

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE PROCESS OF REFORMING THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF UKRAINE

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Karpenko O. O., Gorban A. V., Kovbatiuk M. V., Shevchuk V. O., Kovbatiuk G. O. The Role of International Cooperation in the Process of Reforming the Higher Education System of Ukraine

The main purpose of this research work is to substantiate the need for international cooperation of Ukrainian higher education institutions as an important factor in reforming and modernizing the national education system, its successful integration into the global educational space and increasing competitiveness in the market of educational services. The basic method in the study is system approach. Methods of scientific abstraction, analysis and synthesis are used to form a theoretical synthesis and conclusions, graphic-analytical method is used for a clear illustration of the economic phenomena and processes under study. Internationalization of higher education is one of the main directions of the new conception of higher education reform in Ukraine. New demands and needs in the market of educational services, growing competition between higher education institutions, implementation of innovations in the educational process require changes in approaches to reform in the field of higher education in order to improve quality. International cooperation in the State University of Infrastructure and Technologies is considered as a process of formation and development of equal and mutually beneficial partnerships between educational institutions of different countries. International cooperation will give the State University of Infrastructure and Technologies the opportunity to participate in international projects in an equal and full manner, increase the number of foreign students, invite foreign lecturers to become a fully recognized university in the world, which provides high quality education.

Keywords: higher educational institutions, higher education system, directions of reforming higher education, international cooperation, components of the higher education reform conception in Ukraine.

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Карпенко О. О., Горбань А. В., Ковбатиук М. В., Шевчук В. О., Ковбатиук Г. О. Роль міжнародного співробітництва у процесі реформування системи вищої освіти України

Основною метою цієї дослідницької роботи є обґрунтування необхідності міжнародної співпраці українських закладів вищої освіти як важливого чинника реформування та модернізації національної системи освіти, її успішної інтеграції у світовий освітній простір і підвищення конкурентоздатності на ринку освітніх послуг. Базовим методом у дослідженні є системний підхід. З метою формування теоретичного узагальнення та висновків використано методи наукової абстракції, аналізу та синтезу; для наочної ілюстрації досліджуваних економічних явищ і процесів –

графічно-аналітичний метод. Інтернаціоналізація вищої освіти є одним із основних напрямків нової концепції реформування вищої освіти України. Нові запити та потреби на ринку освітніх послуг, зростання конкуренції між закладами вищої освіти, впровадження нововведень в освітній процес вимагають зміни підходів до реформування у сфері вищої освіти з метою підвищення якості. Міжнародне співробітництво в Державному університеті інфраструктури та технологій розглядається як процес формування та розвитку рівноправних і взаємовигідних партнерських відносин між освітніми установами різних країн. Міжнародне співробітництво надасть Державному університету інфраструктури та технологій можливість рівноправної та повноцінної участі в міжнародних проектах, збільшить кількість іноземних студентів, залучить іноземних викладачів, щоб стати повністю визнаним у світі університетом, який забезпечує високу якість освіти.

Ключові слова: заклади вищої освіти, система вищої освіти, напрями реформування вищої освіти, міжнародне співробітництво, складові концепції реформування вищої освіти в Україні.

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The effectiveness of the functioning of the education system depends on the system and the quality of its management at all levels. New knowledge, new forms and types of service delivery, training and retraining of specialists in new areas, modern interactive forms of education, cooperation in commercialization of innovations are just some points on list of factors that determine the international competitiveness of educational services.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is to implement the project "Improvement of higher education in Ukraine for the sake of results" during five years. The goals of the project are the following: to improve the quality of higher education and to increase its compliance with the needs of the labor market and the continuity of education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank is to cooperate with Ukraine in the financing of this project (in the amount of 200 million dollars) to improve the efficiency, quality and transparency of the higher education system, as well as its support in provid-

ing better technical and digital equipment of the higher education system to organize students' training [1].

In this context, it is important to provide new management methods in the education system, the main provisions of which should be reflected in the concept of development.

A study of the problems of reforming higher education in Ukraine and the process of its integration into the global educational space are described in the works of many scientists. For example, a significant contribution to the study of the European space of higher education, the development strategies of educational systems of the countries of the world, the activities of European and world higher education institutions are made by T. M. Dyman, O. A. Bonkovskiy, A. H. Vovkohon [2], D. S. Kucherenko, O. V. Martyniuk [3], H. F. Khoruzhyi [4]. The integration of higher education in Ukraine in the global educational space is studied by such leading domestic scientists as I. V. Artomov [5], O. L. Galtsova and M. I. Dmytrychenko [6], K. O. Chernova [7] and others.

