



EUROPEAN AND UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES' COOPERATION: STATE OF PLAY AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Strasbourg event follow-up, April 2024



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INTRODUCTION

About the event

A delegation of 14 Ukrainian university rectors and vice-rectors participated in the event "European and Ukrainian Universities' Cooperation: State of Play and Future Perspectives" at the University of Strasbourg on 13 March 2024. The event, sponsored by the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA), held under the auspices of Ewa Kopacz, former Prime Minister of Poland and Vice-President of the European Parliament, and with online participation of Ukraine's Deputy-Minister of Education and Science, Mykhailo Wynnyckyj, aimed to highlight the **role of European and Ukrainian universities' cooperation in assisting the rebuilding and modernization of Ukraine.**

The event was significant for several reasons. The war context implied that the Ukrainian delegation traveled by car and bus from the various parts of Ukraine to (and back from) Strasbourg via Poland and Germany in four days and 60 hours. Kherson State University and Donetsk National University rectors of the relocated universities joined and gave speeches that drew attention on the current situation and the level of help needed. In addition, it was the first event of its kind organised by a French university, bringing together stakeholders including state authorities, the European Parliament, the European Commission, Ukrainian universities, and representatives of 12 European Universities alliances from 7 European countries. Last but not least, the event took place less than 2 weeks after the adoption of the new **Ukraine facility**, the largest EU assistance programme ever agreed, worth 50 billion € for the period 2024-2027.

The Facility will provide the framework for assistance to Ukraine and support its recovery, reconstruction and modernization. It offers an opportunity for a thorough reconstruction and improvement of higher education institutions (HEIs) and an acknowledgement of their role in creating conditions for sustainable growth. During the event, policy officers Judith Orland (DG NEAR) and Svein Hullstein (DG EAC) addressed the EU's priorities for higher education in Ukraine under the Erasmus + programme and the new Facility instrument.

European universities alliances and the cooperation with Ukraine

This report brings together 14 contributions from Ukrainian universities and 18 contributions on how joint cooperation has been explored, initiated and developed in the framework of European universities alliances. The alliances presented here were launched between 2019 and 2023. They are at different stages in experiencing the management of complex consortia and in developing their long-term strategies to build up inter-university campuses and knowledge-creating teams. They represent a very large diversity of countries, institutions and academic fields of the higher education in the EU & EEA.

In the context of the Russian brutal war of aggression against Ukraine over the last two years, European universities alliances immediately expressed academic support and solidarity with Ukrainian colleagues, students and institutions. They took action, most notably in Ukraine's neighbouring EU countries starting with Poland, as this report shows. Numerous and varied bottom-up initiatives, leading to friendly, trustful, twinning-kind of cooperation emerged to support the role of HEIs in Ukraine facing the disastrous consequences of war.

For the first time, this report showcases

- a) **the grassroots initiatives** explored and developed by European universities alliances in order to establish long-term strategic EU-wide collaboration with Ukrainian partners
- b) the **current outcomes**, and
- c) the **main challenges** to make it more sustainable and meet the education, skills and employability goals in order to support the higher education sector in Ukraine, prepare Ukraine to join the EU, and actively jointly engage in the European education area, in synergy with the European higher education area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What has been done by European universities alliances and Ukrainian HEIs

- **Over 30 Ukrainian universities have joined an European universities alliance as associated members or full members**, their partnerships defined in alignment with the alliance's strategy, with, as this report shows, the participation to existing alliance activities or the creation of joint activities taking place in various areas, e.g. governance (rectors' meetings), staff (e.g., peer-to-peer review on quality standards under EU regulations, EU green transition), students and researchers. These joint activities have been mainly based on institutional or/and national funds (e.g. NAWA "Solidarity with Ukraine – European Universities" in Poland) because of current non-eligibility to the alliances' funding.
- Since the start, European universities alliances have been open to collaboration and have followed an inclusive geographical approach, within and beyond the EU. They have served for Ukrainian universities to quickly identify European partners within and cross-alliances and connect efficiently in order to plan long-term activities e.g., joint programmes, applications to national and European calls. Thanks to individual initiatives and to existing collective channels, such as the FOR-EU grouping of alliances, **European universities alliances have shown they can be instrumental and pivotal in building the networking capacities of Ukrainian universities.**
- **European universities alliances have made the most of use of the Erasmus+ funding opportunities**, quickly extended and made more flexible by the European commission from Spring 2022: e.g., applications to the credit mobility schemes under Erasmus+ KA1 ICM for individual student, staff and researcher mobility; joint applications (as a whole alliance or as a satellite project of an alliance involving two or more partners), Erasmus+ action 2 to support institutional cooperation and capacity-building, or Erasmus+ action 3, e.g., create an open digital university for Ukraine (DigiUni project). Joint applications to **Horizon Europe - Widening** have been made, too.
- In addition to the immediate expression of academic solidarity in March 2022, **European universities alliances have released two joint statements** to call for support in creating strategic partnerships of European and Ukrainian universities in June 2022, with the signature of 25 alliances, and in March 2024, which is ongoing. In June 2022, at the Versailles EUAs summit under the French presidency of the Council of the European Union, **Higher education and research Minister Sylvie Retailleau** expressed her support to the creation of these strategic partnerships, confirming in her view "*the idea that European cooperation done at all levels enables to be more resilient and stronger. With this initiative, European universities alliances show they can achieve concrete action, quickly*".
- **European universities alliances have shown their commitment in the field of internationalisation**: the structured action towards Ukrainian universities has been part, sometimes before the start of the war, of the development of the regional and global dimension of European universities alliances e.g. in relation to the Eastern partnership. This topic will be addressed at the coming European Association for International Education conference (EAIIE, September 2024) in a satellite workshop on "Ukraine and the internationalisation of European universities alliances".

Challenges

- This report also illustrates some of the main challenges facing European universities alliances and Ukrainian universities in stabilising long-term collaboration. Among them, the **current non-eligibility of Ukrainian HEIs to alliances' funding** limits the possibilities of joining both alliances' activities and governance bodies, and it makes it difficult to plan long-term.
- Several partners in this report outline that **Erasmus+ mobility schemes can be used as complementary and temporary solutions, but they do not fully serve the objectives of the European universities alliances**. More generally they suffer from the time-consuming application process to calls and the labour-intensive planning of joint activities, not initially planned in the alliance's project.
- **EU research funding schemes are vital for Ukrainian universities, however they do not cover the needs** of those who stay in Ukraine, e.g., "MSCA4Ukraine" is for Ukrainian researchers going abroad. The restoration of the bridging Teaming/Twinning would be welcomed as well as quotas in Horizon Europe allowing for Ukrainian universities to participate.
- Due to war consequences the **innovative capacities and infrastructures of the Ukrainian universities** are under constant attacks and destroyed partially or fully in some cases, and support is needed to rebuild innovative capacities of universities.

Recommendations

- The **Ukraine facility** is a new and major financial instrument of the EU to support the rebuilding and modernisation of Ukraine and to prepare the country for EU accession. Through this report, many examples of the capabilities (e.g., provide future-proof skills in green and digital transition) and readiness of European universities are shown and illustrate that they can be relevant partners, in particular when organised as alliances, to share resources and ensure a European-wide impact. Due to their leading position, their critical mass and close connections with most Ukrainian universities in different regions, and thanks to their experience in piloting innovative projects such as the European diploma, inter-university digital platforms, **European universities alliances can assist in developing best practices for innovation via sharing expertise in many fields of the higher education sector and more generally in policies, including training the negotiators to EU accession**.
- The Plan must include such aspects that are agreed upon between the Government of Ukraine and the EU. But after more than two years of experience in providing assistance to Ukrainian universities, **certain activities should respond to the diversity of local needs and result from direct links between Ukrainian and European universities**. Bridges have already been built and it is valuable to strengthen them.
- **Dedicated funding should be made available to Ukrainian universities joining the alliances' activities** to ensure engagement, or organising events in Ukraine where safe and when it adds value to the alliance initiatives.
- **EU candidate countries, like Ukraine, should be made eligible to the full partner status of the European universities alliances' projects, to pilot the implementation of the European Universities Strategy together**.

JOINT STATEMENT

Statement on Strategic Partnerships between European and Ukrainian Universities 13 March 2024

The European aspirations of Ukrainian higher education institutions have taken on a new dimension as a result of the Russian brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and the two-year Ukrainian struggle for freedom.

The educational and scientific communities of the European Union, and in particular the European Universities alliances, have expressed their full solidarity with Ukraine and undertaken a number of grassroots initiatives to support Ukrainian higher education institutions, their students, and faculty members. Ukrainian higher education institutions have recognized the importance of this support to ensure their daily functioning in the current dramatic circumstances. In June 2022, the first joint statement of Ukrainian higher education institutions and European Universities alliances was addressed to the European Commission and EU Member States, calling for measures to support the establishment of twinning partnerships.

Since then, a community-building process has developed and over thirty Ukrainian higher education institutions have joined European Universities alliances in various cooperation schemes in education and research. In addition, several members of European Universities alliances have and are collaborating in innovative pilot projects, such as the Erasmus+ DigiUni project with the intention of sharing best practices in creating a digital Open University in Ukraine.

In addition to the solidarity expressed by the EU Member States, the European Commission has been quick to adapt its programmes to respond to Martial Law challenges and allow more flexibility for projects and in supporting students and faculty from Ukrainian universities. In February 2024, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union established a new Ukraine Facility, which will provide the framework for EU assistance to Ukraine for the period 2024-2027. The Facility will support Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation, and includes an opportunity for the thorough reconstruction and improvement of higher education institutions and an acknowledgement of their role in creating the conditions for sustainable growth.

In this context, we, Ukrainian higher education institutions and European Universities alliances, jointly call upon the EU institutions and EU Member States to prioritise higher education and research when planning the reconstruction and modernisation of Ukraine. We are ready to play an active role, building on our existing peer-to-peer cooperation and experiences, to help ensure that Ukrainian higher education institutions deliver high quality education and research consistent with European education area provisions, and academic freedom. We ask for further support in facilitating structural cooperation between Ukrainian and European universities, including the possibility of funding projects with Ukrainian associated members of the Alliances, until Ukrainian higher education institutions can fully engage in the European Universities Initiative.

The main objectives of these association projects will be institutional support and structural cooperation between Ukrainian and European universities. Pilot actions launched since 2022 have shown their positive impact. These projects could lead to the creation of training schools for academic staff, with a view to training in course management and quality and innovative teacher training, or in the development and sharing of online teaching resources. In all cases, support mechanisms need to be flexible to respond to the needs and opportunities for greater cooperation.

