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[Autism-Europe 2022 Congress e-poster](#)

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ABSTRACT

We would like to present our complex support system for neurodivergent students at one of the largest and most popular universities of our country. The number of registered students with autism spectrum conditions (ASC) is significantly increasing every year in accordance with international trends. We currently provide support services for 85 university students on the autism spectrum which is more than five and a half times more than in 2015.

There has been a huge drop-out amongst autistic students due to a lack of sufficient support available in higher education. Mental health problems are often arising due to elevated levels of chronic stress and the unsupportive environment. Seeing ASC as a disability rather than a neurodivergent condition holds obstacles against inclusion and full participation in academic life for the students on the autism spectrum.

We would like to present the development process of our university's support system in the past seven years. The progress is based on a collaboration: in our team autistic students, qualified professionals and volunteers work together in accordance with national and international guidelines, using evidence-based methods.

In our holistic approach, we provide comprehensive intervention strategies and support, with a broad focus on all aspects of the university life, such as academic achievements, study administration, housing, community life, peer relations and independency. In our support provision we strongly cooperate with university citizens (e.g.: academics) and other university organisations (e.g.: dormitories, libraries, student self-government). Our goal is to create an environment in which neurodiversity is celebrated and all students can fulfil their true potential. The services provided for the students are built along a threefold pillar: individual, problem-focused support and counselling; social-communication skills training group, and a peer support system. Periods of transitions and the social context of studies are special focus areas. Education of university staff and creating a safe and inclusive social and physical environment is also amongst our objectives.

Our support system is becoming more and more popular amongst high school students and becoming a main selection criterion for the students when deciding about higher education. The process of service development is continuous and flexibly adapting to the needs of the students