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PRIORITY DIRECTIONS OF UKRAINE'S INTEGRATION INTO THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL AND INNOVATIVE SPACE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Abstract. *The article is devoted to the significant topic of European integration of the Ukrainian education and science system in difficult conditions of Russia planned military aggression against Ukraine. A brief retrospective analysis of the relations between Ukraine and the EU over the last three decades was made. Attention was focused on the priority of the European vector of development of the national economy, and therefore the sphere of education, science and innovation. The statistical data describing the current state of the educational infrastructure of Ukraine, which suffered significant destruction as a result of war crimes of Russia, were given. The main measures taken by the team of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the EU partners to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the educational process for Ukrainian refugee students abroad were described. Several EU initiatives were outlined to support Ukrainian students, teachers and researchers in the conditions of war, in particular the ERA4Ukraine portal, MSCA4Ukraine program and others. A new project of Ukrainian Educational Hubs, which implements the concept of lifelong learning for the development of the human capital of Ukraine was demonstrated. Such educational centres offer, inter alia, the opportunity to study IT and working professions, acquire the most demanded skills of professional growth, improve the Ukrainian and English languages, receive psychological support, etc. It is emphasized that an important component of the process of integration of Ukraine into the European educational and innovative space is the digital component. Some examples of successful digitalization in the sphere of education and science are given, including such national systems as the software and hardware complex «Automated Information Complex of Educational Management», System of Automation of Inclusive Resource Centres, Ukrainian Research Information System, etc. The list of the most successful current research information systems in European countries was presented. The importance of financial assistance and support provided by European countries through diversification of funding was stressed. Proposals on the necessity of intensification of European integration processes in the sphere of education and science of Ukraine and strengthening international cooperation in the field of research and innovation were submitted.*

Keywords: *education and science of Ukraine, educational infrastructure, European integration, international cooperation, Russian-Ukrainian war.*

JEL classification: I20, I28.

DOI: 10.32987/2617-8532-2022-4-5-16.

Ukrainian authorities demonstrated their strategic direction of European integration as early as the mid-1990s. A retrospective analysis of the development of relations between Ukraine and the EU shows that relationships between the countries date back to the proclamation of independence of Ukraine in 1991. In particular, in December 1991 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, as the representative of the EU Presidency, in his letter on behalf of the European Union, officially recognized the independence of Ukraine. Ukraine's commitment to building relations with the European Union was first documented in the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of July 2, 1993 «On the main directions of the foreign policy of Ukraine». Subsequently, Ukraine's strategic course for European integration was confirmed and elaborated in the Strategy for Ukraine's Integration into the EU (approved on June 11, 1998), and the Program for the Integration of Ukraine into the EU (approved on September 14, 2000). The next important stage of bilateral relations was the ratification of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU in 2014, which officially entered into force on September 1, 2017. This international legal document at the treaty and legal level consolidated the transition of Ukraine-EU relations from partnership and cooperation to political unification and economic integration. In 2019, the Constitution of Ukraine for the first time formalized the course of European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

A truly historic moment was the qualitatively new stage of relations between Ukraine and the EU in 2022,

when on June 23, representatives of all 27 EU countries voted to grant Ukraine the status of candidate for EU membership. Until this day, Ukraine has passed through a rather long and difficult time, numerous reforms were carried out in various spheres of life, but the unconditional push to join the European family was the brutal invasion of the territory of sovereign Ukraine by the Russian army and the attempt to annex its territory on February 24, 2022 (immediately on the 5th day after the invasion of Russian troops Ukraine applied for membership in the EU). Thus, for the first time in its history, the EU gave the green light for European integration to a war-torn country with part of its territory temporarily occupied.

Ukraine's status as a candidate for membership in the EU, in particular, gives grounds to assert that Ukraine has sufficient human capital, education, research, innovation and future achievements in this field. Moreover, among Ukrainian society, support for European integration processes has grown significantly since the beginning of Russia's armed aggression and continues to be at a high level. Thus, recent polls conducted by the sociological group «Rating» showed that more than 80% of Ukrainians surveyed support joining the EU and NATO, and 86% of respondents would support Ukraine's accession to the European Union in case of a referendum. It is important that support for EU accession is unanimous among representatives of all macroregions of Ukraine and age groups [1].

