

International Charity Foundation
“International Foundation for Education Policy Research”

Monitoring Study

**THE UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
AND ITS ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN HIGHER
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA**

ANALYTICAL REPORT

Kyiv * 2012

ББК 74.58(4УКР)
В90



ЦЕ ВИДАННЯ ЗДІЙСНЕНО ЗА ФІНАНСОВОЇ
SPONSORED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
ТА ЕКСПЕРТНОЇ ПІДТРИМКИ
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INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY RESEARCH

International Charity Foundation "International Foundation for Education Policy Research"



Ukrainian Association of Students Self-Government



Democratic Initiatives Foundation

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Published in 2012 in Ukraine by Publishing House «TAXON»

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"International Foundation for Education Policy Research", 2012

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ISBN 978-966-7128-84-5 (Engl.)

ISBN 978-966-7128-83-8 (Ukr.)

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Summary

The purpose of this Report is to present an overview of the current situation in the Ukrainian high education system and its transformation processes in the context of entering the European Higher Education and Research Area, and to compare results of reforms undertaken in the area of education in Ukraine with the developments in other countries of the continent. The Report explores specific characteristics of the trajectory of development of national higher education in Ukraine with focus on societal, political, cultural, historical, and mentality factors.

The composition and content of the Report are in line with approaches accepted for preparation of analytical documentation supporting the evolution of the Bologna Process, thus diverging from usual patterns of traditional overviews and reports on the situation in Ukrainian higher education. The Program of Actions for the Bologna Process Phase II (2010-2020) adopted at the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Conference of European Ministers of Education and Science in 2009 demands open analysis of accomplishments, failures, and future outlooks.

The Report is based on principles of cross-disciplinary and comparative approaches which makes it possible to combine methods of statistical research, sociological studies, and review of foundational and regulatory documents with observations of the actual processes in the area. Desk research, questionnaires, surveys, and interviews have been used as inputs for designing appropriate tools and indicators. Independent assessments and estimations have been made for a range of important quantitative indicators. Experts of the International Charity Foundation “International Foundation for Education Policy Research”, sociologists, and activists of the Ukrainian Association of Students Self-Government were involved in preparation of the Report which, in the authors’ opinion, allowed a more independent, systemic, and comprehensive view of national higher education and consideration of the special interests of various stakeholder groups.

The Report consists of the summary, background, nine sections, and a list of the main sources used in its preparation.

Section I “Strategy of Legislative and Regulatory Support of Higher Education Reform”

is dedicated to the analysis of the transformations which national education legislation has been undergoing during the last decade and future prospects of its reformation in line with the international obligations and domestic strategies of Ukraine. The conclusion points out insufficient effectiveness of government efforts and a lack of active commitment by the education community to modernization of Ukrainian higher education.

Section II “Structure of Higher Education and Instruments of European Comparison”

covers major concerns in the areas of transformation of higher education structures and

cycles, implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, introduction of the European Diploma Supplement, and nostrification and acceptance of foreign education qualifications. Certain achievements may be identified in each of these areas; however, the desired result remains unattained due to an essential lack of consistency, logic, focus, and good coordination of efforts.

Section III “Implementation of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area in Ukraine” aims at demonstrating the implementation of policies, procedures, and tools of internal and external higher education quality assurance in Ukraine. Provided examples illustrate implementation of European best practices in this area, and are complemented by evaluation of accumulated experiences in their application.

Section IV “Creation National Frame of Qualifications” gives an overview of the origin and specific character of the adaptation of the European Framework of Qualifications to the Ukrainian context. It is highlighted that a qualitative transformation of the National Frame of Qualifications into an effective tool for designing, identification, reference, recognition, planning, and development of qualifications may only be accomplished through mutual trust and collaboration between the government, businesses, the education community, and the public.

Section V “Lifelong Learning” assesses the correspondence of this notion to the nationally-recognized concept of “post-diploma education”. It presents a review of future outlooks for the development of flexible education paths and the recognition of competencies and skills acquired through non-formal training as guarantors of successful employment of Ukrainian university graduates.

Section VI “Economics of Higher Education: Public, Corporate and Private Interest” draws attention to financing of higher education as a crucial factor of building a knowledge-based society. It is argued that Ukraine has created a distorted system of relations between the state, the corporate sector, and the public in the field of economics of higher education, with its main feature being an unfair shifting onto citizens of the obligations to support education where these obligations to contribute are disproportional to the existing levels of income, while implications of such an arrangement are not adequately understood either by the government or by the business community.

