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INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES INTO THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SPACE

Globalization, academic mobility, and shared global challenges stimulate active international cooperation in higher education. This cooperation aims to create effective university education at a global level, contributing to European and global integration. The university, as a unique socio-cultural phenomenon that combines scientificity, rationality, and the ideals of freedom and democracy (according to V. Melnyk), plays a key role in shaping the values of the European community [2, p. 17]. The European Union is actively working to create a European Education Area by 2025, which is considered a significant element of European integration in education.

On June 23, 2022, the European Council made a historic decision to grant Ukraine the status of a candidate for membership in the European Union. This decision was a significant step on Ukraine's path to European integration and recognition of its aspiration to become a full member of the European community. The European Commission's conclusion, which preceded this decision, noted the high level of development of Ukraine's education system. In particular, it emphasized the almost 100% literacy rate, the good results of Ukrainian students in the PISA-2018 international study, and the significant amount of funding for the education sector (5.7% of GDP in 2021) [4, p. 10].

On February 1, 2023, the European Commission published an Analytical Report on Ukraine's application for EU membership, which provided a detailed assessment of the state of integration of Ukrainian education into EU law (EU *acquis*). The report confirmed that the spheres of education and culture in Ukraine have reached a

certain level of readiness for integration, and the development of the education system as a whole is in line with the goals and policies of the EU, especially in the field of vocational training and qualifications [4, p. 10].

The European Union has set common goals and priorities for the development of education in the European Education Area Strategic Framework 2030. This framework serves as a guideline for all EU member states and candidate countries, including Ukraine. To align education policies and practices among EU countries, the open method of coordination is used. This means that countries jointly define goals and priorities, but each country has the freedom to choose the ways to achieve them, taking into account its national specificities and context.

Thus, granting Ukraine the status of a candidate for EU membership and the European Commission's positive assessment of its education system confirm that Ukraine is moving in the right direction towards European integration. This opens up new opportunities for the development of education and science in Ukraine and strengthens its ties with the European community.

One of the key aspects of this cooperation is increasing the compatibility and mutual recognition of national education systems. This allows students and teachers to move freely between countries, to receive education and work abroad without unnecessary obstacles. Such mobility promotes the exchange of knowledge, experience, and ideas, enriching the educational process and scientific research. Experts believe that the creation of a European education area is a key element of European integration. This will allow European countries to join forces in the field of education and science, create common standards and approaches, and ensure high-quality education for all European citizens [1].

The European education area will also contribute to the development of international cooperation in the field of education and science, attract investments in research and innovation, and increase the competitiveness of European education on a global level. This will create conditions for the development of highly qualified specialists capable of solving complex global problems and ensuring the sustainable development of society [3]. A creative understanding

and generalization of global trends in education have led to a gradual transformation of national education systems. This process is aimed at developing a unified European educational and scientific space based on new worldview and value foundations.

The strategic goal of integrating Ukraine's higher education into the European space is to create and implement an educational process model that harmoniously combines the best Ukrainian and foreign scientific and pedagogical traditions. This means not simply copying foreign models, but adapting and integrating them, taking into account national characteristics and needs.

Particular attention should be paid to combining the humanistic traditions of Ukrainian pedagogy with advanced foreign experience in educating creative individuals. This means developing students' ability to think critically, act independently, be initiative, and be responsible. Such an educational model will contribute to the development of a dynamic, mobile, and competitive individual capable of successfully realizing themselves in the modern world.

Ukraine's integration into the European educational space and the active development of partnerships with other countries have confirmed its commitment to the fundamental values of global culture. Ukraine demonstrates its adherence to parliamentarism, the protection of human rights and national minorities, liberalization, freedom of movement, freedom of education, and other fundamental principles of a democratic society. This integration process involves not only the implementation of European norms and standards in education, science, and technology but also the active exchange of experience and knowledge with European partners. Ukraine seeks to share its cultural, scientific, and technological achievements with the EU while adopting advanced experience and innovative approaches [1, p. 46].

Such interaction contributes not only to improving the quality of education and science in Ukraine but also to strengthening its European cultural identity. Integration into the common European intellectual, educational, and scientific-technical space opens up new opportunities for Ukraine's development and cooperation, allowing Ukrainian students, teachers, and scientists to participate

in international projects, exchange experiences and knowledge with colleagues from other countries.

This fosters the development of a new generation of Ukrainian specialists who possess not only deep professional knowledge but also European values and a worldview. They become a driving force for the country's development, capable of implementing innovations, creating new jobs, and increasing Ukraine's competitiveness on the global market.

Therefore, integration into the European educational space is not only a strategic choice for Ukraine but also a crucial step towards its sustainable development and prosperity. It is an investment in the country's future, which will bear fruit in the form of a highly educated and competitive society capable of actively participating in the development of Europe. The creation of a unified European educational space does not mean the leveling of national characteristics. On the contrary, it contributes to their preservation and development, as each country brings its unique contribution to the common educational space. This creates conditions for mutual enrichment and development of educational systems and also contributes to the development of common values and understanding between different cultures.

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