However, despite a significant number of publications, the issue of international cooperation as an important area of reforming the national education system, topical as it may be, has not been sufficiently studied and thus requires further development.

The fundamental position of modern economic science in the development of higher education makes up the theoretical basis of the article. The analysis of foreign and domestic literature is carried out in the area of generalization and systematization of approaches of scientists to reform the higher education system of Ukraine.

To achieve this goal, a number of scientific and special methods of research are used, interrelated and consistently applied in the work, namely: scientific abstraction is used to form a theoretical synthesis and conclusions; analysis and synthesis help to study international projects (by the example of the functioning of State University of Infrastructure and Technologies – SUIT); graphical and analytical methods suggest illustrations for the issues discussed in the article. With the help of scientific concretization it was possible to better reveal the state of the chosen issue, since the necessity of international cooperation of higher education institutions as an important way of reforming the educational system of Ukraine is substantiated. The systemic approach is a basic one in the study.

The results of fundamental researches of Ukrainian and foreign scientists on the chosen subject, published in monographs and periodicals, as well as the authors' own developments, make up the information base for the research.

The *purpose* of the article is to determine the role of international cooperation in the process of reforming higher education system of Ukraine.

In July 2014, the "Education" Strategic Consultative Group drafted the "Concepts for the Development of Education in Ukraine for the period 2015–2025", which contained a roadmap for educational reform and suggested a number of actions mostly relating to higher education institutions in the context of educational management reform.

Work on the development of the concept of reforming higher education is continuing. On December 24, 2019 the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine introduced a new reform on financing and managing universities, which began its operation on January 1, 2020.

Its main provisions are reflected in the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2021–2031 [8].

The new concept of reforming higher education has several main areas, namely: changing approaches to the distribution of budgetary funds and financing in general; managerial autonomy; updating the rules for working with heads of universities; creating new supervisory boards; and expanding adult education opportunities.

A new formula for financing higher education is among the first innovations. The main idea is to remove the direct dependence of university funding on the number of students, and send money to the best institutions, which will be evaluated by specific indicators. Universities will receive 80% of the budget guaranteed for basic expenses, and the remaining funds will be distributed depending on a number of indicators, e.g.: the significance of a university, its position in international rankings, the funds attracted from alternative sources of financing, and the like. The number of students will stop being the only or main criterion for the distribution of funds. As a result, universities will have more motivation to increase their own effectiveness [8].

These criteria increasingly emphasize the need for higher education institutions to reach a qualitatively new level of development and international recognition, which will result in a worthy place in international rankings.

Various world rankings of higher education institutions are compiled on the basis of a large amount of data on the functioning of universities and, thus, take into account almost all areas and aspects of their activities. Unfortunately, domestic universities rarely appear in such rankings. For example, the well-known world ranking QS World University Rankings, calculated according to the methodology of the British consulting company Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), listed four higher education institutions of Ukraine in 2013; from 2014 on their number has grown to six. Six universities entered this ranking in 2019 [9].

For the first time in history, in 2015/16 two Ukrainian universities were included in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. In the 2019/20 ranking, already six Ukrainian universities entered it [10].

The top 2000 Webometrics Ranking of the World Universities rankings (also known as Ranking Web of Universities) included two Ukrainian universities in 2017 and 2019 [11].

Thus, we can state a rather low level of presence of higher educational institutions of Ukraine in the rankings of the world's best universities, since they are far behind universities in advanced countries by many performance indicators. Only the leading universities of Ukraine occupy certain positions in these rankings.

In order for a university to meet the new criteria that are taken into account in the financing formula and to receive sufficient financial funding, great changes should be made both in the educational process and in educational management. In our opinion, the main ways of forming the educational environment include the following (*Fig. 1*) [12].

In the educational process they are: the implementation of the dual education system; regular training of lecturers and their compliance with licensing requirements; strengthening international cooperation and creating a system of external relations of the university at the international level.

