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Higher Education in the European Integration



Summary

Features of the modern global education market and the process of integration into the European educational area are analyzed; and the key trends in shaping an effective education policy in the Ukraine are defined.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

In order to define the national educational priorities and contribute to the creation of a modernized model of higher education compliant with the European standards, the Ukraine joined the Bologna Process in May 2005. Note that widely controversial opinions have been given on this system of national higher education from conservative rationality and pragmatism to the rejection of its principles in general.

A problem that requires urgent solution is the gap between the degree of preparation in higher education in the Ukraine to adopt the informal principles of the Bologna process and the requirements on which it is based.

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RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Education is one of the most important factors on the path of integration into a united Europe, as the implementation of European standards in education will increase Ukrainians' European cultural identity and integration into the European intellectual and educational environment. In this context, what is urgently needed is the study of the historical milestones and context of the educational sector of the European Union, the analysis of which has been the subject of research by many foreign and Ukrainian scientists.

Today we can speak of a new kind of globalization of the global higher education market, in which the mass distribution of education is seen as a guarantee of a country's competitiveness in the new global economy. Therefore, a study of the trends and consequences of globalization of the world market of educational services for the educational system of the Ukraine is an important and urgent task.

ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Significant contributions have been made to the solution of this problem in the works of A. Egorov, N. Lavrychenko, O. Matviyenko, A. Sbruyevoyi, A. Dzhurynsky, A. Lyferova, J. Knight, L. Oderiya and others.

The actual problems of establishing a modern philosophical and educational paradigm of modernization and progress in higher education have been analyzed by V. Andruschenka, V. Astahovoyi, K. Astahovoyi, V. Viktorova, B. Hershunskoho, D. Dzvinchuka, A. Dzhurynskoho, M. Zhurovskoho, I. Zyazyuna, I. Kalenyuk, S. Klepka, K. Korsaka, V. Kremen, V. Kudina, V. Kushertsya, V. Luhovoho, M. Lukashevycha, V. Lutaya, M. Myhalchenka, O. Navrotskoho, S. Nikolayenko, V. Oharenka, V. Ohnev'yucca, L. Ryzhak, M. Rozova, M. Romanenka, P. Talanchuka, V. Shynkaruka and other scholars.

However, despite the availability of scientific publications on numerous reforms of the national higher education, a whole range of issues require further interpretation and analysis, and in particular, the consistency of the regulatory function of higher education is under substantial upgrade to the needs of the labour market. The problems of

formation and integration Ukrainian higher education system into the European educational space are worth the attention.

As a result of the above factors, the purpose of this article is defined as the analysis of the systemic reforms in higher education and the main directions of modernization to promote the creation of its national elite, focusing on social and economic growth and the development of democratic principles in the Ukraine along the national priorities of the 21st century.

PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN MATERIAL

Since 2005 the Ukraine was admitted to the European Union and continued to reform higher education in accordance with the Bologna Declaration. Therefore, the experience of European countries in this area is particularly important for the Ukraine.

The Eurydice Network centres released the following findings of a two-year study, conducted jointly with the European Commission's statistical agency Eurostat. The study entitled "Key figures of European education" analyzes secondary and higher education in 27 EU Member States in six thematic areas: context, structure, participation in education, resources, educational programmes and graduates.

The results of the study are mainly quantitative, the most interesting of them include the following:

1. The number of people below 19 years of age has steadily decreased in the EU between 1985 and 2005. By 2020, the population aged 5–9 years in the EU will decrease to 11% and the number of people aged 10–14 years in some European countries will shrink by 40%. In addition, over the next ten years, a high number of teachers will reach the retirement age in the EU (in six countries 40% of today's teachers will soon retire);

2. In most EU countries the duration of compulsory schooling is gradually increasing. This is done to provide students with all the necessary knowledge and skills;

3. More than 90% of the EU's population aged 3–19 years receive education;

4. Between 1998 and 2008 the number of people who participate in higher education in the EU increased to 25%. In 2006, the ratio of male

and female students was 100:123, and the majority of men specialized in technical studies, while most women specialised in the humanities;

5. In 16 countries higher education is fully or partially paid. However, in all countries there are opportunities for obtaining financial assistance for training;

6. Between 2001 and 2007, the EU allocated a broadly stable approximately 5.1% of GDP to education. In most countries, these funds are mainly spent on the secondary education system;

7. The educational spending per student was roughly twice the cost of a student's education;

8. In elementary and secondary education female teachers constitute the majority (60%), while in higher education they are a minority (less than 40%);

9. Between 2002 and 2007 the unemployment rate steadily decreased in the population aged 15–24 years.¹

The policy on education-related issues received impetus in 1971 at the official meeting of six Ministers of Education, where the first resolution on cooperation in the field of education was adopted. A report on the implementation of the ideas of the meeting was given to the European Commission by Professor Henri Janne including proposals on the areas of cooperation in the field of education (1973).