Section VII “Social Dimension in Higher Education” presents insights into the key components making up the social dimension of higher education, technologies and instruments that ensure equal access, and the meaning and controversial character of “positive discrimination” for certain groups of people in Ukrainian reality. The need to adopt a broader view of the social dimension as a factor in assessing the maturity of society, as well as a stronger focus on building students’ capacity for employability, are emphasized.

Section VIII “Transformation of Higher Education: Student Factor” spotlights the necessity for building a philosophy of higher education based on equal partnership between universities and students in order to promote further advancements in society. What can guarantee implementation of this principle is full adoption of the European recommendations on creating conditions for internal and international mobility, and students’ responsible participation and ownership in higher education quality assurance and management of education institutions.

Section IX “Problems of Corruption in Higher Education” draws attention to the prevalence and social dangers of this phenomenon as a factor in the moral deformation of Ukrainian society. It has been proven that sustainable progress in combating corruption may only be achieved through implementation of a targeted program of actions to remove corruption-breeding functions in education and in the government’s management of education.

BACKGROUND

Building of a national system of higher education in Ukraine was launched after the country declared its independence from the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1991. This was undertaken through the transformation of the Soviet system of higher education which was functioning on the territory of the then Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The dominating tendencies in the development of the Ukrainian higher education system throughout the 1990s included de-militarization and dismantling of Soviet ideological underpinnings of higher education against the background of partial de-industrialization of the country[, -omit]; transition from elitist to mass-scale higher education; humanization of teaching and instruction; increasing the role of humanities in a wide range of educational programs; and the diversification of sources of funding and the emergence of the private sector as one of those sources. Building on the experience accumulated by European countries, Ukraine has introduced a multi-level system of higher education, create a licensing and accreditation framework, and initiated elaboration of education standards and a new legal framework. This allowed bringing the national higher education system closer to the academic tradition and modern practices of the European higher education systems.

In the late 1990s the process of creating the European Higher Education and Research Area was institutionalized (commonly referred to as the “Bologna Process”). Ukraine obtained legitimization of the transformations and advancements in the national higher education system which had taken place in the preceding decade by adopting the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” (2002). The new law promoted and called for positive outcomes of higher education modernization; however, it did not provide any vehicle for its further development in the context of the Bologna Process. An important consequence of the lengthy period of drafting, discussion, and adoption which took four years to complete (1998-2002) was the considerable impact on the law’s content of Parliament’s political maneuvering. This accounts for the fact that the law contained a number of internal inconsistencies, retained a range of rudimentary education norms, and on the whole had an outdated character from the time of its adoption.

The dynamic evolution of the European Union in the early 2000s speeded up promotion and implementation of education reforms which demonstrated their attractiveness and viability for countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Throughout 2002-2005 the forward-looking part of Ukrainian academia became convinced that Ukraine had to join the Bologna Process in the most accelerated manner. Ukraine’s actual joining (in 2005) was preceded by implementation of wide-scale education experiments aimed at bringing forward models to harmonize the national and European education spaces.

Unfortunately, no consensus was reached on the principal ways of how to modernize the higher education system. On the middle and lower levels of university hierarchy no adequate understanding was formed concerning opportunities and prospects of the European vector of transformations. For a long period of time students were not receiving any relevant information, and thus did not become advocates and active participants of modernization. The mentality of top managers at the majority of universities was still dominated by obsolete stereotypes, which in many cases led to an essentially formalistic approach to European education reforms and innovations.

I. Strategy of Legislative and Regulatory Support of Higher Education Reform

Ukraine's joining the Bologna Process necessitated prompt implementation of a number of systemic and structural changes in higher education following the recommendations outlined in guiding documents of the Bologna Ministerial Conferences. In many countries this process was rather painful, causing controversial reactions and serious resistance of some population groups. However, the vast majority of the Bologna Process signatory states accepted the general "rules of play" and displayed political will in carrying out pledged obligations.

The key instrument for implementation of innovations in European countries was adoption of new higher education legislation. This was also reflected in building national education policy in Ukraine. Careful analysis of this policy helps identify three periods which were characterized by different trends in the evolution of education legislation.