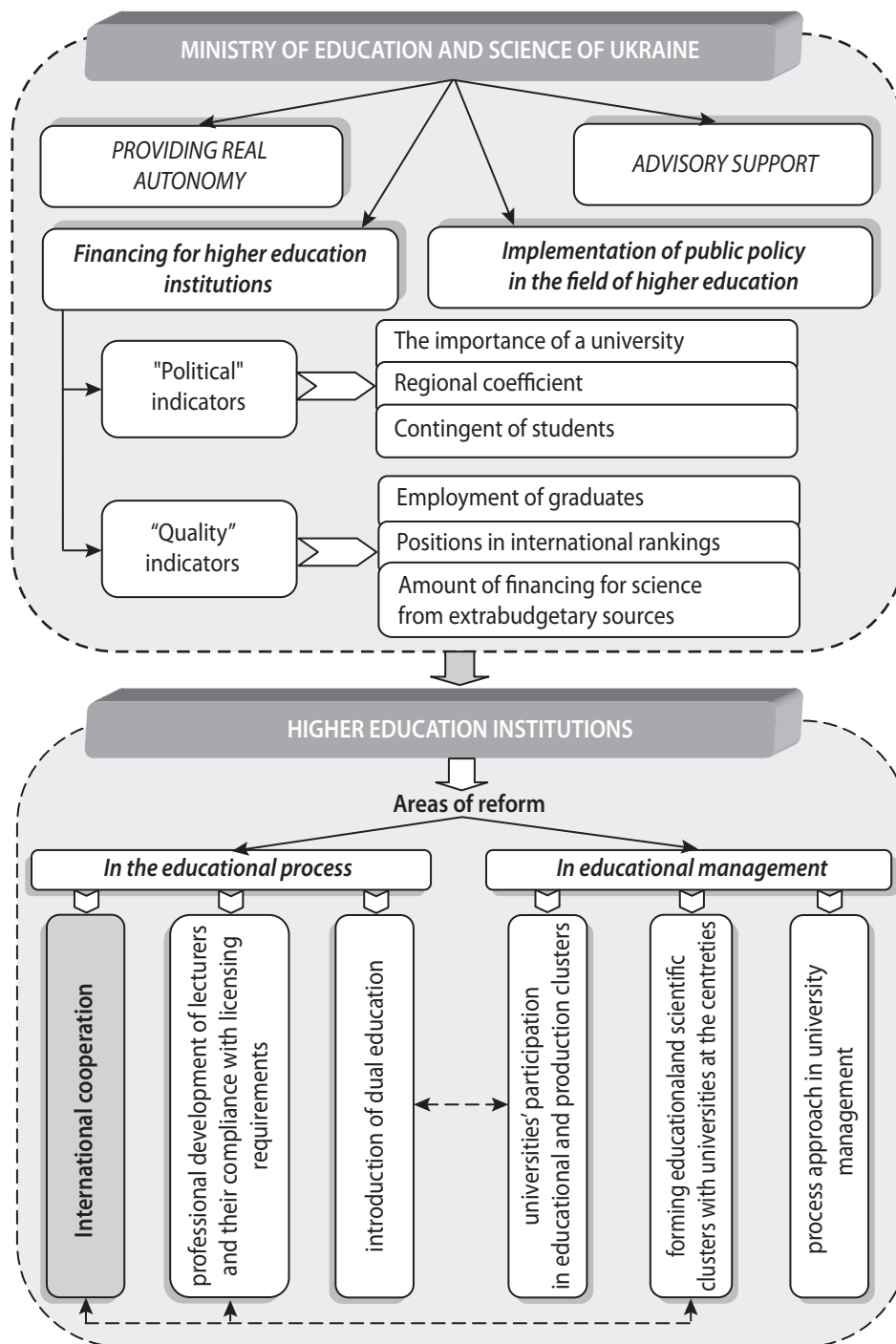


Fig. 1. Components of higher education reform concepts in Ukraine

Source: developed by the authors.

In educational management they are: process approach to university management; creation of educational and scientific clusters with a university in the centre; participation of universities in both educational and production clusters.

One of the important development areas in education is the international cooperation of universities and the export of educational services whose main task is to integrate the educational system of Ukraine into the world educational space. To achieve this

goal, it is necessary to choose an effective policy of promoting and shaping the image of the country, as a whole, and of certain universities, in particular.

International cooperation in the sphere of education is regulated by the law of Ukraine and is effected on the basis of international agreements and conventions. Since 1995, Ukraine has been actively cooperating with scientific and educational structures, such as UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Union and international educational associations [6]. From 2014 to July 2020, Ukrainian participants received 182 grants worth

31,830,000 euros. The total number of participations of Ukrainian organizations is 256 [13].

One of the key criteria for the success of any university in the world today is the level of its internationalization, meaning the level of its international activity, which can be estimated by analyzing participation in international projects. Such an assessment was carried out on the example of SUIT.

