziszewskiego 18/213  
20-036 Lublin

phone/fax: (+48) 81 537-27-89 ext. 50-45

[samorząd@doktoranci.umcs.pl](mailto:samorząd@doktoranci.umcs.pl)

www: <https://www.doktoranci.umcs.lublin.pl/>

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### **Polish Teachers' Union at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University**

The Polish Teachers' Union at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University is a self-governing trade union which gathers academic teachers and other University employees, as well as pensioners

- former employees of the University. The Polish Teachers' Union at UMCS is independent of political, administrative and economic authorities and political parties.

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**Contact:**

Polish Teachers' Union at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University  
Rector's Office Building, room 1402  
Phone: (+48) 81 537-51-14 or 81 537-51-15  
e-mail: [znp@hektor.umcs.lublin.pl](mailto:znp@hektor.umcs.lublin.pl)  
www: <https://www.umcs.pl/pl/znp.htm>

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**Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity" at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin**

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Branch of "Solidarity" Trade Union at UMCS

Address:

Komisja Zakładowa NSZZ "Solidarność" UMCS  
Pl. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 5  
20-031 Lublin

Seat:

Rector's Office Building UMCS  
Pl. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 5  
14th floor, room 1411  
NIP 712-26-26-661

e-mail: [solidarnosc.kz@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl](mailto:solidarnosc.kz@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl)  
www: [www.solidarnosc.umcs.lublin.pl](http://www.solidarnosc.umcs.lublin.pl)

phone/fax: (+48) 81 537 51 08

phone: (+48) 81 537 54 67

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## **2. Law Against Discrimination**

The Constitution, as the most important legal act in the Polish legal order, setting out the permissible limits of action by public authorities and defining the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Republic of Poland, in Article 32 introduces the principle of equality of citizens before the law and the prohibition of discrimination. In accordance with Article 32(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, everyone is equal before the law. Everyone has the right to equal treatment by public authorities. The prohibition of discrimination arising from paragraph 2 means that no one shall be discriminated against in political, social and economic life on any grounds.

The rule of equality of citizens before the law is complemented with the principle of equality of women and men, expressed in Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, according to which a woman and a man in the Republic of Poland have equal rights in family, political, social and economic life. In particular, women and men have equal rights to education, employment and promotion, to equal remuneration for work of equal value, to social security, as well as to occupy positions, perform functions and obtain public honours and distinctions.

Furthermore, Article 35 of the Polish Constitution provides for the protection of national and ethnic minorities. It stipulates that the Republic of Poland grants Polish citizens belonging to national and ethnic minorities the freedom to maintain and develop their own language, preserve their customs and traditions and develop their own culture. Furthermore, it grants national and ethnic minorities the right to establish their own educational and cultural



institutions and organizations for the protection of their religious identity, as well as the right to participate in the resolution of matters concerning their cultural identity.

However, it must be remembered that the Constitution defines in a very general way the fundamental civil rights and freedoms and the obligations of public authorities with respect to protection of these rights and freedoms, whereas detailed solutions concerning this protection are contained in particular laws (the so-called ordinary legislation).

The Act of 3 December 2010 on the implementation of certain provisions of the European Union on equal treatment (Journal of Laws 2020.2156, consolidated text) became the basis for the Polish legal regulations aimed at counteracting infringements of the equal treatment principle on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, denomination, world view, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Article 6 of the Act prohibits unequal treatment of individuals on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin or nationality in terms of access to and conditions of use of social security, services, including housing services, goods, and the procurement of rights or energy when offered to the public.

In Article 3 of the Act the basic concepts related to inequality are defined:

1. **direct discrimination** - a situation where an individual is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation, on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, denomination, world view, disability, age or sexual orientation;
2. **indirect discrimination** - a situation where an individual is or would be disadvantaged or underprivileged on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, denomination, world view, disability, age or sexual orientation, as a result of an apparently neutral provision, criterion or action, unless this provision, criterion or action is objectively justified in view of a legitimate aim pursued and the means of achieving this aim are appropriate and necessary;
3. **harassment** - any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an individual and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual;
4. **sexual harassment** - any unwanted conduct of sexual nature towards a person, or related to a person's sex, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of that person, in

particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual; such conduct may comprise physical, verbal or non-verbal elements;

5. **unequal treatment** - treating an individual in a way that constitutes one or more of the following types of conduct: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and less favourable treatment of an individual based on his or her rejection of or submission to harassment or sexual harassment, as well as encouraging or imposing such conduct;

6. **principle of equal treatment** - means the absence of any types of conduct constituting unequal treatment.