WELCOME ADDRESSES

13 March 2024, University of Strasbourg



Bogumiła Kaniewska **Rector of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań EPICUR**

"Madame Vice President, Dear Friends,

The history of Poland in the last generation is inextricably linked to symbolic events as well as words. One of them is "Solidarity." In 1980, the "Solidarity" social movement was created, which contributed to the fall of communism in Poland in 1989. Communism is gone, but the motto of this movement has remained. From February 2022, driven by a sense of human solidarity, Poles began to help refugees from Ukraine. Also my university joined this action. We welcomed hundreds of refugees under our roof,

and a thousand we gave, and still do, shelter and various kinds of support. Soon, the Polish National Agency of Academic Exchange (NAWA) awarded us a grant that allowed us to prepare and conduct more than 30 weekly training sessions for Ukrainian students, doctoral students, administrative staff and lecturers. Considering the problems of modernization of Ukrainian education and its reconstruction before accession to the European Union, we wanted to share our experience of two decades ago. Nearly 1,000 people from Ukraine were able to learn about various aspects of a modern university in a safe environment in Poznan. We were supported in these activities by, among others, the University of Strasbourg and the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder.

Through such efforts, we have built an informal network with dozens of Ukrainian universities. We also organised in Poznan the first meeting of Ukrainian vice-rectors responsible for international cooperation, who established in Poznan their national commission. Almost 60 vice-rectors came for a few days to my university, discussing the most urgent issues of internationalisation.

Like many other Polish universities (Gdansk, Warsaw), Poznan is an excellent bridge between Western and Eastern Europe, since we joined the European Union only 20 years ago and we still reform Polish universities. With financial support from the Polish national funds, we were able to share what is one of our greatest assets - experience in reforming higher education quickly and effectively. Since representatives of Ukrainian universities are constantly in Poznań, in the past year we have submitted several grant proposals within the framework of ERASMUS strategic partnership and capacity building, we participate in the DiGiUni grant, the faculty of psychology is co-creating rehabilitation centres for veterans, the faculty of pedagogy has prepared trainings for teachers and children with war trauma.



Poland and Ukraine lived together as regions of this same state for centuries. Both nations have suffered from bloody Russian persecutions very often. Poles and Ukrainians are so close to each other in our mentality and linguistic similarity. Therefore all Polish universities supported and still support Ukrainian universities. And we are doing it because we in Poland understand the meaning of the word Solidarity. But Poland is not alone. Many universities in the European Union that are affiliated with alliances of European universities think and act in a similar way. Therefore it is so important to combine our forces and resources to help Ukrainian universities now and in the future. Ukraine is not alone, and alliances of European universities with their experience are already becoming an extremely important example for concrete cooperation between European and Ukrainian universities. I am convinced that together we will be able to defend European values and make Europe an even more beautiful home for all of us."

Michel Deneken

President of University of Strasbourg & EPICUR chair

"Science, like art, literature and culture, knows no borders. Nationalism distorts and rejects the universal values that underpin the progress of human societies. Each time, they represent an existential threat to universities because they oppose critical thinking, rewrite history and deny the realities that disturb them. Emancipation through knowledge and freedom of thought are the counter-powers that obsess them. At the same time, these are cardinal human values that are at the heart of what universities do. The alliances have strengthened and built new tools for cooperation between universities in Europe, and in particular between universities in the countries of Western and Central Europe and those of Eastern Europe bordering Ukraine. The Member States and the Commission can and must encourage more of this kind of solidarity, just as they can and must use it to create and develop new solidarity with the countries bordering the EU, such as Ukraine. Let's relaunch our actions, step up our aid and renew our cooperation arrangements together!"



Mychailo Wynnyckyj

Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine

"Membership of Ukrainian Universities in European universities alliances provides opportunities to co-create solutions for challenges faced by higher education building the European Education Area and transform it together!"

Svitlana Shytikova

Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office - Ukraine

"European Universities Alliances under EU's Erasmus+ Programme is an extremely valuable Initiative for Ukrainian Universities to built trust and develop best practices and innovations together with leading Universities from EU and become equal partners in European Education Area."



Ewa Kopacz

Member of the European Parliament, Vice-President

"I am honoured to participate in a meeting with Ukrainian leading university representatives. I am convinced this initiative is the beginning of a lasting cooperation. A common Europe is not just about free trade, investments or EU institutions. The source of the European project's success is being anchored in the minds and hearts of Europeans, especially young people. The Europe of the future will show how we educated its youth today. And I am sure it will be a Europe not only of common interests but, above all, of common values. This is what I wish for myself and for you."



From left to right: **Frédérique Berrod**, Finance Vice-president Unistra ; **Bogumila Kaniewska**, AMU's rector ; **Ewa Kopacz**, European Parliament Member ; **Jean-Marc Planeix**, vice-president for academic partnerships and governance Unistra and EPICUR strategic coordinator.



Delegation of Ukrainian Rectors and Vice-rectors at the European Parliament, with Ewa Kopacz and members of EUAs and Universities ; on March 13, 2024, Strasbourg.

FEEDBACK FROM UKRAINIAN UNIVERSITIES

What do Ukrainian Universities expect from the EU and European Universities?

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv (comprehensive)
Khmelnyskyi National University, Khmelnytskyi (comprehensive)
Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University, Mykolaiv (comprehensive)
Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, Lutsk (comprehensive)
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Ivano-Frankivsk (comprehensive)
Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Uman (pedagogical)
Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Donetsk (relocated to Vinnytsia)
(comprehensive)
V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv (comprehensive)
The National University of Ostroh Academy, Ostroh (comprehensive)
Sumy State University, Sumy (comprehensive)
Odessa I.I.Mechnikov National University, Odessa (comprehensive)
Kherson State University, Kherson (relocated to Ivano-Frankivsk) (comprehensive)
Lviv Polytechnic National University, Lviv (technical)



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF KYIV- MOHYLA ACADEMY, KYIV, UKRAINE

Together with Ukraine as a country, Ukraine's higher education is going through all the war hardships. There are universities which are relocated and ruined, and consequently in need of special attention and help for their rebuilding and further existence.

At the same time, the critical situation of war has made Ukrainians start seriously reforming its system of higher education, essentially important for the country now and in the near future. In particular, steps are made towards the system's efficiency (e.g., though university mergers, introduction of an alternative approach to university studies financing, etc.) and a consideration of society's rapidly changing needs not in the terms of the industrial revolution's narrow professions only (e.g., introduction of student individual trajectory of university studies, multidisciplinary in study programs, etc.). The European Union and its member states, based on its own experience, could advise the Ukrainian higher education system and its individual universities on the relevant and successful path through the reforms' process.

Equally important is possible support in transforming the Ukrainian universities into the really autonomous institutions, which have both rights (e.g., for launching or closing study programs, setting staff requirements, application of the expected financial autonomy, etc.) and responsibilities (e.g., for aligning their activities with the society's needs, retaining the premium quality of education and research, becoming really student-oriented, etc.).

Ukrainian academia would highly benefit from staying tuned and involved, as an equal partner, with the European higher education area and its processes. This entails possible involvement of Ukrainian HEIs and their research, teaching, and administrative staff into research projects, particularly those studying war, conflict, security, post-war rebuilding in the European or global contexts; joint teaching and learning "exercises"



with the EU partners, e.g. COIL courses or joint programs, with faculty and students working together; the structural dialogue and co-creation, which Ukrainian universities witness at the European Universities alliances.

To finalise – Ukraine has got the EU candidate status. Therefore, Ukrainian universities should prepare themselves to be ready to become equal and responsible members of the EU educational community, e.g., to join the Erasmus programme soon, understand the key principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, and be ready to sign it in the near future, etc.

CONTACT

Larysa Chovnyuk | Head, International Office, National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
2 Skovorody street, Kyiv 04070 Ukraine
Phone/fax: +38 044 425 77 70 | mobiles: +38 050 446 52 94 or +38 066 916 21 92
E-mail: larch@ukma.edu.ua | web: www.ukma.edu.ua, www.dfc.ukma.edu.ua

KHMELNYTSKYI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KHMELNYTSKYI, UKRAINE

Alliances between Ukrainian and European universities are pivotal for fostering academic collaboration, knowledge exchange, and addressing global challenges. These partnerships bolster academic mobility, research collaboration, and institutional development, enhancing academic competitiveness and recognition. They facilitate alignment with European standards, supported by capacity-building initiatives, which strengthen organisational effectiveness and academic quality in Ukrainian HEIs. Moreover, joint research projects promote innovation and pave the way for sustainable development and entrepreneurship, contributing to economic growth and societal advancement in both Ukraine and the European Union. We strongly believe that the joint efforts of Ukraine and its European partners will help overcome all obstacles to the full integration of Ukrainian universities into the European scientific and educational space.

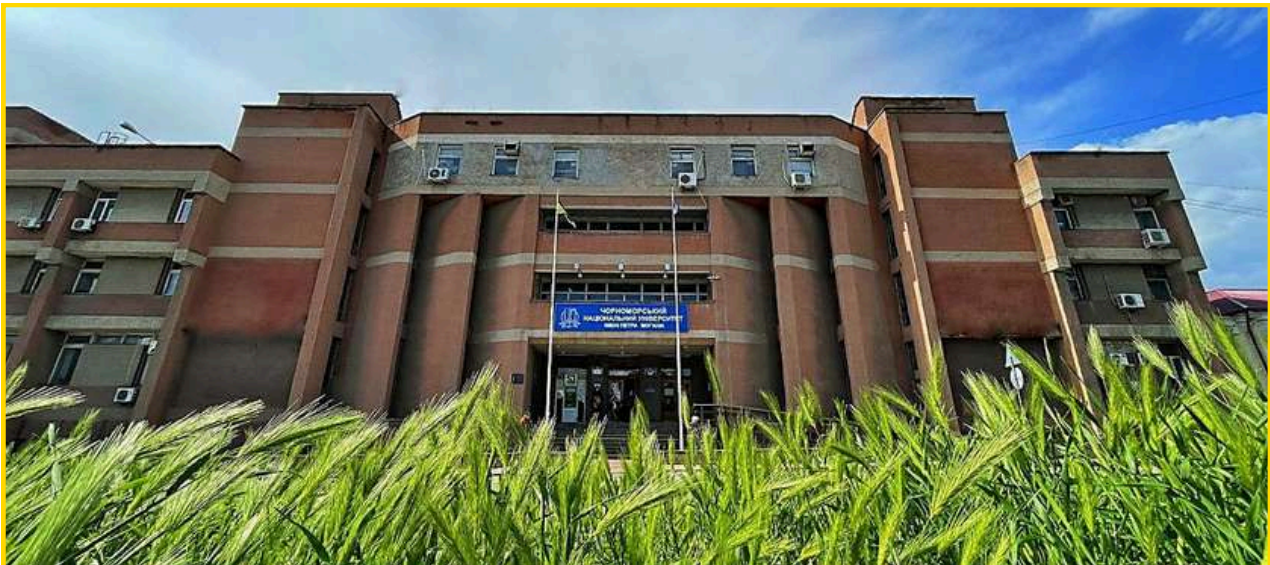


CONTACT

Kateryna Skyba | Vice-rector for scientific and pedagogical work
e-mail: skybakm@khnmu.edu.ua | web: <https://khnmu.edu.ua/en/>

PETRO MOHYLA BLACK SEA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, MYKOLAIV, UKRAINE

Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University is grateful to the EU partners for the warm welcome of our delegation and the platform for discussing common problems! We look forward to active cooperation with the European Union within the framework of alliances of European universities, grant programmes for research and development of educational initiatives. The University is also considering opportunities for academic mobility for students and faculty to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills with European partners. We believe that working together with the EU will allow us to implement projects aimed at improving the quality of education and research in the Southern region of Ukraine. PMBSNU welcomes the opportunities to partner with the European Union to jointly achieve the goals of sustainable development and academic advancement.