Issues of European integration of Ukrainian education and science have been the subject of numerous studies over the years, namely, Kharazishvili Y. et al. [2], Rubel O. & Zhikhareva A. [3],

Matyushenko I. [4], Kuzior A. et al. [5], Pidorycheva I. [6] and others. A number of scientific monographs are devoted to the topic of European integration [7–9]. In particular, in the monograph [10], Ukrainian researchers together with colleagues from Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland provide analytical assessments of the state of formation of a common European educational and scientific space.

Despite the existence of numerous scientific works devoted to various aspects of the European integration processes of Ukrainian education and science, today it is also important to study this issue in the context of the current global challenges, namely in view of the large-scale Russian invasion of the territory of independent Ukraine. Hence, the purpose of this article is to study the key aspects of Ukraine's integration into the European educational and innovation space in the context of Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

A well-known Latin proverb says: «*Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur*» which is translated as «a friend in need is a friend indeed». It is true that when Russia's full-scale unprovoked armed aggression against Ukraine began, Ukrainians realized that they were not alone, but an important member of the European family. For instance, unprecedented support had been provided to thousands of Ukrainian refugee students and their basic needs had been met, among which the right to education played an equally important role. Thus, thousands of Ukrainian children gained access to quality educational services (at the beginning of March 2022, there were nearly 700,000 forcibly displaced school-age students

abroad; however, as of August, 4,5% of them had returned to Ukraine). At the same time, a large number of teaching staff and researchers were forced to leave for safer places abroad (since the beginning of the school year 2022/23 more than 3,500 of them returned to Ukraine and continue to teach, but another 13,000 are outside the country) [11].

In recent years, on the basis of the best practices of educational reforms in EU countries, Ukraine has carried out a number of educational reforms aimed primarily at optimizing domestic educational institutions, improving their potential and the quality of educational services provided. However, educational institutions and teachers themselves became for the Russian invaders not a random target, the occupiers deliberately destroyed everything related to the education and patriotic training of the free Ukrainian nation (even children have not been spared, as official statistics show that since the beginning of the war more than 200 children have been reported missing, more than 400 – killed, more than 800 – injured, more than 8,000 – deported).

As mentioned above, the educational infrastructure of Ukraine has suffered and continues to endure massive destruction. Thus, more than 2,500 educational institutions were damaged by bombing and shelling, and at least 300 of them were completely destroyed during the half-year of the aggressor's invasion of Ukraine (actually nearly 50% of all educational institutions are schools). Fig. 1 illustrates a map showing the number of destroyed and damaged schools in the regions of Ukraine as of August 20, 2022. From the figure below, it can be seen that the greatest destruction

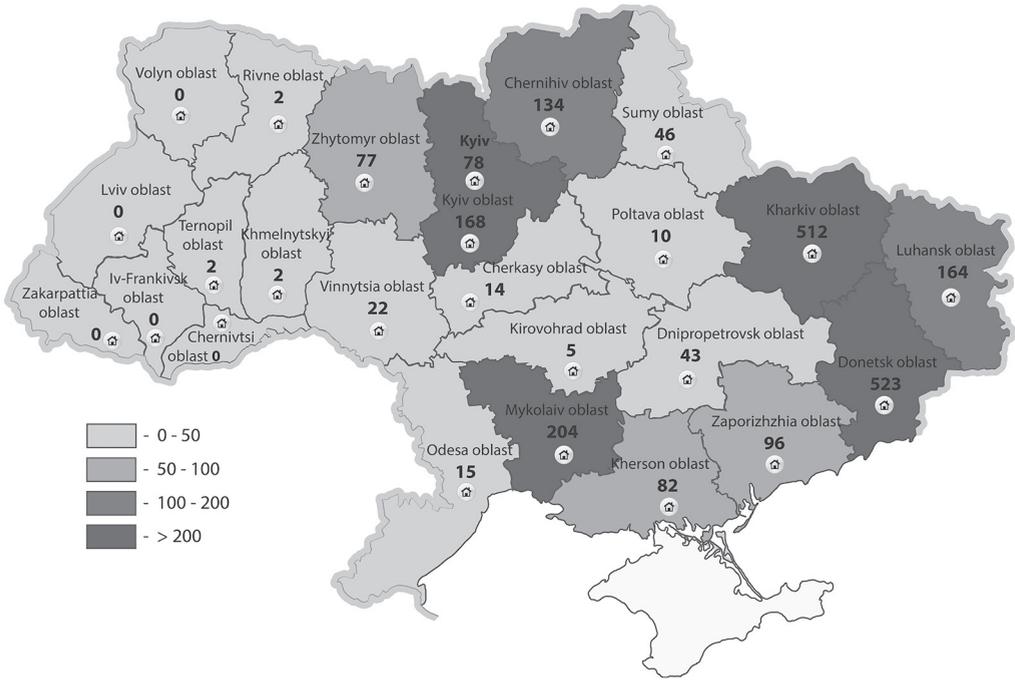


Figure 1. Information on the number of damaged and completely destroyed educational institutions as a result of the russian attack on Ukraine as of August 20, 2022

