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The University of Bialystok Foundation
UNIVERSITAS BIALOSTOCENSIS

The University of Bialystok

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The Republic of Poland

EUROPE 2005

***The Second International Students' Meeting
in Bialystok***

“Europe of Citizens – Europe of Homelands”

INFORMATION KIT

Bialystok, July 13–17, 2005

**"Never doubt that a small group
of thoughtful, committed people
can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
Margaret Mead**

Organizers:

The University of Bialystok Foundation
UNIVERSITAS BIALOSTOCENSIS

The University of Bialystok

Name of the project:

EUROPE 2005 – The Second International Students' Meeting in Bialystok
“Europe of Citizens – Europe of Homelands”

OrganizersThe University of Bialystok Foundation UNIVERSITAS BIALOSTOCENSIS

The University of Bialystok Foundation, *Universitas Bialostocensis*, was chartered on April 22, 2004 at an act of will of seventeen founders, recruiting from the academic circles of the University of Bialystok, as a non-profit organization, governed by an independent Board of Directors.

The Foundation has been established for the purpose of organizational, material and financial support for the academic excellence and future development of the University of Bialystok.

Realizing its statutory goals, the Foundation engages in a wide range of activities in such areas as:

- organization and co-organization of lectures, seminars, and conferences,
- organization of courses and workshops, esp. for the non-governmental sector,
- advertising and promotion of the University,
- business and legal consulting,
- participation in EU funding programs,
- providing financial support for academic projects and student scholarships,
- working in support of the students' organizations run at the University of Bialystok.

Through inviting volunteers to participation in its activities and projects, the Foundation assists the development of students' abilities in managing and organizing non-profit projects.

The University of Bialystok

The University of Bialystok was created in 1997 from the Branch of Warsaw University, one of the biggest universities in Poland. The academic potential and scope of the new University's activities

have contributed to its present position as one of the biggest and most important academic centers in the Northern Eastern Poland. Though now an independent academic centre, the University of Bialystok still maintains scientific and personal connections with Warsaw University.

The region of Podlasie with its essential religious and ethnic diversity creates numerous opportunities for scientific research, as well as cultural projects. Hence, as an academic centre the University of Bialystok has a unique opportunity to foster tolerance, encourage openness and advance cooperation between ethnic and religious minorities of the region.

For years the University of Bialystok has specialized in researches concerning various problems of the Eastern borderland. The areas of study available at the University are well suited to specific regional needs, possibilities and geopolitical conditions of Podlasie. The University of Bialystok also responds to the needs of Poles living behind the Eastern boarder of Poland. Among others, the University befriends and cooperates with academies from Belarus, Russia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

At present, The University of Bialystok educates over 16 000 students, including foreigners, mostly from Eastern Europe. It is a mold of future intellectual elites, as well as a source of creative social, cultural and economic life.

Outline of the Project

Europe 2005 – The Second International Students' Meeting in Bialystok "Europe of Citizens – Europe of Homelands" is a continuation of an innovative project introduced by the University of Bialystok five years ago. *Europe 2000 – Students' Integration Meeting* took place in Bialowieza on July 14-17, 2000, and gathered about a hundred participants from different European countries, mostly students from befriended universities, such as The University of Sussex, Carl-von-Ossietzky-Universität Oldenburg, Institut D'Etudes Politiques de Rennes, The University of Pecs, Herzen State Pedagogical University, Yaroslavl Pedagogical University, Rostov State University, Omsk State Pedagogical University, Minsk State Linguistic University, Mogilev State University, Vitebsk State University, Yanka Kupala's State University of Grodno, Universitas Studiorum Polona Vilensis, Brescia University.

Europe 2005 – The Second International Students' Meeting in Bialystok "Europe of Citizens – Europe of Homelands" is a conference meeting of students from Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, and other European countries, which is intended to continue the tradition of *EUROPE 2000* and to expand its scope, both in the number of participants and thematic content.

During a five-day stay in Bialystok, students and other guests will have a remarkable opportunity to participate in lectures, workshops, and debates with top-class academics, researchers, politicians, journalists and NGO representatives, discussing the effects of European integration on:

- the condition of local cultures and identities,
- the level of civil participation in public life,

- prospects for academic development.

Apart from content sessions, students from different countries will have a chance to get to know distinctive elements of the multicultural folklore of Podlasie through participation in culture-oriented meetings, day trips, and sightseeing tours included in the *EUROPE 2005* program. The participants are also invited to present their own cultural – national, regional, or local backgrounds as a part of the *EUROPE 2005* program, in order to discuss the influence of those backgrounds on our identities as the Europeans.

Program of the 2005 Students' Meeting

| DATE | TIME | ACTIVITIES |
|---------|---|---|
| July 13 | to 18.00 | Guests arriving and boarded |
| | 18.00 | Organizational meeting |
| | 19.00 | Dinner |
| | 20.00 | Integration meeting – Karaoke |
| July 14 | Towards the culture of trust, dialogue and civil engagement | |
| | 9.00 | Breakfast |
| | 10.00 | Official meeting – with the university and city authorities |
| | 11.00 | Opening lecture: <i>Students' culture – past and present</i> |
| | 12.00 | Sightseeing tour of Bialystok (with a tourist guide) |
| | 14.00 | Lunch |
| | 15.00 | Lecture: <i>The European Citizen</i> |
| | 17.00 | Workshops: <i>Culture of trust, dialogue and civil engagement – reality or ideal?</i> |
| 19.00 | Barbecue and a folk group concert | |
| July 15 | Ethno-cultural identities of the Europeans or a common European culture? | |
| | 9.00 | Breakfast |
| | 10.00 | Lecture: <i>Europe of homelands. Ethno-cultural identities of the Europeans</i> |
| | 12.00 | Lecture: <i>Changing identities of the Europeans: cosmopolitanism or localism?</i> |
| | 14.00 | Lunch |
| | 15.00 | Oxford debate: <i>Is it true that there is a common European culture?</i> |
| | 16.00 | Spare time |
| | 17.00 | Against stereotypes: presentation of participants' national cultures |
| | 19.00 | Dinner |
| | 20.00 | "I just love this land...": documents presenting the ethno-cultural diversity of Podlasie |
| 22.00 | Feature film | |