CONTACT

Alla Koval | Vice-rector for Scientific and Pedagogical Activities and International Cooperation
Phone: +380512 76-55-77 | e-mail: prorector_inter@chmnu.edu.ua | web: <https://chmnu.edu.ua/>

LESYA UKRAINKA VOLYN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, LUTSK, UKRAINE

Today higher education in Ukraine needs to deepen cooperation with the EU in terms of open science, academic integrity, education without borders, the spread of European values, internationalisation development, etc. Active participation of Ukrainian universities in Alliances of European universities is extremely important for Ukraine. Unfortunately, however, Ukrainian universities as associate partners of the Alliances do not have adequate funding under the Erasmus+ programme to ensure the full participation of teachers and students in all activities of such a project. Equally important for Ukrainian universities is the expansion of opportunities for



academic mobility of students, teachers, and administrative staff, simplification of the procedure for recognition of academic qualifications between Ukraine and EU countries, etc. We consider it extremely valuable for Ukrainian universities to have access to online education platforms, open science, and EU scientific databases, which allow for the exchange of experience and adoption of best practices for reforming higher education in Ukraine.

We are grateful to Adam Mickiewicz University and the European Commission for their active participation in the development of Ukrainian science and education, and at the same time, we ask you to pay attention to the issues in which Ukrainian universities need support from the EU, which will expand the scientific horizons of both Ukraine and the EU.

CONTACT

Anatolii Tsos | Rector | 13 Voli Avenue Lutsk, Ukraine, 43025

Phone: +38 (0332) 720123 or +38 (0332) 242178 | e-mail: tsos.anatoliy@vnu.edu.ua |

web: <https://vnu.edu.ua/en>

VASYL STEFANYK PRECARPATHIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, IVANO-FRANKIVSK, UKRAINE

Aligning the Ukrainian higher education system with the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) enhances the recognition of qualifications, facilitates academic mobility, and promotes internationalisation. Cooperation with EU universities allows Ukrainian higher education institutions to implement advanced teaching methods, quality standards and academic programmes that meet international standards. Ukrainian universities can receive funding within the framework of various programmes of the European Union that makes it possible to

attract additional resources for the development of educational programs, scientific research and international cooperation. Exchange programmes such as Erasmus+ enable students and teachers to study, teach and research in EU universities, it promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience, and also helps to build international partnerships. EU-Ukraine cooperation often includes capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening the administrative, managerial, and research capabilities of Ukrainian universities.



CONTACT

Serhii Sharyn | Vice-Rector on Scientific and Pedagogical Work | Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 57 Shevchenko str., Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, 76018
Phone: +380-342-59-60-17 | e-mail: serhii.sharyn@pnu.edu.ua | web: <https://pnu.edu.ua/en/>

PAVLO TYCHYNA UMAN STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY, UMAN, UKRAINE

Education is the mainstay of the modern lifestyle and is essential for the sustainability of the world's democracies and economies. Education in the EU is recognised as one of the priorities on the way to building a cohesive, digital, green and sustainable European community. On the backdrop of Russian unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, education has suffered devastating consequences for human lives and educational opportunities for millions of young people and continues to cause serious damage in the education sector. The closure of borders, limits on studying in other countries, disproportionate access to digital technologies for participants in the educational process, decrease in international exchange programmes, deteriorating infrastructure, security risks, etc. All these factors significantly complicate the process of obtaining quality education.

The actions of the European Union aimed at solidarity and support for Ukraine, highlight the need to accelerate reforms and modernization, increase the productivity of Higher Education Institutions and innovation, and provide professional training that satisfies the needs of the European labour market.

The EU remains a consistent partner in the implementation of educational reforms in Ukraine, participates in the development of legislation and curricula, and guarantees long-term cooperation in education, research, and joint project activities, assists in identifying current problems and needs, as well as future prospects.



CONTACT

Volodymyr Mykolaiko | Vice-Rector for International Relations and Strategic Development | 2 Sadova str., 2, Uman, Ukraine, 20300
e-mail: v.mykolaiko@udpu.edu.ua | web: <https://udpu.edu.ua/en/>

VASYL' STUS DONETSK NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, DONETSK (RELOCATED TO VINNYTSIA)

Collaborating with the EU can help Ukraine modernise its education systems, aligning them with European standards and best practices, in developing robust quality assurance mechanisms and accreditation processes for its educational institutions.

Cooperation in the area of Promotion of Lifelong Learning can support Ukraine in assisting continuous professional development, adult education, and vocational training programs to enhance the skills and employability of its workforce across various sectors.

Participation of Ukrainian HEIs in EU-funded research programmes, joint research projects, and technology transfer initiatives can foster knowledge exchange, promote scientific excellence, and drive economic growth through innovation.

Participation in EU mobility and exchange programmes, along with cooperation with EU member states, offer valuable opportunities for Ukrainian students and academic staff to study, teach, or conduct research abroad, fostering cross-cultural communication, enhancing language skills, and promoting collaboration across diverse fields.

The EU provides support for capacity building and institutional development in the education sector through targeted training programmes, technical assistance, and policy dialogue.

By prioritising cooperation with the EU in these key areas, Ukraine can benefit from the

wealth of expertise, resources, and opportunities available within the European education landscape, ultimately contributing to the country's socio-economic development and integration into the European higher education area.



CONTACT

Illya Khadzhynov | Rector | str. 600-richchia, 21, Vinnytsia, Vinnytsia Oblast, 21021, Ukraine
e-mail: i.khadzhynov@donnu.edu.ua | web: <https://www.donnu.edu.ua/en/>

V.N. KARAZIN KHARKIV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KHARKIV, UKRAINE

In the current context of Ukraine, higher education institutions should focus on fostering internationalisation of the university curriculum, internationalisation at home and on increasing engagement of students and staff in international activities. To achieve these goals, capacity building opportunities should be prioritised as they bring together EU and UA academics and researchers (young scientists) and create a framework for international collaboration with the 'bottom-up' approach.

Taking into account limited funding and human resources faced by UA universities, especially those at the frontlines, collaboration with EU universities can help them to maintain and develop their capacities in areas such as education and research management, innovation through joint projects, training programmes, and collaborative initiatives. In this way, UA HEIs will improve the quality of education and research by adopting international best practices, standards, and methodologies. Furthermore, they should focus on accumulating knowledge, skills and funds for the post-war reconstruction.

Another important issue is that UA universities are also scientific hubs having their clear mission in the task of after-war renovation of Ukraine, including such tasks as demining of de-occupied territories, rehabilitation and prosthetics for military and civil population. To fulfil this task, UA universities may need different kinds of equipment and assume that it could be the "second-hand" equipment of EU universities and scientific institutions, which may be not new but still operational.



CONTACT

Borys Samorodov | Vice-Rector for Research and Teaching | Room 3-49, 4 Svobody Sq., 61022, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Phone: +38 050 271 58 88 | e-mail: samorodov@karazin.ua | web: <https://karazin.ua/en/>

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF OSTROH ACADEMY, OSTROH, UKRAINE

This was a significant meeting, which was an opportunity to discuss new support tools for Ukrainian universities from the European Union together with European colleagues. It is extremely important that Ukrainian higher education institutions can become full-fledged partners of European universities alliances. The first steps in this direction have already been taken, and the experience of individual alliances was presented during the meeting. At the same time, it should be extended to other cooperation initiatives between Ukraine and the EU in higher education. That is why the result of this meeting was a joint appeal of Ukrainian and European universities to the European Commission to develop new tools of European support for the Ukrainian higher education system.



CONTACT

Dmytro Shevchuk | Vice-Rector for Research and Teaching

Phone: (03654) 2-29-49 | e-mail: dmytro.shevchuk@oa.edu.ua | web: <https://www.oa.edu.ua/en>

SUMY STATE UNIVERSITY, SUMY, UKRAINE

1. The main aspect of cooperation with the European Union is broadening access to European programmes and support schemes, which will contribute to the development of research and education in Ukraine.
2. Joint research projects and academic mobility programmes for teachers and students between Ukrainian and European universities will contribute to the exchange of knowledge and technologies, as well as raising the level and openness of scientific and research work in Ukraine.
3. Implementation of joint study programmes, double degree and internship programmes for students and postgraduates will allow them to gain international experience and increase competitiveness in the labour market.
4. Implementation of the best European practices and cases in the educational process and research activities of Ukrainian universities to raise the quality of training qualified specialists.
5. Full integration into European Universities Alliances, joining work packages to develop university structures and performance according to European priorities and global sustainable development goals.



CONTACT

Ivan Kozii | Vice-Rector for scientific and pedagogical work | 116, Kharkivska st., 40007 Sumy, Ukraine
E-mail: i.kozii@rectorat.sumdu.edu.ua | web: <https://int.sumdu.edu.ua/en//>

ODESA I.I.MECHNIKOV NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, ODESA, UKRAINE

- 1.To make Ukraine ERASMUS+ Programme Country as soon as possible (before Ukraine joins the EU);
- 2.To allow Ukrainian HEIs join European Alliances of the Universities as full and funded members on Alliances discretion as soon as possible (before Ukraine joins the EU);
- 3.To let Ukrainian HEIs selected as members of European Alliances to enjoy all the benefits like HEIs from ERASMUS+ Programme Country if it is impossible for Ukraine for any reasons to become ERASMUS+ Programme Country before Ukraine joins EU;
- 4.To allocate special EU funds and to establish special EU programmes focused on academic mobilities, COILs and double-diploma programmes for Ukrainian HEIs;
- 5.To allocate special EU funds and to establish special EU programmes focused on restoration of the damaged assets, equipment and facilities for Ukrainian HEIs.