Discrimination is prohibited, inter alia, with regard to:

- undertaking vocational training, including further training, refresher courses, retraining and job placement;
- conditions for taking up and pursuing business or professional activities, including in particular employment relationships or work under a civil law contract;
- joining and being active in trade unions, employers' organisations and professional self-governments, and exercising the rights granted to members of such organisations;
- access to and conditions of using social security, health care, education including higher education, services including housing, goods and the procurement of rights and energy when these are provided to the public.

Article 13 of the Act grants people who have suffered violations of the equal treatment principle the right to compensation in civil law proceedings, according to the rules set out in the Code of Civil Procedure.

Anyone alleging infringement of the principle of equal treatment must substantiate that the principle has been infringed, i.e. demonstrate that such an infringement has occurred (Article 14). Substantiation is a slightly less strict form of corroborating a circumstance than proving which requires certainty that a given fact has actually occurred, on the basis of the evidence gathered. Substantiation does not require certainty, however, the evidence gathered must indicate a high probability that a certain fact has occurred. Pursuant to Article 14(3) of the Act, if violation of the principle of equal treatment is substantiated by the injured party, the person alleged to have violated this principle is obliged to prove that he or she did not commit the

violation. Therefore, he or she must prove to have treated the complainant equally in comparison with other people in such a situation.

The limitation period for claims for breach of the equal treatment principle is 3 years from the date the injured party became aware of the breach of the principle of equal treatment, but not longer than 5 years from the occurrence of the event constituting the breach (Article 15 of the Act). The statute of limitations for claims means that after the expiry of the above-mentioned deadlines it is impossible to claim compensation.

The Implementation Act is not the only legal act which prohibits discrimination. In this respect, the regulations of the Act of 26 June 1974 - the Labour Code are of particular importance.

Article 11<sup>3</sup> of the Labour Code provides that any discrimination in employment, whether direct or indirect, in particular on the grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political opinion, union membership, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, employment for a definite or indefinite period, full-time or part-time employment - is unacceptable. The issue of equal treatment is dealt with in Chapter IIa of the Labour Code.

Pursuant to Article 18<sup>3a</sup> § 1 of the Labour Code, employees should be treated equally with respect to the establishment and termination of the employment relationship, terms and conditions of employment, promotion and access to training to improve professional qualifications, in particular regardless of sex, age, disability, race, religion, nationality, political opinion, union membership, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, employment for a definite or indefinite period of time, full-time or part-time employment.

Equal treatment in employment means not discriminating in any way, directly or indirectly, on any of the grounds mentioned above. Discrimination also includes:

- encouraging or ordering another person to infringe the principle of equal treatment in employment;
- unwanted conduct with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of an employee and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (harassment).

Discrimination on the grounds of sex is also any unwanted conduct of sexual nature or referring to the sex of an employee which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the employee, in particular creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the employee; such conduct may comprise physical, verbal or non-verbal

elements (sexual harassment). An employee's submission to harassment or sexual harassment, as well as an employee's resistance to harassment or sexual harassment, must not result in any negative consequences for the employee (18<sup>3a</sup> § 6 and 7 of the Labour Code).

Article 18<sup>3b</sup> of the Labour Code lists a catalogue of infringements of the equal treatment principle and indicates that an infringement of the principle of equal treatment in employment (with reservations relating to, inter alia, actions taken by an employer to equalise opportunities for employees and infringement of the principle of equal treatment by churches and religious associations) is understood as differentiation by an employer of the situation of an employee on one or more of the grounds referred to in Article 18<sup>3a</sup> § 1 of the Labour Code, resulting in particular in:

- refusal to establish or termination of the employment relationship,
- unfavourable remuneration or other terms and conditions of employment, or failure to promote an employee or grant an employee other work-related benefits,
- omission of an employee from training courses to improve professional qualifications.