The first period covers the time from 2005 to 2007 (in some issues since 2003) and includes the first unsuccessful attempts to modernize the Ukrainian Higher Education Law. The Ministry introduced the Credit Accumulation Modular System as the main principle of organizing learning, which seemed like a mechanical combination of ECTS and the national modular ranking system (created in 1990s on the basis of developments in the late Soviet period). During this time, due to rapid economic growth, state funds allocated for higher education increased, but this was not properly leveraged to provide target support to reforms and facilitate structural rebuilding of the sector.

In the period from 2003 to 2007, a number of draft laws were introduced in the Ukrainian Parliament for review. They all envisaged considerable modernization of existing education legislation and were intended to eliminate numerous deficiencies and inconsistencies of the Law of 2002. On four occasions the proposed laws were adopted (24 June 2004, 22 September 2005, 21 February 2006 and 22 March 2007) but were later vetoed by different Presidents, mainly for budgetary and fiscal reasons. At the same time, during this period the Ukrainian Higher Education Law was subject to ten amendments through adoption of laws and one amendment was enacted by the ruling of the Constitutional Court — all of them aimed at limiting government budget allocations or resolving corporate problems for separate professional groups. It should be underlined that draft laws proposed in the period from 2003 to 2007 did not address any strategic tasks of modernizing education legislation.

The second period covers 2008 through the beginning of 2010. In 2008, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science initiated development of a new version of the Ukrainian

Higher Education Law which intended to stipulate a comprehensive range of measures to modernize the national higher education system, in particular, implementation of the country's obligations in relation to the Bologna Process. Regrettably, failure to adopt this law was conditioned by the reluctance of the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance to expand university autonomy, the weak political will of the country's leaders, and the lack of consistent support of the Parliament's majority in the Government.

This draft law, designed by the Ministry of Education with inputs from higher education institutions, was essentially cropped and botched in the process of numerous coordinated approvals in various ministries and agencies. Due to this, the draft law was deprived of the most important systemic innovations which defined the direction of further reform efforts in this sector. When the coordinated agreement procedure was completed, the draft law received approval of the Cabinet of Ministers on 23 September 2009; however, the decision to bring this law up for Parliament's review was never put into action. In its final revised edition the draft lost most of its useful innovations.

At the same time, in October 2009, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and its key documents were officially enacted in higher education institutions, followed by approval of the Methodological Guidelines intended to resolve controversies in the legal regulation of the education process. The important steps undertaken to reform the system included allowing higher education institutions independence in designing curricula, approval of the Concept and Program for organizing Master's degree studies in Ukraine, the Order on the structure of education and professional programs and curricula for Bachelor degree studies, and approval of the Provisional Regulation on cross-sectional individualized humanitarian education.

The third period started in March 2010 and continues to the present. Expectations of reforms in the area of higher education which have been shaped by social demands of society were reflected in the Program of Economic Reforms of the Ukrainian President V.Yanukovich for 2010-2014 "Prosperous Society, Competitive Economy, Effective State".

Among the steps for reforming the education system outlined in the Program, those relevant to higher education include:

"Improvement of the education management system:

- building a unified education policy, ensuring continuity across education levels;
- increasing independence of education institutions in managing financial resources;

- optimizing the network of education institutions, taking into consideration actual demographic and economic factors and raising education quality (creating consolidated regional higher education institutions);
- revisiting out-dated standard staffing norms.

Raising quality and competitiveness of education:

- building and development of a national education quality assessment system; organization of independent qualification centers, including those to confirm qualifications according to the European system of standards; facilitation of setting up independent national rankings of secondary schools, vocational training institutions, and universities;
- extensive implementation of information and communication technologies in education institutions;
- alignment of qualification profiles, standards, and curricula with the education and qualification demands of working environments and workplaces;
- motivating employees to contribute to the preparation of curricula and agreement of education and professional standards; refocusing curricula on increasing the share of practically-oriented training components; large-scale implementation of internship programs;
- separating academic and practically-oriented programs in higher education institutions and development of professionally-oriented higher education.

Ensuring access to education:

- implementation of the National Frame of Qualifications;
- promoting development of Lifelong Learning.