July 16 Development and cooperation of the European academic communities – problems and prospects for the future.

| | |
|-------|---|
| 9.00 | Breakfast |
| 10.00 | Day trip to Bialowieza |
| 11.30 | Sightseeing tour of Bialowieza |
| 14.00 | Lunch (Polish traditional cuisine) |
| 15.00 | <i>The EuroStudent</i> : meeting with representatives of the Ministry of National Education and Sport and the Ministry of Economy and Labour – study and work possibilities in the EU |
| 16.00 | Lecture: <i>Development and cooperation of the European academic communities – problems and prospects for the future</i> |
| 19.00 | Returning to Bialystok |
| 20.00 | Dinner |
| 21.00 | “Saturday Night Fever”: disco |

July 17

| | |
|-------|--------------------------|
| 9.00 | Breakfast |
| 10.00 | Participants’ departures |

Mission

The city of Bialystok, where *EUROPE 2005* will take place, is the cultural, educational and political center of a culturally diversified, mostly rural borderland region of Poland with a mixed population of Polish, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Russian, Tatar and other communities cherishing their unique customs and traditions. Internationally, the region is famous mainly for its primeval forests, such as The Bialowieza Forest (National Park and World Heritage Site), which is among the last world woodland areas unaffected by industrial modernization, and wetlands abundant in a variety of rare and endangered species of wildlife, including protected areas of The Biebrza National Park.

We believe that the prospective political, economic, social and cultural position of the city and region depends on three key factors. Firstly, on its opening to contacts with other European countries, regions and ethnic groups on the level of grassroots, not-for-profit activities. Secondly, on advancing local civil organizational capabilities. And thirdly, on the attitudes and organizational skills of the young generation of local leaders. *EUROPE 2005*, as an international meeting of students that includes in its agenda important cultural, civil, and educational issues, is intended to bring improvement to all of the above spheres of bottom-up activities.

We also believe that the University of Bialystok, as one of the biggest and most important academic centers in the Northern-Eastern Poland, has an ideal chance and public duty to rise above the routine of a government-sponsored educational institution. As an independent, non-profit organization supporting the development of the University, we aim to extend its engagement in various grassroots, cross-sector and cross-border initiatives, which involve different groups, such as academic teachers,

students, researchers, authorities, journalists, minorities and social activists, working together for their mutual benefit and improving their organizational capabilities.

The first Students' Integration Meeting, which took place in 2000 in Bialowieza, proved that the initiative meets the needs of the young generation of the Europeans in terms of intercultural knowledge, experiences and relations. Aiming at expanding the project in its spectrum and scope, especially through incorporating civil society issues into its agenda, we intend to turn it into an annual event, which, in the long run, will provide students, university teachers, local minorities and other groups involved with an effective basis of contacts, communication, and cooperation in the non-governmental sphere.

We realize that to evolve as civil entities, local communities need human and social capital developed beyond the state borders by civil organizations, their leaders, volunteers and active supporters. Thus, *EUROPE 2005* is not merely intended to raise multicultural awareness of its participants, like *EUROPE 2000* aimed to do in the context of European integration, but also to strengthen the values of civil engagement, responsibility and creativity, and to establish strong and long-lasting links between potential civil activists, leaders and participants, recruiting from the young generation of the educated Europeans.

Objectives

The overall aims of the project are to integrate, educate and activate students on the international level through:

- stressing the most important values and principles of the EU as the political, cultural and economic community;
- defining rights and obligations of the European citizens, specially rights and obligations of the European students;
- extending the knowledge of European ethnic, cultural and religious diversity;
- developing an attitude of respect and concern towards different ethnicities, cultures and religions;
- building participants' identity as Europeans;
- identifying problems of the European academic communities, suggesting solutions to those problems, and discussing prospects for the future;
- exchanging opinions about possibilities and perspectives of the personal and professional development in the EU.

EUROPE 2005 – The Second International Students' Meeting in Bialystok "Europe of Citizens – Europe of Homelands" will extensively contribute to:

- activation and integration of Polish and other European academic communities;

- promotion of the youths' activeness;
- reduction of the effect of stereotypes on the international contacts;
- building a base for students' international meetings and cooperation;
- extension of academic and personal contacts;
- promotion of Bialystok and the Northern Eastern Poland (its cultural and natural inheritance) in Europe;
- promotion of Bialystok as an academic center both in Poland and Europe;
- promotion of Bialystok the centre of cooperation and dialogue between academic communities of the Eastern and Western Europe.

Target groups

As an international students' meeting *EUROPE 2005* is basically addressed to students from Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Spain, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Denmark, Austria, and other European countries.

Among other groups involved in the project are:

- academics and researchers,
- politicians,
- journalists,
- NGO representatives,
- teachers,
- ethnic minorities,
- local community.

Participation in the project is also open to other groups and individuals interested in its contents.

Coordinators

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