Odesa I.I.Mechnikov National University is the oldest and leading Educational and Research Institution in the South of Ukraine. Established in 1865, it is named after Nobel prize winner Iliia Mechnikov, who was a professor of the University in the late 19th century. ONU is a classical university equally experienced in the fields of Natural Sciences, Humanities and Social Studies. It is divided in 11 faculties and supports over 100 bachelor, master and PhD educational programs. There are also such university divisions as the Scientific Library, Botanical Garden, Astronomical Observatory, Hydrobiological Station as well as Museums of Rare Books, Paleontology, Zoology and Minerals.



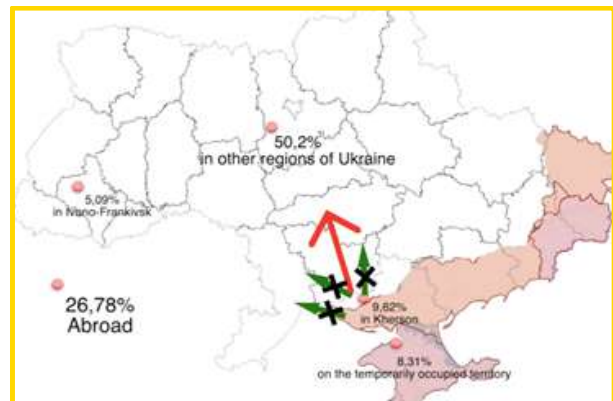
CONTACT

Andrii Smitiukh | Vice-Rector for scientific and pedagogical work and international cooperation
Dvoryans'ka St, 2, Odesa, 65082
E-mail: a.smitiukh@onu.edu.ua | web: <https://onu.edu.ua/uk/>

KHERSON STATE UNIVERSITY, KHERSON (RELOCATED TO IVANO-FRANKIVSK), UKRAINE

In the context of complex geopolitical and social challenges, cooperation between Ukraine and the European Union in the field of education remains crucial, especially concerning displaced universities, which are faced with the need to adapt to new conditions in times of crisis and instability. Given the circumstances, we believe that currently the key aspects include:

- expanding access to scientific and innovation programmes of the EU, integration of research infrastructures of Ukraine into research infrastructures of the EU;
- involvement in forming alliances with the EU universities that allows joint development of strategies for modernising higher education, introduction of new standards, and improvement of management in education;
- financial support and technical assistance to facilitate the improvement/restoration of the infrastructure of universities;
- supporting digitisation processes through collaborative programmes.



CONTACT

Oleksandr Spivakovskiy | Rector | Legal address: Kherson State University, 27 Universytets'ka St., Kherson, Ukraine 73003 | Actual address: 14 Shevchenko St., Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, 76018
Phone: +380963102636 | e-mail: spivakovsky@ksu.ks.ua | web: <https://www.kspu.edu/>

LVIV POLYTECHNIC NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, LVIV, UKRAINE

Despite the fact that Ukraine acquired the status of an associate country in the Horizon Europe programme in 2022, Ukrainian universities, scientific, research and other institutions still face the problems of integrating their innovative activities into the European scientific space. The reason for this is a number of objective and subjective factors, including the following:

1. The financial possibilities of state and commercial funding of scientific research decreased catastrophically, the possibilities of purchasing scientific equipment disappeared altogether, mutual visits of scientists actually stopped, etc. Therefore, the support of the European scientific community makes it possible to compensate Ukrainian scientists for these losses, at least partially.
2. Since Ukraine is on its way to EU membership, the European Commission needs to develop and implement dedicated mechanisms for the development of scientific research and measures for industrial modernization for Ukraine. This would enable Ukrainian institutions to integrate into the European technological and economic space.
3. Specific measures are necessary to ensure the access of scientists from leading Ukrainian universities to the European research infrastructure and the organisation of targeted support for Ukrainian scientists in the fields of IT, artificial intelligence, medicine, the latest materials, etc., in order to form the prerequisites for the reconstruction of the Ukrainian economy and the formation of the future infrastructure of "smart" cities.
4. It is known that the European Commission provides support for Ukrainian researchers who were displaced as a result of Russian aggression through the use of the "MSCA4Ukraine" Programme. However, this programme actually did not increase support for the scientists who remained in Ukraine and who did not have the opportunity to leave for EU countries. Therefore, specific programmes are needed that would provide for an increase in the number of grants specifically for Ukrainian scientists who have remained working in Ukrainian scientific institutions.
5. For a wider involvement of Ukrainian universities in the Horizon Europe project consortia, at least for the period of the war, special quotas for Ukraine for certain types of projects should be introduced. I believe that it is necessary to restore the Bridging Teaming/Twinning type programme.
6. It is important to develop and propose a separate programme that will allow Ukraine to be involved in infrastructure programmes and competitions within the framework of the INTERREG EUROPE programme or other programmes in which infrastructure projects are possible.
7. It is important to provide Ukrainian universities with the opportunity to participate in the European Universities Alliances fully.

CONTACTS

Oleh Matviyiv | First Vice-Rector | address: 12 Bandery St., Main building, Room 206, Lviv, Ukraine
E-mail: oleh.m.matviikiv@lpnu.ua | web: <https://lpnu.ua/en> | work: +38 032 258 2019 | mob.: +38 063 340 7724

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCES BEST PRACTICES

SPEAKERS OF THE EVENT

EuniWell | SEA-EU | EC2U | ENHANCE | E3UDRES2 | EPICUR | ERUA

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCES

CIVICA | Unite! | EU-CONEXUS | ARQUS | EUT+ | Transform4Europe | Aurora | EUPeace
| STARS EU | UNIGreen | EU Green |

Find out more information about the European universities initiative & alliance partners [here](#)

“Support for Ukraine is consistent with European values and support for the Ukrainian higher education sector is consistent with academic freedom. EUniWell is proud to count Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (KNU) as a full member of the Alliance. KNU researchers, teachers and students contribute to our well-being Mission, and we look forward to strengthening institutional cooperation within the EUniWell platform, and deepening academic collaborations focused on mutual leveraging of excellence and mobilities across the Alliance.” – Prof. Dr. Beatrix Busse, Chief Development Officer, EUniWell

Best practices

The European University for Well-Being (EuniWell) stands out for its exclusive focus on well-being, encompassing individual, societal, and environmental aspects. Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (KNU) joined as a **full member** in summer 2022, **enjoying equal rights and responsibilities**.

KNU actively participates in EuniWell activities:

- Contributing to research, teaching, civic engagement, and knowledge transfer missions.
- Involvement in thematic arenas, seed funding projects, open lecture series, leadership fellowship academy, and student board.
- Although KNU doesn't receive funding from EuniWell Erasmus+ (or SwafS projects), both parties ensure KNU's active participation through shared resources.

In 2023, EuniWell hosted an **online Europe Day event with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine**, facilitating engagement between students, staff, and leadership from member institutions. Additionally, a meeting with President Zelenskyy allowed KNU students to exchange views directly with him.



Perspectives

To date, KNU mobility to participate in EuniWell activities has been enabled with institutional and national funds from all EuniWell member institutions. Some academic collaborations have been facilitated through the **EuniWell Seed Funding Programme** supported by institutional resources of our member universities.

With more direct support for Ukrainian universities in the European Universities Initiative, KNU would be able to more fully participate and lead in EuniWell activities on an equal financial footing.

CONTACT

Graham Harrison | PhD, Managing Director

E-mail: gharriso@uni-koeln.de | web: <https://www.euniwell.eu/what-we-offer/euniwell-ukrainian-fellowships>

"Support for Ukraine from all academic perspectives was discussed in Gdańsk by rectors, directors, academics, ministers, soldiers, representatives of foreign research centres and students during two conferences we organised together with NAWA. If we want to continue to support Ukraine and prepare it for EU accession, these initiatives need systematic support from the European Commission. The real help we can give Ukraine today is if the training and skills we provide can be used by students or researchers in the process of rebuilding Ukraine. This is why it is so important to fully integrate Ukraine into the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area." - Anna Jurkowska-Zeidler



Best practices

At the University of Gdansk & SEA-EU Alliance, cooperation with Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University (ONU) after 24 February 2022 came about naturally: it was done independently of EU funding, as a form of support for Ukrainian higher education and to show that Ukrainian universities are ready for close international cooperation at the level required by the European University Project.

Each SEA-EU alliance university has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with ONU to foster cooperation in education and academic research, chosen for its alignment with the alliance's vision and its coastal location. **SEA-EU joined the NAWA programme "Solidarity with Ukraine," - Polish universities associated in alliances of European Universities to help Ukrainian HEIs** - engaging in various activities and events, for which it was selected #1 by NAWA in May 2023.

The University of Gdansk hosted the **"SINGING BY THE SEA" concert** with members of the Split University Choir and students from French, Norwegian, and Ukrainian universities.

ONU and SEA-EU organised a **Congress of young researchers** and three summer schools in 2023, with over 200 ONU representatives visiting Gdansk in 2023 and 2024. ONU participated in a Staff week on language policy co-organized by Gdansk University and the University of Malta.

Perspectives

The SEA EU alliance is hoping that **"the work done so far would contribute to a favourable decision by the European Commission on Ukrainian universities joining the European University project as full members"** and is emphasising the exchange of good practices, collaboration between scientists, joint research, and student and staff exchanges to promote academic values and the European way of life permanently. The final goal is to integrate ONU into SEA-EU activities, at all levels (rectors, management, administration, research, students).

CONTACT

Dr hab. Anna Jurkowska-Zeidler | Vice-Rector for International Cooperation, University of Gdansk
E-mail: anna.jurkowska-zeidler@prawo.ug.edu.pl | web: <https://sea-eu.org/associated-partners-and-stakeholders/>, find [here](#) a detailed report.