Since the second half of the 1980's the importance of human resources in the improvement of the national economies' competitiveness has been increasing in the EU. Within this framework an exchange of students started in 1986 to implement the Erasmus programme to promote cooperation between universities and enhance student mobility within the EU. While in 1987 about three thousand students participated in the programme, at present hundreds of thousands of students and scholars from thirty European countries study abroad by Erasmus scholarships.

Since 1995, Erasmus has also been made part of the Socrates programme, with a view to providing students with qualifications and diplomas that are recognized by all EU member states. For this purpose the following were introduced:

– European Credit Transfer System – ECTS, implemented as a special supplement to degrees, which describes the content, level and status of courses studied;

- European CV;
- EUROPASS.

Two years later (in 1989) the exchange programmes for training human resources was geographically extended within the framework of the Tempus programme, aimed at the implementation of the trans-

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European cooperation scheme for higher education, in particular with a view to restructuring the higher education sector in Central and Eastern Europe through the development of inter-university cooperation (exchanges between students and teachers). The first phase of the Tempus programme (which

started in 1990) was intended to implement the trans-European mobility scheme for university studies in Central and Eastern Europe. Tempus II (1994–1998) was aimed at expanding exchanges with the former USSR. The aim of Tempus III (2000–2006) was to promote the effective development of higher education systems in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the countries of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia through the convergence of cultures and experiences in democratic change.

The signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 opened a new stage in the development of educational strategies. Education in law was included in the joint strategy to prepare young people for adult life within the EU. The approved educational strategy is characterized by a refusal of the unification of educational policies of the Member States – the transposition of Community law and the content of education are their prerogatives. In accordance with its “principle of complementarities”, the EU is only allowed to support and complement the activities of the Member States in certain segments of education to enhance the “spirit of European membership.” These areas, according to the legislation, were included as follows:²

Improving the quality of education (Chapter 3, Article 149) by:

- development of the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching of foreign languages in the Member States;

- promoting the mobility of students / pupils and teachers through academic recognition of diplomas and timing of training;
- development of cooperation between educational institutions;
- facilitating the exchange of information and experience on common principles of functioning of the education systems of the Member States;

- promoting increased exchanges of young people and teachers;
- development of open and distance learning.

Development of the training system (Section 3, Article 150) by:

- optimization of systems training and qualification for the intensification of professional integration into the labour market;
- facilitating access to vocational training and facilitate mobility of teachers;

- promoting cooperation in training between educational institutions and companies;

- promoting the exchange of information and experience on issues common training in member countries.

Long-term cooperation between the European Commission and 145 leading universities in Europe allowed the formulation of the following basic principles of the development and implementation of European qualifications and degrees:

1. Philosophy of mutual trust.

2. Ability of educational structures to converge (through harmonization) at both national and international levels.

3. Expression of learning outcomes not in terms of time and in terms of loans that are tied to the results in the form of competencies.

4. Reality creation of a common system of ECTS (accounting) and credit accumulation.

5. Values and self-sufficiency of both levels of education: as a bachelor's degree and master's degree.

6. Consistency within the European educational space requirements for qualification as competencies.

7. Differences on the first or the second level of education may not exceed 25%.

8. Limitations grading scale loans: bachelor level programmes – from 180 to 240 credits, master's level program - from 90 to 120 credits, the number of loans in the annual programme – no more than 60.

9. Develop public, transparent and tiered performance indicators of educational achievement, as a condition of comparability of structures and degrees as part of the European qualifications framework is based on objective standards.

10. Coherence and feasibility of these principles as a result of political will and the hard work of all involved, particularly in the framework of the recognition of double and joint degrees.