Raising effectiveness of education financing:

- developing and adopting the unified standard of education costing per student;
- shifting the emphasis in funding education institutions from the principle of the of maintenance facilities to the principle budgeting based on the number of students and costing standard per student;
- extending opportunities of education institutions to attract additional costs by legalizing the endowment institute – charity targeted non-commercial funds; utilizing grant support for research projects and education innovations; extending fee-paying services delivered by education institutions;

– changing the approach to drawing up the state order for specialist training by implementing the economy (region) demand forecast.”

The last two years have been characterized by the existence of the President’s political will to implement reforms which has affected the commitment of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sport, Cabinet of Ministers, and Parliament. After a lengthy period of revision the Cabinet of Ministers brought to Parliament a new version of the Higher Education Draft Law based on the last imperfect version of the previous Government.

The document gained rather controversial responses from academia and the wider public. With the purpose of obtaining formal legitimization of the draft, the 3d All-Ukrainian Congress of Educators was convened in October 2011, whose specially selected cohort unanimously supported the ministerial draft law. At the same time, the draft elicited negative reaction from numerous academic communities, NGOs, student organizations, and independent experts. It is important to spotlight the parallel introduction of an alternative draft prepared by the President’s Official Representative in the Ukrainian Parliament, Mr. Y.Myroshnychenko, which was evaluated by many observers as much more progressive and relevant to the tasks of reforming higher education. Apart from this, the Parliament’s opposition also brought forward its own draft law.

Such wide rejection of the official draft legislation forced Prime-Minister N.Azarov to attempt to reach alignment of positions and views through a working group designated to revise and refine the document. The working group led by Mr. M.Zgurovsky, Rector of the National Technical University “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”, reviewed the Government’s draft law, alternative documents, and thousands of proposals offered by academia, the public, and student organizations. The result of the working group’s effort is a considerably refined draft law which provides for implementation of the public-state management of higher education, ensures execution of Ukraine’s international obligations, extends autonomy of education institutions, and restricts administrative functions of the Ministry. At the moment, the draft law is undergoing a process of coordinated review by different Ministries which continue to resist education deregulation.

Over the last year the Government and the Ministry hurriedly adopted a range of high- stakes decisions. Independent experts and observers are quite reserved in their evaluation of the quality of these documents, considering many of their norms to be controversial and inconsistent. An example includes the decision to transfer to the authority and subordination of the Ministry of Education those education institutions subordinated to other agencies, which was adopted in November 2011 and revoked in February 2012. The Ministry also suspended a number of decisions adopted by the preceding leadership, in particular those which were vital for reforming the system and harmonizing higher education and research with the European education space.

Thus, the legislative efforts of all Ukrainian Governments to implement the Bologna Process recommendations have so far remained of small effect. On the one hand, the formal step of Ukraine entering the European Higher Education and Research Area has been undertaken, international education projects are being developed and delivered, and the ECTS has been nominally introduced. On the other hand, Ukraine has not yet adopted a three-cycle system of education levels, the ECTS has not become the underpinning basis for organizing teaching and developing higher education standards, and the competency-based approach has not become the major framework for learning and assessing learning outcomes. University autonomy remains no more than a popular slogan, international and domestic teacher- and student mobility schemes have not received wide state support, and the system of higher education quality guarantee has not been created, but is substituted by departmental control of the activities of education institutions.

II. Structure of Higher Education and Instruments of European Comparison

Levels (cycles) of higher education

One of the essential elements of building the Ukrainian national education system was the introduction of a multi-level education scheme necessitated by the lack of internal flexibility in the traditional specialist training scheme and the requirement to harmonize it with modern education systems.

The current specialist training framework includes the following education qualification levels: junior specialist, bachelor, specialist, and master. It was shaped according to Article 30 of the Ukrainian Education Law (1996) and Regulation on Education Qualification Levels approved by the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution of 20 January 1998 N65.

The duration of bachelor degree programs is four years; for specialist degree – one year; master’s degree – from one to one and one-half years. This diversion from globally-accepted standards of study timelines was a consequence of the compromise-based transformation of Soviet curricula into bachelor degree programs caused by the dismantling of the ideological underpinnings of the Soviet system and the collapse of the authoritarian administrative, state-planned economy. The retention of “specialist” degree study programs was a tribute to deeply-rooted traditional practice and, in fact, “conserved” the outdated model of training.