The onus is on the employer to prove that the employer was motivated by objective reasons which resulted in a breach of the principle of equal treatment.

A particularly important element contributing to equal treatment is the right to equal remuneration stipulated in Article 18<sup>3c</sup> § 1 and 2 of the Labour Code. According to this provision, employees are entitled to equal remuneration for equal work or for work of equal value, and this remuneration includes all remuneration components, regardless of their name and nature, as well as other work-related benefits granted to employees in cash or in a form other than cash.

A person with regard to whom an employer has infringed the principle of equal treatment in employment is entitled to compensation in the amount not lower than the minimum remuneration for work, determined on the basis of separate provisions (Article 18<sup>3d</sup> of the Labour Code). These separate provisions were shaped by the Act of 10 October 2002 on the minimum remuneration for work (Journal of Laws of 2020.2207, consolidated text). An employee's exercise of his or her rights due to a breach of the principle of equal treatment in employment can neither be the basis for unfavourable treatment of the employee, nor it can cause any negative consequences for the employee. In particular, it cannot constitute a reason justifying termination of the employment relationship by the employer or termination without notice (Article 18<sup>3e</sup> of the Labour Code). The same protection applies to an employee who has

provided any form of support to an employee exercising his or her rights under the principle of equal treatment in employment.

The above regulations are supplemented by criminal law provisions, which introduce in the Penal Code several types of offences related to unequal treatment. Criminal law is generally referred to as the *ultima ratio* (a measure of last resort) used by the legislator for two reasons. Firstly, when the legislator recognizes certain social values as particularly important and requiring protection at various levels, including through criminal law, and secondly, when the legislator considers that other areas of law (e.g. labour law, civil law) protect these values inadequately. In both cases, the fact that a value is protected under criminal law is the result of the special importance the legislator attaches to this value. For example:

- Article 119 § 1 of the Penal Code **prohibits discrimination:**

Whoever uses violence or unlawful threat against a group of people or an individual because of his or her national, ethnic, racial, political or religious affiliation or because of his or her irreligiousness, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years.

- Article 194 of the Penal Code regulates **the prohibition of religious discrimination:**

Whoever restricts a person's rights because of his or her religious affiliation or irreligiousness shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years.

- Article 256 § 1 of the Penal Code prohibits **the promotion of fascism or another totalitarian regime:**

Whoever publicly propagates a fascist or other totalitarian system of state or incites to hatred on the grounds of national, ethnic, racial or religious differences or on the grounds of irreligiousness shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years.

- Article 257 of the Penal Code regulates the crime of assault on the grounds of xenophobia, racism or religious intolerance:

Whoever publicly insults a group of people or an individual because of their national, ethnic, racial or religious affiliation or because of their irreligiousness, or for such reasons violates the

bodily integrity of another person, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years.

Sexual harassment may give rise to criminal liability of the perpetrator:

- **Rape** under article 197 § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever by means of violence, unlawful threat or deceit leads another person to sexual intercourse shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty from 2 to 12 years.

- **Causing to submit to other (than sexual intercourse) sexual act** under Article 197 § 2 of the Penal Code.

Whoever induces another person to submit to other sexual act or to perform such an act, in the manner specified in § 1 (i.e. by violence, unlawful threat or deceit), shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 6 months and 8 years.

- **Sexual exploitation of a relationship of dependence or a critical situation** under Article 199 § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever, by abuse of a relationship of dependence or taking advantage of a critical situation, leads another person to sexual intercourse, to submission to other sexual act or to the performance of such an act, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years.

- **Violations of sexual intimacy** under Article 191a § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever records the image of a naked person or of a person in the course of a sexual act, using violence, unlawful threat or deceit for this purpose, or disseminates the image of a naked person or of a person in the course of a sexual act without his or her consent, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years.

Other forms of direct or indirect discrimination may also constitute grounds for criminal liability of the perpetrator for an offence:

- **Criminal threat:** Article 190 § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever threatens another person with commitment of a criminal offence to his or her detriment or to the detriment of his or her next of kin, if the threat arouses in the threatened

person a justified fear that it will be fulfilled, shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years.