State University of Infrastructure and Technologies is a young and, at the same time, one of the oldest educational establishments in Kyiv. It was founded according to the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 151-p dated February 29, 2016, by uniting two capital universities – the Kyiv State Maritime Academy named after Hetman Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachnyi and the State Economic Technological University of Transport. Each institution has a similar, but its own origin. The history of creating and developing these universities reflects the history of water and rail transport, which always needed qualified specialists for its construction, development, and technological re-equipment [14].

Despite its young age, it already has its own history of international cooperation in the implementation of international projects.

Since 2013, SUIT has been involved in a number of projects. Among them one can name three projects of the Erasmus+ KA1 program focused on the implementation of academic mobility of students, educational and the professional program and staff in partnership with the following institutions: Latvian Maritime Academy (Riga, Latvia), specialty 271 "Sea and river transport"; Lithuanian Maritime Academy (Kaunas, Lithuan), specialty 271 "Sea and river transport"; Jan Długosz University (Poland, Czestochowa), specialties 081 "Law" and 121 "Software Engineering".

One can also name three projects of the Erasmus+ KA2 (Tempus) program aimed at developing the potential of higher education. The first project was Tempus project No. 544031-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-AT-Tempus-JPHES "Knowledge Transfer Unit – From Applied Research and Technology – Entrepreneurial Know-How Exchange to Development of Interdisciplinary Curricula Modules – KTU". Under the terms of this project SUIT Knowledge Transfer Unit was created and equipped with basic office equipment and rapid prototyping technology. The total price of the Equipment/services amounts 31.285,00 Euro [15]. Project 544031-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-AT-TEMPUS-JPHES "Knowledge Transfer Unit – From Applied Research and Technology – Entrepreneurial Know-How Exchange to Development of Interdisciplinary Curricula Modules" has been selected as a "success story" by the panel of experts from the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission. "Success stories" are finalised projects that have distinguished themselves by their impact, contribution to policy-making, innovative results and/or

creative approach and can be a source of inspiration for others. The selection of that project as a success story was made on the basis of rigorous criteria regarding the quality, relevance and results [16].

The second project is Erasmus+ KA2 project No. 598218-EPP-1-2018-1-PL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP "Crisis and Risks Engineering for Transport Services (CRENG)". The main project goal was to support the development of Crisis and Risks Engineering for transport services to ensure sustainability of Ukraine (UA), Azerbaijan (AZ) and Turkmenistan (TM) transport systems for their integration into Global transportation network. To contribute CRENG development in PCs the project was supposed to create the environment for education of high skilled specialists in line with labor market and according to EU best practices and Bologna process [17].

The third project was Erasmus+ KA2 project No. 610133-EPP-1-2019-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP "Academic Response to Hybrid Threats (WARN)". The general aim of the project was to fill the security skills gap across various professional domains to increase civil resilience to hybrid threats in Ukraine. This means that various societal and professional groups and individuals should be able to adequately cope with external stresses and disturbances caused by hybrid influence and to adapt to social, political and environmental changes [18].

The Ukraine Higher Education Leadership Development Program project "Internationalization Strategy of the State University of Infrastructure and Technologies" was administrated by the British Council, the Institute of Higher Education of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, and the UK Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. The main objective of the project was to develop the Internationalization Strategy of the newly established State University of Infrastructure and Technology and launch its implementation process [19].

In February 2021, SUIT joined the project "Norway – Ukraine. Professional adaptation. Integration into the state system" (NUPASS). The essence of the project is to retrain the target group of people in specialties that are in demand in the labor market of Ukraine, to assist project participants in social adaptation to living conditions in civil society. Currently, 16 universities have joined the project (15 Ukrainian ones and Norwegian NORD University). Vocational retraining of 29 people in the specialty "Business Management" is being conducted in SUIT [20].

So, active participation in international projects is an important area of international cooperation and, thus, an integral part of the reform of the higher education system in Ukraine.

CONCLUSIONS

Reforming the higher education system of Ukraine should be based on integration into the World Higher Education Area, together with the preservation and develop-

ment of the national achievements and progressive traditions, the latter being one of the fundamental principles of the state policy of Ukraine in the field of higher education. The main way of its implementation is the expansion of international cooperation and activation of Ukrainian universities' participation in international projects.

Therefore, it is advisable to form a system of international cooperation, taking into account the characteristics of each individual university. ■

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