

DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY OF UKRAINIAN STUDENTS WITHIN THE EU

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According to The Regulation on the Implementation Procedure of Academic Mobility Right [2], approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2015, Ukrainian students should be provided with the opportunities to participate in academic mobility programs – both the *internal* (those implemented by national participants of the educational process in higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the territory of Ukraine) and *international* academic mobility programs (implemented by national participants of the educational process in HEIs – partners outside Ukraine and foreign participants of the educational process in national HEIs). The Regulation on the Implementation Procedure of Academic Mobility Right [2] approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2015, which complies with the 1999 Bologna Declaration [6], signified national recognition of the XXI century global education strategies [2]. The urge for such document, establishing the procedure of academic mobility (AM) programs organization for national higher education institutions (HEIs) and those outside Ukraine, arises from the demand for higher education which has increased by almost 50% since the beginning of the century [3, p. 127] and low competitiveness of Ukrainian HEIs among the EU countries.

In 2013–2014 Global Competitiveness Index Ukraine ranks 43 out of 148 in the area of “Higher education and training” [3, p. 14]. Dysfunctional economy, political and social instability in the transitional society deeply affect the higher education system of Ukraine. Insufficient funding of higher education often leads to inadequate academic facilities and low quality of instruction by unmotivated and poorly rewarded faculty. One way to accelerate the integration of Ukraine into European education community is to develop the framework and opportunities for international AM of students whose experience would bring positive changes to the national economy. The expected impact cannot be underestimated since the number of students in Ukrainian HEIs is quite large (over 1,3 mln in 2015-16 exclusive of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine) [1].

Academic mobility programs are aimed at fostering *degree mobility* — study at HEI different from place of education of educational process participant, with the aim to obtain a higher education degree which is evidenced by a document on higher education; and *credit mobility* — study at HEI different from place of education of educational process participant, with the aim to accumulate ECTS credits and / or relevant competences, learning outcomes (without ECTS credits), which will be recognized by the home HEI. Academic mobility for participants of the educational process under degrees of Junior Bachelor, Bachelor, Master and PhD at the national HEIs is realized through such forms as: participation in academic mobility programs, language internship and research internship [2].

Various sources provide different estimates of the average flow of Ukrainian students participating into international mobility programs. Inter-institutional agreements between HEIs of Ukraine and other countries contribute to 4 000 people participating in international programs and internships annually. According to the EC report, 9 642 students from Ukraine studied abroad in 2012-13 [4, p. 30]. Other international AM opportunities in Ukraine are extensively associated with individual students’ efforts and their financial self-sufficiency. UNESCO indicates that as many as 39,670 students from Ukraine studied abroad in 2012. The leading destinations for Ukrainian students are (data as of 2013–2015): Russia (12,043), Poland (9,485 students), Germany (5,850), the Czech Republic (2,098), the UK (1,035), Austria (1,099), Italy (2,063), France (1,131), and the USA (1,509) [5]. Among these academic destinations Poland has been facing the most steadily expanding contingent of Ukrainian students over the last decade.

The report by Perspektywy Education Foundation reveals dynamic increase in the number of Ukrainian students: in the academic year 2013/2014 there were 15,123, i.e. 42% of the total number of foreign students. The number increased by 55% within one year [9]. Ukrainian students are the largest single group of foreign students in Poland which totals 30,589, representing 54% of the total number of foreign students currently studying in the country, followed by Belarusians (4118), Norwegians (1538), Spaniards 1188 and Swedes (1290) [8]. The flow of Ukrainian students has now reached 57,000 –making up over 50% of the total number of foreign students in Poland [8] and accounting for more than 4% of all students getting higher education in Poland. The increase of the internationalization factor is due to both the growing number of foreigners and the decrease of the total number of students in Poland. In the academic year 2014/15 there were 1,469,386 people studying in Polish universities – over 80,491 students fewer than in the previous year, and over 265,000 fewer than three years ago [8]. The introduction of the Polish Erasmus Programme for Ukraine, which awarded 500 scholarships to Ukrainian students in academic year 2014-2015, also facilitates study in the country [10].

Although Ukrainian students constitute a large group within the international student contingent in Germany, the role of internationally granted scholarships in their increasing mobility should not be considered significant. In many cases Ukrainian baccalaureate students prefer paying for their one-year master’s degree program in German universities rather than applying for programs such as DAAD etc. which admit a small number of applicants.

It seems indisputable that international student mobility in Ukraine with the few currently operating major programs (Erasmus Mundus and DAAD) is underdeveloped. This is almost twice less than in BRIC countries [7, p. 14]. On the whole, student academic mobility doesn’t seem to be nationally supported in Ukraine, while it is well organized,

granted and fostered in economically developed countries. Even though a number of projects have been implemented to initiate a sustainable dialogue on higher education institutional reforms among European and Ukrainian stakeholders (“Erasmus”, IAESTE, “Socrates”, “Tempus”, DAAD, LEAD), students from Ukraine demonstrate low level of involvement to countries other than Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic (the overall number of students engaged in international academic mobility programs doesn’t exceed 2%) [4, p.4].

Literature

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