"The EC2U Alliance is thankful to the University of Strasbourg and EPICUR Alliance for providing us the opportunity to present how we have created a sustainable solidarity mechanism to support the Ukrainian academic community. This mechanism is now translated into the participation of the Ivan Franko University of Lviv as Associated Partner to the EC2U Alliance. As such, Lviv students and staff are actors of the EC2U activities: however, their participation is only possible on the basis of own funds from EC2U member universities. The EC2U community therefore calls on the European Commission to urgently provide adequate flexibility on the use of the Erasmus+ funds dedicated to the European Universities Initiative to allow the eligibility of mobility support to Ukrainian students and staff." - Ludovic Thilly

Best practices

The EC2U alliance began supporting Ukraine during the full-scale invasion in February and March 2022, organising a **solidarity fundraising event** at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania. In April 2022, the Alliance and Ivan Franko University of Lviv (LNU) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** for Strategic Partnership during the EC2U Forum in Pavia, Italy.

In October 2022, LNU Students and Staff participated in the **EC2U Forum** in Iasi, Romania, while a proposal for LNU as an Associated Partner was prepared and included in February 2023.

In May 2023, LNU Students attended the EC2U Forum in Jena, Germany, and in October 2023, the Rector, Students, and Staff visited Poitiers, France for a second EC2U Forum.

In July 2023, EC2U was selected for a new funding period with LNU as an **Associated Partner**.

Since November 2023, LNU has actively participated in EC2U activities, including **Governing Bodies**.

Additionally, EC2U has been supporting Ukrainian Universities via **FOR-EU**, providing statements, events, and more.

Since April 2022, support has been provided to LNU through various channels, including **E+ KA1 ICM and participation in E+ KA2 projects** such as the EUNIVERSE project led by the University of Poitiers.

Perspectives

For the future, the **EC2U Alliance aims to implement a better participation of Ukrainian Universities to the Alliance's activities**. This would be through the establishment of the mobility costs eligible to the Alliance budget, even if they are associated partners. Another way to enhance the participation is to make eligible Ukrainian Universities Full Partners.

Another perspective is to improve the integration of Ukrainian Universities within the European Higher Education Area. For this, it is vital to make Ukraine a member of Erasmus+ programme (not just KA1 ICM).

CONTACT

Prof. Dr. Ludovic Thilly | Executive Vice-Rector for EC2U Alliance & European Networks, University of Poitiers, Coordinator general of the EC2U Alliance

E-mail: ludovic.thilly@univ-poitiers.fr | web: <https://ec2u.eu/standing-in-solidarity-ec2u-supports-ukraines-journey-towards-peace-and-prosperity/>

"The conference in Strasbourg was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the solidarity of Polish universities with Ukraine fighting for freedom and sovereignty. Under the NAWA programme "Solidarity with Ukraine - European Universities", Warsaw University of Technology organised many scientific conferences, summer and winter schools, workshops and study visits in 2023. We hosted 122 representatives of the academic community from the Kyiv and Lviv Polytechnic. I spoke to many of them. They were extremely motivated, highly creative, eager to cooperate with us and exchange experiences. This creates a strong foundation for the future of our partnerships with Ukrainian universities." - Grzegorz Robak



Best practices

The Alliance has initiated a **Task Force for Ukraine**, outlining various activities:

- Mapping available offers such as **summer schools, researcher stays, student groups, online language tandems, and bridge courses**.
- **Utilising national (e.g., NAWA) and international (Erasmus+) funding sources**.
- **Consulting Ukrainian partners** before application preparation.
- **Developing digital teaching projects and improving infrastructure** to facilitate information flow and support.
- Prioritising efforts on **"Rebuilding Ukraine after the War" collaboration programme**.

Enhance Alliance is participating in the "Solidarity with Ukraine – European Universities" programme by NAWA. Objectives include networking and cooperation establishment between Ukrainian universities and Enhance Alliance members, facilitating exchanges of students, academics, and staff, and exploring cooperation formats such as visits, internships, schools, seminars, workshops, training, courses, and conferences. These activities facilitated 122 physical and 30 online mobilities.

Perspectives

- **support in entering the job market:** assisting Ukrainian students with workshops how to prepare for a job interview, providing information on job and professional development opportunities
- **onboarding and integration activities:** organising joint projects, cultural exchanges, events
- **promoting Ukrainian culture and achievements:** organising concerts, exhibitions and workshops. These events could be open to the general public.
- **offering language courses** in Polish and English

CONTACT

Grzegorz ROBAK | Director of the Centre for International Cooperation, Warsaw University of Technology

E-mail: Grzegorz.Robak@pw.edu.pl

Web: <https://enhanceuniversity.eu/enhance-support-for-ukraine/>

“Our vision is to create an institutional partnership between a group of European universities and a group of Ukrainian universities to respond simultaneously to the needs of students, teaching staff and administrative and scientific services, thanks to an action plan designed on a partnership basis to address the priority and structuring needs of Ukrainian universities”. Jean-Marc Planeix

Best practices

Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (2022-2023)

33 Summer and Training Schools have been organised to support the Ukrainian higher education system in its diverse aspects, for a total number of 1000 participants (staff + students):

1. NAWA "Solidarity with Ukraine - European universities": 10 Summer Schools were organised from February until June 2023, with some EPICUR partners (Strasbourg, Freiburg), in order to ensure continuity in education for Ukrainian students (e.g. thesis), follow courses under the Polish higher education system, and support Ukrainian university representatives & staff
2. POWR.03.05.00-00-Z303/18: more than 20 Training Schools were organised on theoretical and practical knowledge on ICT solutions and IT tools in university management, more generally on the AMU infrastructure and the city of Poznań, and on Polish culture and history

Throughout 2024, 22 Schools are scheduled and two already under way.



EPICLuster mobility programme “Seeking a new language: Narratives on home, (forced) migration and identity of newcomers Ukrainian youth to European cities” (from February 2024)

The EPICUR research project aims to identify the Ukrainian youth's primary modes of narrating migration and the processes of settling in urban communities. The team made of researchers from universities in Poland, Greece, Germany, and Ukraine, is conducting international research on how young people who came to Freiburg, Poznań, and Thessaloniki after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine were taming these spaces and finding their way in this new city.

Digital University – Open Ukrainian Initiative (DigiUni) (ERASMUS-EDU-2023-CBHE)

The project team led by Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv consists of a large international partnership of EU universities from France (University of Strasbourg), Germany, Spain, Czech Republic and Poland (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), 10 Ukrainian universities together with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Ukrainian Association of IT professionals. Based on EU best practices, the team will create a **unified digital educational ecosystem in Ukraine** that will provide continuous, high-quality, inclusive, and transparent education, regardless of the location of learners & teachers, using existing digital innovations in education and a clear paradigm for involving future innovations. EPICUR defines this project as a **satellite project** of the alliance.

CONTACTS

Prof. Jean-Marc Planeix | Vice-president & EPICUR strategic coordinator | email: planeix@unistra.fr,

Prof. Rafat Witkowski | Vice-Rector International cooperation | email: witkows@amu.edu.pl,

Dr Sabine Menu | Associate professor & EPICUR liaison officer in Brussels | email: smenu@unistra.fr

Web: <https://epicur.edu.eu/news/epiccluster-project-seeking-a-new-language-survey/>

<https://amu.edu.pl/en/solidarity-with-ukraine/summer-schools>

“Ukraine and its resistance against Russia’s war of aggression must remain in the European public eye. Research and higher education should be prioritized as they can serve as a driving force in Ukraine’s recovery and its EU accession process. As members of ERUA, we are continuously strengthening our partnerships and are ready to contribute to a strong and resilient Ukrainian higher education system through our expertise, networks and in close exchange with our Ukrainian partners. To fulfill this role effectively, we require reliable, but flexible structural support”, Eduard Mühle



Best practices

- Thanks to NAWA “Strengthening cooperation with Ukrainian universities within the framework of the Universities Initiative” and led by SWPS University, **ERUA welcomed 7 Ukrainian universities as associated partners**
- In 2022-2023, with the European Women’s Rectors’ Association EWORA, Mykolas Romeris University conducted a **survey of Ukrainian rectors & vice-rectors about challenges and needs, and the role of European universities alliances**
- University Paris 8 organised a **Ukrainian week** in November 2023, with an international colloquium on narratives and truth regimes in war situations with EUV, immersive workshops & performances, with the participation of Kyiv’s Mohyla Academy & PAUSE program laureates.
- SWPS hosted a two-day study visit in March 2024 for 20 colleagues from Ukraine, funded by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation (Fullbright), focusing on **curriculum and pedagogy**.
- The **interdisciplinary Viadrina Center of Polish & Ukrainian Studies** was established in 2023.
- High-ranking representatives from Ukrainian legislative, executive, and judicial bodies engaged in **mediation perspectives** during a workshop at Viadrina (EUV) in May 2023.
- In September 2023, Ukrainian students visited EUV and the Collegium Polonicum, a joint research and teaching institution run by AMU in Poznań and EUV on the German-Polish border in Ślubice for a **summer school focused on start-ups, transfer, and digitalization**.
- Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv secured funds to enhance **teaching & research on Ukraine abroad** in collaboration with EUV.

Perspectives

The initiatives focus on strengthening **Ukrainian studies in Europe** through scholarships for Ukrainian students, transitioning from short-term support to long-term cooperation, and establishing **double degrees and micro-credentials**. Additionally, the efforts aim to expand **collaboration with societal actors, offer capacity-building programmes, and facilitate engagement with decision-makers**. Ultimately, the goal is to bridge the gap between Ukraine’s higher education system and that of the EU.

CONTACT

Prof. Dr. Eduard Mühle | President Europa-Universität Viadrina | email: muehle@europa-uni.de,
erua@europa-uni.de | Web: <https://erua-eui.eu/>

"The E3UDRES2 alliance universities offered their support to Ukrainian peers and students as an immediate response following the Russian aggression against the country. However, we felt something was needed in a long-term. While having only scarce contacts in Ukraine, we invited three Ukrainian HEIs with a profile matching the one of E3UDRES2. Next years should allow us to learn more about each other, see how these bonds can be developed. This covers attendance of the E3UDRES2 events by staff or students, capacity building workshops, submission of new projects addressing the needs of Ukrainian partners in a more targeted way. Since the beginning we are amazed by their enthusiasm and commitment, despite all the difficulties. Events like the one in Strasbourg help us to raise awareness, but also learn from others." - Michal Karpíšek

Best practices

E³UDRES², the European Union Initiative for Urban and Regional Development, promotes the transformation of small and medium-sized cities and their rural areas into smart and sustainable regions.

The alliance released a statement on Ukraine (1 March 2022) and gave immediate responses. In Spring 2022, **student housing** increased from 20 to 400 places. The alliance received support from the Ukrainian national agency in identification of relevant partners.