The next stage of the educational strategy the EU started in the new millennium – the strategy acquired innovative character at the meeting of the European Council (Heads of State or Government of the EU) in Lisbon (March 2000), held in response to the challenges of the 21st century. The new strategic goal of the EU targeted the transformation the EU (by 2010) to “a competitive and socially integrated European knowledge society has formed the knowledge dynamic economy in the world, capable of sustainable development with the growth in jobs and to increasing social cohesion”.³

The document states that in order to build the most competitive economy in the world the EU Member States should:

- Reduce the number of young people who leave school too early, before secondary education, to 10%;
- halve the existing gender imbalance of graduates in mathematics, science and technology;
- ensure that the percentage of 24-25-year-old EU citizens with completed secondary education is not less than 85%;
- reduce the ratio of 15 year old people with insufficient skills in reading from 20 to 15.5 percent;
- increase the share of lifelong students to 12.5% of the adult working population (age group of 26-64 years) and at least to 10% in any country.

Obviously, the declared intentions require not only a radical transformation of the European economy, but also the effective modernization of social affairs – in this context, education is central to the EU’s strategy to produce quality human resources.

Thus, the main objectives that improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training in the EU, include:

- improvement of the quality and efficiency of education and training of teachers in the Member States “in the context of new requirements”, namely knowledge society.

- developing skills for the knowledge society;
- ensuring equal access to ICTs;
- increasing the proportion of persons who engage in technical and natural sciences;
- effective use of resources.

The development of skills for the knowledge society and the identified second component aims to improve the quality of education. It should be noted that the EU, recognizing this problem as a very high priority, has made a lot of effort, since 2000, at developing a unified list of basic skills for the community. The work was the result of the adoption in 2006 of the European reference system key competences for lifelong learning, which is recommended for the implementation of the national education system members. The system covers eight key competences: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, ability to learn, interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences, entrepreneurship and cultural expression.

Another effective tool to ensure a high level of educational quality was determined to ensure equal access to information and computer technology that was planned to be achieved not only through the provision of appropriate equipment and broad communications capabilities (Internet / Intranet), but also by high-quality software.

The problem of attracting young people to the study of natural sciences and mathematics courses as planned was solved by updating the content of natural sciences and mathematics education at the secondary level, and strengthening links with industry and business life.

It was clear for the EU leadership that an integrated system of lifelong education needed considerable investment in education in both the public and the private sectors. Innovation demanded increased investment in human resources, as the latter is considered as the main instrument of building a knowledge society.

Implementation objectives “Improving equal access to education” included tasks such as:

- creating an open educational space;
- added attraction education;
- supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion.

Addressing the task of “building an educational space” involved, firstly, facilitating access to education for all age groups, which was planned to be achieved primarily through the development of information and orientation manuals, and secondly, the creation of so-called “bridges” in order to allow transition from one direction in one education system to another – Europeans should be able to accumulate prior educational achievement and be sure that the credit and qualifications will be recognized throughout the EU space.

The goal of “Openness in the EU’s education throughout the world” in the context of basic needs strengthening compliance market and the challenges of globalization include:

- strengthening ties between production and research and society at large;
- development of entrepreneurial spirit;
- intensification of foreign languages;
- increased mobility and exchanges;
- strengthening European cooperation.

The intensification of open educational institutions for sustainable development, including openness to new ideas, communication with the world economy and business and meeting real needs became important goals for the EU.

These problems encourage European countries to find new approaches to reforming their educational systems and the creation of new policies and legislative frameworks in the field of higher education.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The Bologna process and the construction of the European education space are the preconditions of attracting qualified labour, “blue card”. EU through institutional transformation rebuilds their own goals of higher education in all 28 “neighbouring countries” (a program such as European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, TACIS, TEMPUS, etc.). Due to the fact that “neighbouring countries” will never become members of the EU, they become qualified donors. EHEA is constructed as a two-level principle– it consists of a core of full EU members, which represent all the benefits of “brain purchase”

and the surrounding countries, which have access to only some minor European funds and programs, but are not allowed to participate in breakthrough projects, policy- and decision making.

M. Mamardashvili said: to be part of reality, it is necessary to identify one's real interest. And we are now on the way to this reality (economically, politically and mentally). Although we have learned to speak "a common language" but "Ukrainian reality" (including education) is still not identical with the "European reality", which is an objective reality and an insurmountable obstacle which cannot be neglected in the process of entering higher education to the European educational space.

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NOTES

- ¹ *Всемирная декларация о высшем образовании для XXI века: подходы и практические меры. ОТ ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИХ ПОДХОДОВ К ПРАКТИЧЕСКИМ МЕРАМ.* http://www.e-joe.ru/sod/99/5_99/st191.html
- ² *Bologna Declaration.* Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education Convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999. www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf
- ³ С. А. Бабело: *Соціальна держава і соціальна сфера: змістовно-концептуальний взаємозв'язок.* *Економіка та держава*, № 3., –2008, 49–51.