- **Stalking (persistent harassment):** Article 190a § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever, by persistent harassment of a person or his or her next of kin, arouses in that person a justified feeling of threat, humiliation or anguish, or substantially violates that person's privacy, shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 6 months and 8 years.

- **Forcing particular behaviour:** Article 191 § 1 of the Penal Code:

Whoever uses violence or an unlawful threat against a person in order to force this person to perform, give up or submit to a specific act shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years.

Prosecution of these three crimes, as well as of the offence under Article 191a of the Penal Code, requires that a motion for prosecution should be submitted by the aggrieved party to a law enforcement authority (prosecutor, police). Only then the law enforcement authorities are able to initiate preparatory proceedings in connection with a given act.

In addition, a person who violates the prohibition of discrimination may be held criminally liable for the following offences:

- **Insult** under Article 216 of the Penal Code:

§ 1 Whoever insults another person in his or her presence or even in his or her absence but in public or with the intent that the insult should reach that person, shall be subject to a fine or the penalty of restriction of liberty.

§ 2 Whoever insults another person by means of the mass media shall be subject to a fine, restriction of liberty or deprivation of liberty for up to one year.

- **Defamation** under Article 212 of the Penal Code:

§ 1 Whoever slanders another person, a group of people, an institution, a legal person or an organisational unit without legal personality of such conduct or characteristics which may bring them into disrepute in the public opinion or expose them to the loss of trust necessary for a given position, profession or type of activity, shall be subject to a fine or the penalty of restriction of liberty.

§ 2 If the perpetrator commits the act specified in § 1 by means of the mass media, he or she shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to one year.

Both defamation and insult are private prosecution offences, which means that the aggrieved party becomes a private prosecutor, and independently brings and supports a private bill of indictment before the court. Pursuant to Article 60 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a public prosecutor may prosecute any private prosecution offence if he or she decides that the public interest so requires (e.g. due to exceptional intensity of malice on the part of the perpetrator, or due to the aggrieved party who may be a person in need of assistance, etc.)

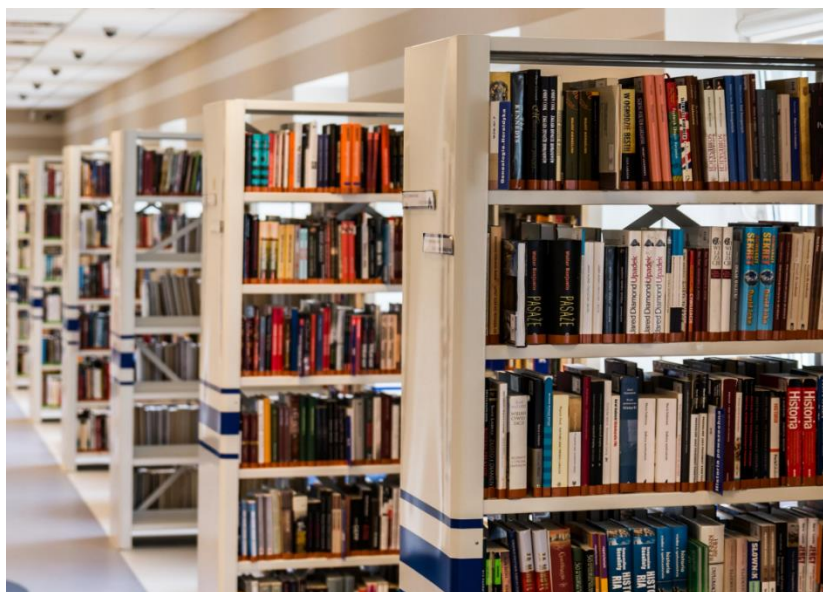
The rights to equal treatment and protection against discrimination are also safeguarded under the civil law. Pursuant to Article 23 of the Civil Code, personal rights of a human being, such as, in particular, health, freedom, dignity, freedom of conscience, surname or pseudonym, image, privacy of correspondence, inviolability of a dwelling, scientific, artistic, inventive and improvement work, are protected by civil law, irrespective of the protection provided by other regulations.