Created by the authors based on [12].

of the educational infrastructure was recorded in the territories where active hostilities have been or are continuing, namely in the eastern, south-eastern and north-eastern parts of Ukraine.

In these difficult conditions of the russian-Ukrainian war, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU), as the central executive body responsible to society for the sustainable and innovative development of the education and science system of Ukraine at the national, European and global levels, has done and continues to do everything possible to organize the continuity and safety of the educational process for Ukrainian pupils and students on the territory of Ukraine, as well as for all refugee students abroad. For this reason, a series of

online meetings were organized with European Ministers of Education to discuss priority steps for assistance to Ukraine, during which the parties discussed the following issues [11]:

- provision of educational services to forcibly evacuated citizens of Ukraine, creation of the necessary conditions for distance learning on the Ukrainian curricula (e.g., All-Ukrainian Online School platform);
- integration of Ukrainian refugee students into the education system of European countries, in particular, the opportunity to enrol acquired knowledge, skills, assessments and mutual recognition in the education systems of the EU and Ukraine;
- psychological support and socialization of students in EU countries;

- organization of temporary examination locations for the basic and additional sessions of the national multi-subject test within the admission campaign for the 2022/23 school year;

- directions for diversification of financial instruments of assistance to the Ukrainian education system, as well as strengthening cooperation and participation in joint international scientific projects;

- implementation of student academic exchange and mobility programs, etc.

Another important topic of bilateral meetings was the termination of cooperation with russian organizations in the field of research, science and innovation, in which Europe confirmed its absolute agreement with Ukraine.

Against the background of the full-scale russian invasion of Ukraine, European partners offer modern European tools to support Ukrainian schoolchildren, students, teachers, scientists and all staff of science and education, in particular:

- European Commission launched the ERA4Ukraine portal to provide information and support services to Ukrainian scientists forced to go abroad due to the war. The portal brings together initiatives at the level of the EU, individual countries and non-governmental organizations. The portal provides information on recognition of diplomas, current vacancies, social assistance, housing offers for scientists and their families, etc. [11; 13];

- Science4Refugees and the EURAXESS portal provide refugee research internships, part-time and full-time jobs, and access to the European Research Community.

Ukrainian researchers have the right to take advantage of the initiative Science4Refugees without the need to have refugee status [11; 14];

- Ukrainian institutions are granted free access to full-text electronic resources available within the Research4Life project (in particular, Dimensions – a scientometric platform from the «Digital Science» company, Scopus – one of the largest referral databases of scientific citations from the «Elsevier» company, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (PQDT) – the world’s most comprehensive collection of multi-disciplinary dissertations and theses from the company «ProQuest»). During the half-year 2022, more than 500 Ukrainian institutions exercised their right and registered on this resource, while the number of databases on the Research4Life platform for Ukrainian researches increased to 40 [11; 15];

- a new fellowship scheme MSCA4Ukraine Programme of the European Commission was launched for displaced researchers from Ukraine: «This support will enable displaced researchers to continue their work at academic and non-academic organisations in the EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries while maintaining their connections to research and innovation communities in Ukraine» [16];

- Council of Europe has created a special page for the adaptation of Ukrainians to European educational standards «Education in time of crisis». Language learning, recognition of qualifications and training are among the main tools that facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees from Ukraine [11; 17];

• European Center for Modern Languages at the Council of Europe has created a website to support the linguistic integration of immigrants from Ukraine. The site presents tools for children’s adaptation to the new environment and schools. Some materials were developed specifically for the new realities that arose as a result of the aggression of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine; others are adapted from a toolkit for adults developed within the Council of Europe’s Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM) project [11; 18].