The **2023-2027 project focuses on strategic partnerships and systemic support for three HEIs**. The **Erasmus+ project proposal "DUKE"** prioritises digital competencies for future skills, borderless education, and a joint digital ecosystem among Ukraine, Kosovo, and E3UDRES², with 120 mobilities. Further project ideas and cooperation are being explored.

Perspectives

- **Engagement as full partners** – impact on funding, KPIs and engagement in E3UDRES² systemic work (quality, concept of learning, innovative methodologies, research...)
- **Mobility** – mobility models, international aspect of learning, short term exchanges, internships (also online); Participation in iLiving Labs, hackathons, bootcamps...
- **Co-teaching activities, new study programmes**
- Strengthened **digital tools and systems**
- **Engagement in strategies development**, future universities discussions – responding to challenges
- **Engagement in joint research**
- **Online and offline staff development**
- **Civic dimension**: European values, principles of democracy
- **Cooperation with/between regional stakeholders**

CONTACT

Michal Karpíšek | Secretary General, UAS St. Pölten, Austria
E-mail :michal.karpisek@fhstp.ac.at, office@eudres.eu
Web: <https://eudres.eu>

Best practices

CIVICA launched "**CIVICA for Ukraine**" with 5 Ukrainian universities for social sciences education and research. Coordinated by the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and supported by NAWA, the project enabled over 100 students, researchers, faculty and staff from Ukrainian partners to participate in CIVICA activities in 2023.

The initiative produced **reports** on "Challenges and Needs of Ukrainian Universities" and "Modernisation and Recovery of Ukraine from the Perspective of Ukrainian and European Students." Building on its success, CIVICA and its Ukrainian partners have committed to a **new collaboration cycle (2024-2026)**, opening existing and planned activities to Ukrainian participants. This scheme, **backed by Erasmus+ and NAWA**, aims to enhance institutional dialogue and increase impact. Ukrainian partner institutions are also invited to pursue Erasmus+ Associated Partner status to deepen cooperation and contribute to alliance development.

CIVICA For Ukraine aims to enhance cooperation between the CIVICA alliance and public policy, addressing current needs due to the war. **Objectives** include developing intellectual capital, fostering research and teaching connections, and aligning Ukrainian universities with EU standards. Supported activities include intensive courses, staff mobility, workshops, and public lectures. **Principles for action** include endorsement from CIVICA and Ukrainian governing bodies, reciprocity, openness, dedicated programme schemes, Nawa agency support, coordination for synergies, avoidance of overlap with bilateral ties, and focus on activities over administration.

Perspectives

CIVICA would like to renew and possibly increase the participation of Ukrainian students and researchers in CIVICA activities beyond 2024, but the **Erasmus+ scheme within the European universities initiative only permits to fund limited mobilities from Ukraine to CIVICA partner institutions** since Ukraine is not an Erasmus+ member country. Support is limited to



staff and faculty under a series of clear conditions. **Support for student mobility is allowed only when formal cooperation agreements have been implemented at partners level.** More flexibility would be appreciated to facilitate maximum participation (through recognition of status through cooperation at consortium level).

EU Funding opportunities are expected to support capacity building and reinforce structural and institutional cooperation in education and research between the alliance, its members and the Ukrainian partners especially to prepare Ukraine reconstruction. **The dedicated EU schemes should be available for a cycle of 2 or 3 years** (with a large window to submit proposals) to create as much stability as possible and facilitate planning of operations and decision-making by governing bodies.

CONTACT

Aurélien Krejbich | CIVICA Executive Director

E-mail: aurelien.krejbich@sciencespo.fr | web: <https://www.civica.eu/for-ukraine/>

Best practices

Unite! Alliance welcomed 7 Ukrainian universities to join 2 satellite projects in the field of the green transition with the further perspective of establishing permanent and wider cooperation with the whole Unite! network.

2023, Green Transition in Ukrainian Universities, is a project financed by NAWA, led by Wrocław Tech. The project had 3 main tasks:

1. Development of **Green Standards for Ukrainian universities** in the field of education and research activities in the area of engineering and technical sciences; development of the Green Campus Model; implementation of green standards and evaluation of the implementation process.
2. Summer school entitled "**Green technologies for Ukraine's society development**"
3. **Pilot of micro-credentials style training in Ukrainian HEIs**. Development of training modalities for Ukrainian students, conducted by teachers of Ukrainian HEIs in the form of micro-credentials in a thematically related field of green transition.

Two study visits of 14 representatives of Ukrainian HEIs were hosted by TU Graz and TU Darmstadt. They focused on the achievements of hosting universities in green transition.

2024, Green Education in Ukrainian Universities, is a project financed by NAWA, led by Wrocław Tech.

The main task for the Green Education in Ukrainian Universities project: **Green Transition University** has been to further improve the general concept in line with the previous project:

1. Post-implementation evaluation of green standards developed in 2023.
2. Green Transition in Ukrainian Universities, Summer School for 60 Ukrainian students in Wrocław.

Further adjustment of the curriculum of the Summer School is under way to adapt to the needs Ukrainian students of engineering related fields. Other tasks are: development of micro-credentials framework for Ukrainian Higher Education system (pilots), elaboration of training package for academic teachers in Ukrainian HEIs.

Perspectives

- **Extended cooperation with Ukrainian universities to other Unite! Communities**
- **Enhancement of involvement of Unite! partners in cooperation with Ukrainian universities.**
- Organization of **study visits** and mid-term staying/training modalities of representatives of Ukrainian HEIs at least in two Unite! universities per year.
- Long-term financial support of Ukrainian HEIs related to the involvement in the activities of the **Unite!WIDENING project** (Unite!WIDENING+UA project).

CONTACT

Christine Marburger | Unite! Alliance Manager

E-mail: marburger@tu-darmstadt.de | web: <https://www.unite-university.eu/unitenews/unite-solidarity-with-ukraine>

Best practices

Strategic Partnership Agreement:

EU-CONEXUS and Odessa I.I. Mechnikov University (ONU) have signed a **strategic partnership agreement** in July 2022 where the pursuit of a wide range of potential cooperation activities in education, research and institutional development has been agreed upon.

Integration in Alliance Governance, activities and study offers:

To start with, ONU representatives are invited to participate as observers in the EU-CONEXUS **Governing Board, Academic Council and Research Council** in order to get acquainted with and possibilities to join ongoing activities.

ONU is participating in **workshops dedicated to the institutional alignment of partner universities** and has been able to send a student to the **PhD Summer School** organised at South East Technological University in 2023. **ONU students are also invited to participate in joint EU-CONEXUS academic offers**, especially **online** (PHD transversal course Minors, microcredentials, etc.).

Mobilities of students have been organised within the **Erasmus+ KA 171** programme to EU-CONEXUS partner Catholic University of Valencia in 2023. Researchers from ONU are regularly invited to participate in scientific conferences organised by EU-CONEXUS.

Joint project development:

A jointly developed **Erasmus+ Capacity-Building** project was submitted in 2023 but has not received funding.

Also in 2023, ONU joined the **EU-CONEXUS ENABLES** project submission to the **Horizon Europe-WIDERA Call** as a full partner, which has been accepted for funding.

Perspectives

- Collaboration is expected to become more intensive with the concrete implication of ONU in the Horizon Europe **EU-CONEXUS ENABLES** project.
- Mutual knowledge exchange would also be strengthened through more direct contact in mobilities or other concrete collaboration projects. **Simplification and flexibilisation of access to funds supporting mobilities to EU-CONEXUS partner universities would be welcomed.**

CONTACTS

Isabella Baer-Eiselt | e-mail: isabella.baereiselt@univ-lr.fr

Andrey Smitiukh | Strategic partnership with ONU Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University
E-mail: inter@onu.edu.ua | web: <https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/2022/03/01/eu-conexus-in-solidarity-with-the-ukrainian-people/>

Best practices

The Arqus Alliance Rectors' Council firmly condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine in the initial days of the war and issued a **statement** requesting immediate cessation of this action. The Alliance endorsed the joint statement of 41 European Universities Alliances calling for the restoration of peace, democracy and respect of human rights in Ukraine in March 2022.

From the beginning of the war, individual Arqus universities adopted and implemented different lines of action to help the Ukrainian people, namely Ukrainian students and academics, in the aftermath of the Russian military invasion of their country.

The **"Arqus for Ukraine"** project, initiated by the University of Wrocław in 2022 and funded by NAWA, promotes collaboration between 4 Ukrainian universities and Arqus Alliance members. It involves organizing summer schools, hosting workshops, arranging study visits, and conducting a **conference on Higher Education and Human Rights** with National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) participation. NaUKMA became an associated partner in October 2023 after starting the process in December 2022.

ARQUS developed an **Action plan for Ukrainian refugees and at-risk students and scholars** in collaboration with NaUKMA, building on the Integrated Arqus Plan. **NaUKMA's integration in the working group** enhances the perspective and ensures actions are responsive to Ukrainian students and scholars as active counterparts, not just beneficiaries.

Arqus institutions have included NaUKMA and other Ukrainian higher education institutions in their Erasmus+ KA171 mobility applications. Results are pending, but this collaboration aims to create joint teaching opportunities between Arqus and Ukrainian universities.

In **Research and Innovation**, NaUKMA researchers engaged in networking workshops on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and interdisciplinary sessions connecting Climate Change and AI. Additionally, a NaUKMA speaker presented at the **final conference of the Arqus Research and Innovation project** and participated in the **Arqus Annual Conference 2023**, contributing to discussions like the **Plenary Session on Human Rights**.

Perspectives

The Arqus Alliance is committed to continue supporting the resilience and reconstruction of the Ukrainian Higher Education system through its **"Arqus for Ukraine"** programme and specifically by engaging in further collaborations with its associated partner NaUKMA in the areas of **learning and teaching, research and innovation and support for students and staff**.

CONTACTS

Dorothy Kelly | Coordinator of the Arqus Alliance | e-mail: coordinator@arqus-alliance.eu

Fernando Galán | Secretary-General of the Arqus Alliance | e-mail: secretary-general@arqus-alliance.eu

Luisa Bernstorff | Assistant Secretary-General Arqus Alliance | e-mail: luisabern@arqus-alliance.eu

Web: <https://arqus-alliance.eu/news/arqus-universities-response-humanitarian-crisis-ukraine/>



Best practices

EUT+ condemns in the strongest possible terms the invasion of Ukraine, the terrible human suffering that it has caused, and the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure. More specifically, we condemn the attacks on universities and university staff and students who stand for truth and justice. **EUT+ is not just a project, it is an embodiment of the fundamental European values and democratic principles that we share with our colleagues in all Ukrainian universities.** EUT+ believes we must **Think Human First**. Our nine universities stand fully beside Ukraine in spirit and in practice.