The protection of personal rights is carried out before a civil court on the basis of Articles 24, 415, 445 and 448 of the Civil Code and is independent of possible criminal proceedings against the perpetrator of the infringement of personal rights (provided that his or her conduct meets the criteria of a criminal offence).

In the event of infringement of personal rights, the following may be claimed:

- to refrain from such an action;
- that steps be taken to remedy its effects, in particular by a declaration of appropriate content and in an appropriate form;
- monetary compensation or
- payment of an appropriate sum of money for a social purpose;
- compensation for damage in accordance with general rules, if, as a result of infringement of a personal right, pecuniary damage has been caused.





### 3. Recommended resources

The film “Blue Eyed” (1996); directed by Bertram Verhaag

The film “Tough Guise: Men, Violence and the Crisis in Masculinity” (1999); directed by Sut Jhally

Cieślukowska D., Sarata N. (2012). *Dyskryminacja wielokrotna – historia, teorie, przegląd badań*. Warszawa: Fundacja Fundusz Współpracy i Towarzystwo Edukacji Antydyskryminacyjnej.

Goffman E. (2007). *Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości*. Gdańsk: GWP.

Heller, G. (2017). *Czy można przekonać olbrzymów?* Lublin: Wydawnictwo Inne.

Lewandowski M. (2014). Ochrona pracownika przed dyskryminacją w polskim prawie pracy, *Palestra*, no. 3-4.

Nelson, T.D. (2013). *Psychologia uprzedzeń*. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne

Strack, E. (2021). *Dyskryminacja. Powiedz: stop!* Wydawnictwo Adamada

Winiarska A., Klaus W. (2011). *Dyskryminacja i nierówne traktowanie jako zjawisko*



#### **4. Letters from representatives of the UMCS community**

Dear UMCS academic community,

As a student organisation for people with and without disabilities, we are familiar with the problem of discrimination. It can arise on many different levels, also among people with disabilities. Through our Association's activities we try to promote the equality of educational opportunities for all students of our university and, at least to some extent, contribute to the reduction of architectural barriers. However, our main mission is to overcome social barriers, as they are the most strongly felt. People with disabilities are perceived very often in a stereotypical way, according to patterns that have been formed in the society over the years. Physical, mental and psychological dysfunctions are often associated with such traits as weakness, dependence, isolation, loneliness, sadness, low self-esteem and even low productivity. People who struggle to function on a daily basis are often perceived by others as disadvantaged, with no chance to live happy, fulfilled lives. Certainly, people with disabilities do have some limitations, but they can enjoy many beautiful experiences despite their difficulties. Most people with disabilities are aware of their limitations. Many of them, especially those with mobility impairments, have their own tried and tested ways of coping with certain situations and they try to use their abilities. Therefore, the society should create the best possible conditions for people with disabilities to make use of their resources and thus participate in the social life. We should not focus on the limitations and reinforce them with our opinions, but contribute to make the obstacles less and less influential in the life of people with

disabilities. This is precisely the aim of our organisation - to fight, among other things, against social discrimination that is still noticeable. People with disabilities are frequently excluded from all forms of cultural and social life, which typically results from a general, stereotypical assessment of a given disability. Most people's knowledge of particular dysfunctions is insufficient, so they are not aware of the capabilities of a person they are excluding. Forms of participation in the social and cultural life are often not adapted to the needs of people with disabilities. Therefore, a very important way of combating discrimination is making the society more aware of disability issues. An important role is played by thematic training courses, but also by adaptation of events organised by university institutions to the abilities and needs of students with dysfunctions.