During the full-scale Russian invasion of the territory of Ukraine, the question of creating an educational space friendly to children and adults arose. Thus, on the initiative of the MESU, the Institute of Education Content Modernization and the Association of

Innovative and Digital Education, the project of Ukrainian Educational Hubs was implemented, which realizes the concept of Life Long Learning for the human capital development of Ukraine. The project aims to educate children and adults for successful careers. It should be noted that the project shares the principles of the global initiative of the World Bank «Human Capital Development Project» [19]. Educational hubs offer, among other things, the opportunity to study IT and working professions, acquire the most demanded skills for professional growth, improve Ukrainian and English languages, receive psychological support, etc. As of September 2022, 16 hubs (fig. 2), of which 10 are located in Ukraine, five in the EU and one in the UK, have already been successfully operating. The functioning of hubs within Ukraine and



Figure 2. Network of Ukrainian Educational Hubs as of September 2022

Source: [19].

abroad, in addition to stated purposes, has also certain regional features. Educational hubs located in the territory of Ukraine, primarily designed to help Ukrainians realize their potential in their own country and stop the massive outflow of Ukrainian citizens abroad. Educational hubs, depending on the characteristics of the countries and the needs of the refugees, also have certain characteristics, but one of the main tasks of these centres is also to prevent the gap between the Ukrainian refugees and their homeland, education and social and cultural activities. The expansion of the network of educational hubs is continuing and new locations are expected to open soon.

An important component of the process of Ukraine's integration into the European educational research and innovation space is the digital component. In conditions of war, it was important to provide uninterrupted functioning of the software and technological complexes and local educational databases in the field of education and research. For instance, the SSI «Institute of Educational Analytics» is a technical administrator of two national systems as SHC «AIKOM» (software and hardware complex «Automated information complex of educational management» –an online system of EMIS grade for preschool, out-of-school, school and vocational education), and AS «IRC» (a system of automation of inclusive resource centres, responsible for providing a comprehensive assessment of children with special educational needs, providing them with the necessary support and more), so their uninterrupted operation was one of the most important tasks that were successfully solved.

On the initiative of the MESU, the Directorate of Science and Innovation of the MESU, and the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine, in August 2022, the beta version of the national «Ukrainian Research Information System» (URIS system) was presented. The URIS system is a new multifunctional information and telecommunication platform that provides collection, formation, processing, storage, use of data and information in the field of scientific and technical activities of Ukraine, as well as automation of procedures and processes of interaction of subjects and users of the system [11; 20]. Among the main functions of the URIS system is the aggregation of data on the sphere of scientific and technical activity of Ukraine; data integration, its presentation and provision of analytical tools for users to explore it; aggregation of information useful for domestic scientists, employees of scientific institutions and HEIs on a single platform, etc.

It should be noted that the world analogues of such CRIS (current research information system) systems are the following: Information on research in Finland (Research.fi, <https://research.fi/en/>), Current Research Information System in Norway (CRIStin, <https://app.cristin.no/>), National Academic Research and Collaborations Information System (NARCIS, <https://www.narcis.nl/?Language=en>) in the Netherlands, Research Portal of Catalonia in Spain (PRC, <https://portalrecerca.csuc.cat/?locale=en>), Slovenian Current Research Information System (SICRIS, <http://www.sicris.si/public/jqm/cris.aspx?lang=eng&opdescr=home>), PolyU Institutional Research Archive of the

Hong Kong Polytechnic University in China (PIRA, <https://ira.lib.polyu.edu.hk/>) and others.

Financial assistance from international partners is no less important instrument to support Ukrainian R&D under martial law [21]. Thus, in March 2022, the United Nations global fund for education – the ECW («Education Cannot Wait») Foundation approved a \$5 million grant «First Emergency Response» to meet critical education needs as a result of russian invasion. The funds were allocated to the UNICEF and Save the Children Quick Response Budget and used to overcome immediate short-term calls (e.g., purchase of laptops and repair of shelters in schools, etc.) [22].

Ukraine and Finland continued to implement the project «Finnish support for Ukrainian school reform» until 2023, which provides financial contributions for educational reform of up to 6 million euros and up to 2 million euros from the EU. Another example of financial assistance is the redistribution of funds for 2023 within the implementation of the Erasmus+: 200 million euros from the budget of this program for 2021–2027 will be redistributed to support Ukrainian students and teachers next year; and 25 million euros – for scholarships for Ukrainian researchers due to a new initiative led by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, which will allow 200 researchers to continue their research for two years at the university of the EU member state or a country that is an Associated Country for Horizon Europe. Another example of financial aid was the statement of the European Commission in September 2022 of 100 million euros for the restoration of schools in Ukraine that had been

damaged or completely destroyed by russian missiles and bombs.