- **Providing assistance to Ukrainian students and staff** through scholarships, hostels, and various means of support.
- **Mobilisation of EUT+ members to support Ukrainian refugees**, including scholar grants, fee waivers, language courses, jobs, IT support, and more.
- Over 200 Ukrainian individuals (students and staff) benefiting from scholarships, language courses, and **Erasmus KA171 and KA131** mobility programmes.
- Signing of the first **cooperation agreement and Memorandum of Understanding** between Podilia State University and the European University of Technology (EUT+) at Technical University of Cartagena (UPCT) in 2022.
- **Opening collaboration opportunities between Podilia State University and other EUT+ universities**, enabling student and staff exchanges.

Perspectives

EUT+ members are committed to support Ukrainian people who wish to continue their academic training and research or teaching work, despite the terrible circumstances in which they find themselves. The **EUT+ Accelerate** has as one of its objectives, promoting the integration of **internationalisation** of our activities with non-EU countries, coordinating the cooperation activities and partnerships with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other academic institutions of the global scene through the creation of **EUT+ Global Outreach Office** (EGOO), which will be focused on coordination activities between EUT+ members with special emphasis on Ukraine. Therefore, in its second phase, EUT+ will continue to work to maintain and increase mobility grants, through the work of creating EUT+ Global Outreach Office, which has as one of its specific objectives to **sign agreements for students and staff mobility**, with Ukraine as a special target to promote. EUT+ will also work to maintain the **on-site and e-learning training programmes**, when possible, while developing new proposals as **Erasmus+ KA171** mobilities, **KA2 CBHE** (Capacity Buildings with HEIs) applications, etc. in line with the evolving situation of Ukraine and the evolution of the war.

CONTACTS

Timothée Toury | Project Coordinator of EUT+ | e-mail: timothee.toury@univ-tech.eu

Francisco Vera García and **Maija Lebedeva** | Heads of EUT+ Global Outreach Office

E-mail: francisco.vera@upct.es, majja.Lebedeva@rtu.lv

Web: <https://www.univ-tech.eu/eut-statement-on-ukraine>

Best practices

Transform4Europe (T4EU) partners have signed the statement in support of Ukraine. **Mariupol State University (MSU) is an associated partner of the alliance.** T4EU has brought together Ukrainian universities and their partners in a concerted effort to enhance educational opportunities and support for Ukraine:

BOOST Project (co-funded by the EU):

- Developed by one of the T4EU partner, University of Primorska, with Tartu University, State University of Applied Sciences in Poland, 6 Ukrainian universities, in partnership with the Ministry of education and science of Ukraine.
- Aims to assist **local, remote Ukrainian universities** in integrating the European education area.
- Provides opportunities for skills development (e.g., English), in particular for **under-privileged** students and staff, student-centred blended learning, and internationalisation.
- Features 3 study trips to EU universities, 9 training courses for over 400 participants from administrative and teaching staff, 1 compulsory course for over 1200 students and updates of courses for 1150 students.
- Includes **reports on IT development** (webinars), on **internationalisation strategy** (International week) and the design of a **Roadmap of support for remote universities**.

The University of Silesia received support from "NAWA - Solidarity with Ukraine" to integrate MSU into T4EU as an associated member, Katowice becoming **MSU's Ambassador for institutional cooperation**, which was formalised via a bilateral agreement. More grants were secured for collaboration, focusing on mobility, research, teaching cooperation and support services (e.g., seminar on working after post-traumatic experience). The implementation of activities will refer to the tasks carried out within the T4EU alliance project and made in alignment with its strategy.

MSU and Vytautas Magnus University collaborate through the T4EU Alliance, creating the **MSU Center at Vytautas Magnus University** in October 2023. The aim is to bolster educational and cultural connections, foster exchanges, and hold joint events. Both universities actively engage in public discussions and international conferences as part of this partnership.

Estonian Academy of Arts (EKA) supports Ukrainian war refugees by waiving tuition fees for MA programmes and providing assistance such as scholarships, accommodation, and language courses. They collaborate with Ukrainian art academies, hosting delegations and organising joint initiatives and mentorship programs. EKA also continues its support through various projects, including humanitarian aid and educational programmes.

Perspectives

A dedicated week of activities and events organised by the T4EU Alliance ("T4EU Week"), aims at fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and promoting cross-cultural exchange among partner institutions. Inviting MSU representatives will help integrate the whole community and to present the diversity of European culture.

CONTACT

Prof. Michael Mrissa | PhD, Vice rector for internationalisation, University of Primorska

E-mail: michael.mrissa@upr.si | web: <https://transform4europe.eu/transform4europe-with-ukraine/>

Best practices

Since Aurora's creation, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University has actively participated in the Aurora's unique Capacity Development (CD) Programme, with the aim of reducing research disparities in Europe. From February 2022, Aurora Alliance universities have provided humanitarian aid to Karazin, as well as designing and implementing the long-term, systemic and institutional support, with the help of the [Aurora programme leader](#) at [Karazin](#).

The resulting key actions have been: **protection of Aurora Karazin Colleagues – relocating staff to safety; Karazin Donations Fund - Urgent and targeted fundraising to address institutional needs; Support Action Plan - jointly devised long-term and structural support plan.**

Overview of step-wise efforts and activities according to the **Action Plan (2022-2024)**:

1. **Whole of Alliance approach** - Palacky University Olomouc has been coordinating support.
2. **Addressing urgent needs** - Fundraising: over 65,000 € to assist Karazin's institutional needs.
3. **Structural and Systemic Approach** - Support Action Plan: a collaborative plan developed with Karazin University has addressed immediate, mid-term, and long-term needs.
4. **Saving lives and livelihoods** - Crisis Management: Aurora University has provided crisis management advice to address downsizing at Karazin University.
5. **Support to education in exile** - [International Summer School: Refugee Law & Rights \(report\)](#).
6. **Creating Karazin Peace Education Hub in Aurora 2030**: Focus on establishing Karazin as a peace hub through systematic support in conflict transformation and peace-building.
7. **Inclusion of Karazin University in Aurora projects**: SWAFS and EURIDICE projects.

Perspectives

We plan to have Karazin University become a **full member of the legal identity of Aurora**, in order to become eligible for funds to support the activities we are setting up for the rebuilding of capacity once the war is over, including training for returning Ukrainian refugees.

The **Aurora 2030 programme** aims to involve Karazin University staff and students in task teams, despite financial challenges due to Ukraine's non-Erasmus status.

EU-level support is sought to address the priorities of Karazin University's new strategy, including:

- **Reconstruction of war-damaged property and dormitories of the university.**
- **Staff education and resocialization programmes.**
- **Outreach for exiled staff to maintain cooperation and support post-war rebuilding.**
- **Utilising diaspora resources for funding and collaboration.**
- **Strengthening European partnerships for internationalisation and quality assurance.**
- **Collaboration with stakeholders for regional development.**
- **Joint education programmes with international partners.**
- **Peace education efforts with Aurora Alliance and EU partners.**

CONTACTS

Frans Snijders | ad interim Secretary General | e-mail: f.a.m.snijders@vu.nl

Sabine Allain Sainte Rose | Programme Director | e-mail: s.allain-sainterose@vu.nl

Selma Porobić | CD Programme Leader & Karazin Support Coordinator | E-mail: selma.porobic@upol.cz

Oleksandr Kyzhniak | CD Programme Co-leader/ former Karazin IR Head | e-mail: o.kyzhniak@vu.nl

Web: <https://aurora-universities.eu/support-for-karazin/>, <https://aurora.upol.cz/war-in-ukraine-support-to-our-aurora-partner-v-n-karazin-kharkiv-national-university/>

Best practices

EUPEACE, the European University for Peace, Justice, and Inclusive Societies, aims to equip future citizens with the skills and knowledge to foster peace, justice, and inclusivity. Inspired by the rebuilt bridge of Mostar, symbolising dialogue overcoming conflict, our mission is particularly relevant amid the challenges posed by the war in Ukraine. **As a young university alliance launched in 2023, we have not yet acted jointly to support Ukraine. But as individual universities close ties to our Ukrainian partners have led to a wide range of support activities over the last years.** As an alliance we will try and look for solutions to **scale up our efforts and jointly deepen our cooperation with our Ukrainian partners.**

The cooperation between Justus Liebig University (JLU) and NaUKMA began in 2012 with a strong focus on humanities, political science, and chemistry. In 2022, an **Information Point** was set up at JLU. Significant student mobility has developed with around 410 Erasmus+ exchanges and 15 virtual joint courses (tandem courses) since 2021. In addition, E+ CBHE funding has been made available for NaUKMA members via the "Designing and implementing Liberal Arts Studies in Ukraine - LibArt-UA" project, and a project for a Joint Degree Masters programme in the field of Ukraine-Europe studies is in preparation.

The cooperation between Marburg University and Kyiv National Economic University (KNEU) began in 1997 and has enabled virtual exchanges for approximately 1500 KNEU students through "MO:VE-Marburg Online" since 2022. It encompasses 20 Bachelor and 14 Master courses involving 28 Ukrainian and 11 Marburg educators, including German language courses. Online scholarships and honoraries have been provided, and plans are underway for closer teaching collaboration.

The University of Calabria (UNICAL) - Ukraine cooperation has provided scholarships for Ukrainian students and organised lectures & events to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The cooperation between University of West Bohemia (UWB) and Ukraine involved research projects on renewable energy and nanostructured metal coatings. They also participated in the **Future4Refugees** Project with the Polish Fundacja Ignatianum. Additionally, they implemented the **Erasmus+ project "State without difficulties,"** which supports the integration of Ukrainian students in the Czech Republic.

Perspectives

Since 2022, the School of Business at the Marburg University and the Kyiv National Economic University have plans for a joint degree programme, **but the national funding, secured for the German-Ukrainian cooperation, excluded actions related to the development of a joint degree programme. Some seed-funding for the labour-intensive planning phase would be needed to move this forward.**

CONTACTS

Michael Groll | Marburg University (UMR) (Germany) | e-mail: michael.groll@verwaltung.uni-marburg.de

Markéta Ulčová | University of West Bohemia (UWB) (Pilsen) | e-mail: mulcova@rek.zcu.cz

Web: <https://www.eupeace.eu/>

Best practices

Silesian university in Opava has been providing and financing various activities right from 2022/2023 academic year, including:

- Study programmes by different specialties for Ukrainian students in Czech and English languages **free of charge**.
- Special **scholarship programme** for Ukrainian students with refugee status has been implemented and maintained until now.
- For quicker adaptation of students-refugees from Ukraine in Czechia, different **support programmes and events were organised in the university**, provided by staff and students-volunteers. An **intensive course of the Czech language** was organised for Ukrainian students and teaching staff, allowing for continuing studies, or teaching and research
- Ukrainian students were **accommodated in the university's dormitory free of charge**.