Students with disabilities should be provided with equal educational opportunities and treated on a par with other learning members of the academic community. They are all bound by the same rules concerning attendance at classes, examinations or additional activities offered by the university. However, people with disabilities often have restricted opportunities to participate fully in the academic life because of their limitations. The forms of support provided mainly by the Office for People with Disabilities and Psychological Support of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University are not an expression of special treatment, but of equal opportunities for people benefiting from them. It makes the educational process more accessible for them, it is a form of technical assistance in fulfilling their duties as students. A person with a disability (especially one that significantly impedes functioning) is often unaware of his or her own abilities, talents and how to use them. For people coming from small towns and villages, university education is frequently the first opportunity to live an independent life. Prospective students with disabilities often do not know which educational path to choose in order to ensure future career opportunities in line with their interests but also allowing them to work in a way that is appropriate to their physical condition. It happens that people with disabilities would like to develop their passions, but when choosing a course of study, they largely focus on their limitations resulting from their disability. That is why it is so important to provide vocational counselling and psychological support tailored to the needs of students with different types of disabilities. Such initiatives can certainly contribute to raising awareness about the accessibility of the labour market for people with disabilities. They will be able to learn about their rights and opportunities which will allow them to feel fulfilled in their work. Such activities undoubtedly contribute to reducing discrimination in employment.

Despite the increasing number of activities undertaken for the benefit of people with disabilities, discrimination is still noticeable. In order to prevent this phenomenon, it is necessary, above all, to be open to other people, to have empathy and to be willing to learn more about the needs of people with disabilities.

**Alter Idem UMCS**

**Association of Disabled Students**

Dear Sirs,

The academic community of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, which also comprises doctoral students, adheres to the fundamental values of respect for the human being, empathy and cooperation in the scientific and educational mission undertaken by our Alma Mater.

Bearing in mind the constitutionally guaranteed inherent and inalienable dignity of every human being, the community of doctoral students at UMCS, aware of their responsibility, wholeheartedly joins the efforts undertaken by the University to build good and respectful interpersonal relations that create a friendly environment for all, open to discussion, different views and backgrounds of the members of our academic community.

We trust that together, with a sense of responsibility for the future of our Alma Mater, we will continue to build a community open to each and everyone, based on respect for diversity and tolerance.

**Marcin Bubicz**

**President of the Academic Council**

**Doctoral Student Government of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University**

I came to Lublin, UMCS for a year as a researcher under the project "Solidarity with Scientists". During my stay I have visited different regions of Poland. I have had time to assess whether discrimination on any grounds exists in Lublin and Poland in general. I must admit that I have never encountered this problem. I don't speak Polish very well, and people don't understand me right away, but they always try to understand and show me kindness. As a woman, I have met with nothing but respect and willingness to help, and the same goes for my disability.

I can always count on help from my colleagues at UMCS. I am very grateful to all my colleagues, friends, acquaintances: thanks to them, I feel comfortable and safe in Lublin. Apart from a purely human approach,

**Prof. Alena Rudenka, Professor, Belarusian State University, Scholarship holder of the  
“Solidarity with Scientists” programme funded by the National Agency for Academic  
Exchange**

I was warmly welcomed by the people at UMCS and supported throughout my stay in Poland in various manners. The support I received was not just limited to my research, but extended to many aspects of life in Poland such as finding accommodation. I did not experience any discrimination at UMCS. I have nothing but good memories at UMCS. Thus, without any hesitancy, I highly recommend UMCS to any foreign researcher.

**Sachindra Dhanapala Arachchige, PhD (NAWA ULAM Research Fellow)**

I have had the honour of carrying out research projects at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin for several years now. So far, I have successfully completed two research projects (under: Lane Kirkland Scholarship Program Polish National Commission for UNESCO), and I am carrying out a third project as part of a grant from the Visegrad Fund. The projects are carried out at the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Spatial Management.

I would like to thank the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University for the opportunity to work together with outstanding researchers and scholars. My special thanks go to Dr hab. Bogusława Baran-Zgłobicka, who has been my scientific supervisor during the current and previous projects. Her openness, commitment, intellectual support and coordination of activities at every

stage of the research have helped me to successfully complete my projects. A heartfelt thank you to each and every professor at UMCS who has shared their experience and ideas. For me as a young researcher, this is particularly important.

I recommend Marie Curie-Skłodowska University to anyone who really wants to develop academically and professionally. It is a place that provides not only theoretical knowledge, but also a lot of practical experience, opportunities for comprehensive development of your interests and passions.

Thank you for the opportunity to spend valuable time with interesting people and friends!

**Iryna Kostetska, PhD**

**National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine**



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## **Legal acts**

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