Hence, from the first days of russia's violent invasion of Ukraine, the international scientific and European community strongly condemned the russian intervention and expressed its indisputable support for Ukraine. In addition, a number of international donors and partners, in solidarity with Ukraine, have initiated various types of support and financial assistance mechanisms to address the urgent challenges facing education during the war (in particular, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the United Nations Nations on Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children International, etc). For example, in May 2022 the MESU together with UNICEF and SSI «Institute of Educational Analytics» conducted an all-Ukrainian survey of communities on the educational needs of IDPs [23]. Based on the results of the survey, UNICEF funded 80 dollars per displaced teacher and provided funds for laptops.

This study was an attempt to provide a brief overview of some successful initiatives and projects implemented in the field of education and science in the context of integration with the EU, notwithstanding the continued active military activities on the territory of Ukraine. On the basis of the analysis we have developed some proposals that will contribute to the European integration of Ukrainian education and science, in particular: continuation of the initiated reforms in the field of education and science of Ukraine based on the best European experience; raising the level of English language proficiency and

digital skills of students and teachers; development of a network of educational hubs both within Ukraine and abroad; attraction of foreign investments in reconstruction of damaged educational infrastructure; updating of the roadmap for the integration of the scientific and innovative system of Ukraine into the European Research Area; strengthening international cooperation and increasing the participation of Ukrainian scientists in EU research and innovation programs (e.g., Erasmus, Horizon Europe etc.); commercialization of intellectual property and intensification of cooperation between science and business; increasing the publication activity of Ukrainian researchers in scientific journals, which are included to the Scopus and Web of Science databases, etc. It is also important to take into account the need for psychological assistance to participants in the educational process both during hostilities and after the war. At the same

time, it is important that the Ukrainian education and science system, in the process of European integration, preserve its unique features, including a rich cultural and historical heritage.

Therefore, regardless of the unprecedented cruelty of the Russian aggressors towards the Ukrainian people, these events have led to the acceleration of the processes of integration of Ukraine into the European educational and innovative space, strengthening the harmonization of Ukrainian legislation with EU directives, increasing the number of international grants and cooperation between Ukraine and Europe. The EU fully supports Ukraine and has already taken important steps, including financial support for the development of the national education and science system. However, this is a much more multifaceted and comprehensive topic, especially during the war, so it will be the focus of our next study.

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ПРІОРИТЕТНІ НАПРЯМИ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ УКРАЇНИ ДО ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО ОСВІТНЬОГО ТА ІННОВАЦІЙНОГО ПРОСТОРУ В УМОВАХ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Анотація. Широкомасштабне вторгнення російської федерації на територію незалежної України зумовило появу екзистенційних викликів для нашої держави, її демократії та свободи, безпекової ситуації й виживання української нації як повноправного члена Європейської спільноти. У складній ситуації опинилася також вітчизняна система освіти і науки, гостро постало питання збереження життя дітей та освітян, забезпечення безперервності й сталості освітнього процесу, цілісності освітньо-наукової інфраструктури. Російська збройна агресія проти України передбачала її швидку капітуляцію та знищення українського суверенітету, однак у результаті тільки пришвидшила процеси європейської інтеграції, у т. ч. у сфері освіти і науки. Саме питанням інтеграції вітчизняної освіти й науки до європейського освітнього та інноваційного простору присвячено цю статтю. Зокрема, окреслено основні напрямки посилення співпраці між Україною та ЄС із метою розвитку людського капіталу як основної місії освіти та зміцнення економічної безпеки. Акцент зроблено на проектах, що започатковані Міністерством освіти і науки України, вітчизняними інституціями та європейськими партнерами для задоволення першочергових потреб сфери освіти, науки й інновацій. Підкреслено, що важливу роль у відновленні освітнього процесу як у межах України, так і за кордоном відіграла міжнародна підтримка та залучення фінансових інструментів ЄС. Наведено пропозиції щодо необхідності інтенсифікації євроінтеграційних процесів у сфері освіти і науки України, посилення міжнародної співпраці в галузі досліджень та інновацій.

Ключові слова: сфера освіти і науки України, освітня інфраструктура, євроінтеграція, міжнародна співпраця, російсько-українська війна.

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