Perspectives

The Krakow University of Technology plans to launch **free engineering studies** in Ukraine for Ukrainian and war-displaced candidates, aiming at assisting in the country's reconstruction. These studies, unprecedented in Poland, will include Ukrainian academic teachers and dual-language instruction in Polish and Ukrainian, covering engineering subjects and Polish language training.

With thematic scope matching Polish standards, students will graduate with European diplomas and specialise in knowledge for Ukraine's needs. The university will offer administrative and peer support for adaptation. Additional education offers in other fields are currently prepared. Volunteering and psychological support is provided to Ukrainian colleagues, starting with the provision for accommodation for Ukrainian refugees and employment for displaced professors, seeking further support through grant applications.

The European Commission could **broaden opportunities for Ukrainian institutions to participate in Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe**, in order to foster greater cooperation and mutual learning. Additionally, the Commission could support the creation of:

- **virtual learning platforms** to promote seamless collaboration and knowledge exchange among Ukrainian and European universities, based on a diverse range of online courses, webinars and conferences, enriching the learning experience for all stakeholders involved.
- **collaborative research groups** between Ukrainian and European universities, in particular on renewable energy, cybersecurity, and sustainable development, with open access to publications in Ukrainian universities
- **entrepreneurship hubs at Ukrainian universities**, as catalysts for innovation, offering students and faculty mentorship, training, and access to funding opportunities
- **language exchange programmes** between Ukrainian and European universities
- **Digital infrastructure and digital skills training programmes**

CONTACTS

Daniel Stavárek | Vice-Rector of Silesian University in Opava | e-mail: stavarek@opf.slu.cz

Dariusz Bogdał Dariusz Bogdał | Vice-Rector of Cracow University of Technology

E-mail: pcbogdal@cyf-kr.edu.pl | web: <https://starseu.org/>

Best practices

Our collaboration with Ukrainians within UNIGreen, the green European University, began in 2022 when we applied for funding from NAWA for a project (UNIGreen+UA 1.0) aimed at presenting the principles of European Universities to our Ukrainian partners. In 2023, we implemented the project, the description of which is presented below.

The **UNIGreen-UA 1.0** project initiated to foster scientific collaboration and enhance mobility among Ukrainian PhD students and academic staff, has been a multifaceted initiative encompassing a wide range of activities. **Aimed at bridging gaps and building long-lasting partnerships**, the project's objectives were met through carefully planned and executed activities.

The primary objectives of the UNIGreen-UA 1.0 project were to:

1. **Facilitate scientific and academic mobility.**
2. Foster international relations and encourage knowledge exchange.
3. Support Ukrainian PhD students and academic staff through internships, study visits, and participation in the UNIGreen conference.
4. Enhance language, communication, and cross-cultural competences.

The main tasks involve organising internships and webinars for Ukrainian doctoral students and facilitating study visits to UNIGreen Alliance Universities. The internships aim to provide practical experience, enhance research skills, and promote academic development, while webinars focus on scientific and nonscientific themes for PhDs. Study visits allow representatives from Ukrainian universities to explore alliance members' structures, cultures, and specific academic practices, including those of UNIGreen.

Outcomes:

Participants experienced notable enhancements in their competencies, especially in scientific knowledge, research skills, and cross-cultural competencies, as evidenced by pre- and post-activity assessments. The project significantly contributed to building and reinforcing international relations, promoting mobility, and paving the way for future collaborations. Knowledge exchange was facilitated through PhD internships, study visits, and the UNIGreen conference, enriching participants' personal and professional development.

Perspectives

We have completed all the tasks that were agreed upon with our Ukrainian partners; the entire project has been realised according to plan. Moreover, **we have secured funding for the continuation of our cooperation, thus, activities aimed at strengthening the collaboration between the UNIGreen Alliance and the Ukrainian higher education community will also be conducted in this year, 2024.**

CONTACT

Katarzyna Specjalska | manager of UNIGreen+UA 1.0 project at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences
| E-mail: katarzyna_specjalska@sggw.edu.pl | web: https://www.sggw.edu.pl/unigreen_for_ua/



Best practices

The Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences, together with all members of the EU GREEN consortium launched in 2023, is actively involved in helping universities in Ukraine through the **INTERACT project** financed by NAWA.

The aim of INTERACT project is to involve Ukrainian partner universities in meetings and other activities of the EU GREEN consortium :

- Involving Ukrainian universities in EU GREEN consortium meetings and activities.
- Kick-off meeting in January-February 2023 gathered EU GREEN members and 10 Ukrainian universities to outline cooperation plans.
- 21 research internships hosted at Wrocław University due to war instability and logistical challenges.
- EU GREEN Senate meeting in September 2023 elected a Ukrainian representative.
- UPWr Staff Week in September 2023 facilitated knowledge exchange for 29 Ukrainian university employees.
- Hosting Ukrainian staff for familiarisation with funding procedures in December 2023.
- Ukrainian student participation in EU GREEN activities, including Blended Intensive Program and Summer Schools, surpassing planned numbers.

Perspectives

We intend to maintain the achieved results of support for Ukrainian universities by conducting another edition of the **INTERACT 2.0** project financed by NAWA. We have extended the number of participating Ukrainian universities to 12.

The following activities will be organised:

- Study visits with the participation of universities representatives and scientists from Ukraine, aimed at consulting future projects and establishing new scientific alliances,
- Involvement of students from Ukraine in summer schools;
- Participation of representatives of Ukrainian universities in consortium meetings in order to network and establish cooperation between Ukrainian universities and members of alliances,
- Research internships dedicated to scientists and representatives of universities from Ukraine.

In the long-term perspective, we hope to strengthen and extend current relations and networks both in didactic and research activities. Currently, we focus on matchmaking processes of Ukrainian and consortium researchers as well as equipping Ukrainian teachers with relevant methods and skills enabling conducting modern didactic which will enable them to undergo European accreditation processes. We also share our know-how on applying for external funds and managing international projects. We hope that this comprehensive approach will support the process of Ukrainian higher education incorporation to the European Education Area.

CONTACT

Maria Sobota | Interact project at Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences
E-mail: maria.sobota@upwr.edu.pl | web: <https://eugreenalliance.eu/>

As long as the war to defend Ukraine's independence continues, higher education, along with society as a whole, is exposed to all the negative effects of this tragic situation, which prevents normal planning of activities.

One must take into account the fact that more than 10 million Ukrainian citizens have had to relocate, seeking safe havens in the parts of the country that are not at war, and several million are temporarily outside Ukraine. More than 30 universities have been forced to evacuate completely, leaving all their infrastructure in the war zone.

On the other hand, the Ukrainian authorities and higher education are fully aware of the need to continue the work of universities and the need for reforms related to the process of accession to the European Union, which has already begun.

All of these limitations affect the choice of forms and means of cooperation between universities in Ukraine and alliances of European universities or other universities in the European Union, but they do not limit this cooperation completely.

Given the divergent potential of European universities alliances, the degree of involvement in cooperation with Ukrainian universities before and after the outbreak of the war, and limited financial resources, one can make recommendations on various aspects of cooperation and possible measures, and the final decision should be a sovereign assessment of European and Ukrainian partner universities.

One of the basic forms of support for Ukrainian universities may be support in terms of know-how in all reforms undertaken by Ukrainian universities on the way to accession to the European Union. Sharing knowledge on how to most effectively introduce European legal norms, principles of quality assurance, subject recognition, organization of studies, etc., can effectively contribute to a faster alignment of European and Ukrainian standards.

Many European universities have already prepared subjects in online form (MOOC), which can be used for the educational needs of Ukrainian universities.

For such subjects to yield the expected results, they should be adapted to the requirements of Ukrainian universities and the Ukrainian educational cycle. This requires a small amount of money and relatively little time.

Since Ukrainian students studying in the online form may be either inside or outside Ukraine, the credit for study subjects based on the subjects taken should be the responsibility of Ukrainian universities.

The participation of Ukrainian students in various types of Erasmus+ (or related) mobility seems very limited, and it is necessary to emphasize virtual mobility.

The creation of joint degree programmes at this stage of the implementation of reforms in the Ukrainian education system seems to be hampered; the main emphasis should be on joint subjects or subject modules. Such a form of educational cooperation will certainly have a significant psychological impact, too.

Given the scope and complexity of the necessary reforms being undertaken in Ukraine, it is necessary to involve not only the teaching and research staff of the universities, but also other stakeholder groups, such as library staff, deans' offices, etc., so as not to leave any group of employees out of the reach of European universities.

It is extremely complicated to conduct joint research in most fields when Ukrainian universities are constantly exposed to the direct negative and destructive effects of warfare, often without access to laboratories and research equipment. In this situation, preserving the research potential of Ukrainian universities is an extremely difficult but necessary task with a view to the future reconstruction of the country.

Ukraine's universities now vary widely in size, the extent to which their capacity has been destroyed, the degree to which staff and students are dispersed, and the daily danger caused by the war. Therefore, the needs of these universities vary greatly in financial, structural, and institutional terms. In this context, it seems an effective way to place the initiative in the hands of Ukrainian universities themselves and their European partners, affiliated with alliances of European universities or outside them, for creating a comprehensive aid programme at a time when the internal situation in Ukraine is changing dynamically may create the danger of inadequate action to meet needs. A fund that would allow specific, wide-ranging activities, described in detail by alliances of European universities and their Ukrainian partners, would help in this situation.

Certainly, the war that Ukraine is currently waging in defence of its independence limits the scope of action, but it definitely increases the motivation of citizens to act, and this potential for energy should be the basis for activity on the road to aligning Ukraine's higher education with EU requirements.

Prof. Rafał Witkowski
Vice-rector International relations
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, EPICUR

This report documents the key messages of the addresses and presentations prepared by speakers and held at the event "European and Ukrainian Universities' Cooperation: State of Play and Future Perspectives" at the University of Strasbourg on 13 March 2024. After the event, Ukrainian participants and European universities alliances were invited to contribute and share their feedback, best practices, and suggestions. This report is based on all these contributions, for which we thank the authors, including for the pictures & map credits. Introduction, Executive Summary, Final remarks, and the editing of the report were jointly provided by the EPICUR teams at the University of Strasbourg and at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań.

Strasbourg, 19 April 2024



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