Implementation of master’s degree programs in the late 1990s was more of a demonstration character rather than any real content change. These programs had very little difference in comparison with specialist level studies (e.g. only a few disciplines), did not contain any real research focus, and were not sufficiently supported by strong faculty or research facilities. Unfortunately, during the following years the national master’s programs did not get any closer to compliance with modern models adopted in developed countries. The master’s training cycle remains too short (in most cases it is a one-year course), which does not allow for the possibility to deliver adequate content and quality of training. These programs are insufficiently focused on conducting research and the cross-disciplinary character of contemporary research explorations; there are no provisions for building flexible education paths and student mobility. Ukrainian master’s programs are oriented towards preparation of research and faculty staff, while the global practice gives wide examples of using such programs as leadership schools in professional and business fields.

The introduction of the “junior specialist” level in the national higher education system was also not well-reasoned and lacked clear logic. Even now we encounter inconsistency between junior specialist and bachelor curricula; there is no well-shaped concept of this level as a

“short cycle” of bachelor’s studies and no opportunities for mobility through incompatibility with similar programs in other countries.

Despite the fact that the current Ukrainian Higher Education Law has been in effect for ten years, the stipulated Requirements to education qualification levels of higher education have not been elaborated.

Reforming postgraduate programs (“aspirantura”) into the third cycle is one of the urgent recommendations on transformation of the higher education system in Ukraine and its harmonization with the European Higher Education and Research Area.

Engaging in postgraduate learning and the procedure for awarding scientific degrees in Ukraine differs considerably from European practices. Postgraduate programs include mandatory study of such disciplines as philosophy, foreign languages, and methodology of scientific research. Upon completion of the first year in a postgraduate course, students take examinations in foreign languages and philosophy, followed by an examination in a specialized research field (the “candidate’s minimum”).

European doctoral degree programs involve cross-disciplinary courses on research methodologies, field-specific courses, participation in scientific discussions, seminars on project management, development of academic skills, etc.

Many research supervisors in Ukrainian postgraduate studies deliver their functions only nominally; students are practically excluded from a productive research environment and are forced to pursue their research on their own. It is not common and not encouraged to have more than one research supervisor or engage in multi-field explorations. There are no national programs to promote postgraduate students’ nation-wide mobility, and examples of international mobility are results of independent searches and initiatives of individual young researchers or their supervisors.

It is worthwhile mentioning one case of building an experimental third-cycle program. The most sustainable and vivid example of such efforts is organization of the Doctoral School at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Programs delivered by the School have been elaborated with reference to the best European models and practices and include internally developed criteria and principles for preparing Doctors of Philosophy: elaboration of comprehensive cross-field methodological courses, real integration of international partners into the academic and research processes, and organization of research seminars and publications of research results in internationally-acclaimed scientific periodicals.

Unfortunately, such localized attempts to implement structured doctoral programs did not receive support from the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sport, and as a result were not widely disseminated and appropriately recognized.

The most typical way to adapt recommendations on implementation of the third cycle is formalistic re-naming of “candidate nauk” into Doctor of Philosophy. Moreover, all versions of the new draft law on higher education retain this fake approach to reform the system of learning for scholars and researchers.

The procedure for awarding scientific degrees in Ukraine also remains formalistic. Decisions rendered by specialized boards at universities and research institutions are not final. The final decision about awarding degrees lies with the attestation board of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sport.

With such an arrangement, a considerable part of research is kept outside the global research mainstream. The vast majority of scientific publications are placed in local little-known editions. There are serious deformities in the ethics of research endeavors. Plagiarism is no longer something which would cause the expulsion of a researcher from the professional community.

Implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The pilot implementation of the European Credit and Transfer Accumulation System began in 2003 through 2005 years in the form of the credit accumulation modular system as the basis for organizing teaching and learning. This system was not a direct projection of ECTS, but was based on the combination of European recommendations and the national modular ranking system. Due to this combination, higher education institutions acquired a tool which was close to the one they were accustomed to using and which allowed for resolving certain problems of formal comparability in education. At the same time, it proved to be powerless for making systemic advancements towards building the credit accumulation modular system in its modern sense. Furthermore, the new system was not legitimized through adoption of appropriate legal acts.

Further steps were taken only at the end of 2009 when Ukraine officially implemented ECTS on the basis of the latest edition of the ECTS User’s Guide. After this, Methodological Guidelines which provided for elimination of discrepancies with the existing regulatory framework and actual performance of transfer and accumulation functions, were elaborated to support its implementation.

Unfortunately, this stage also did not gain legislative support. This led to the co-existence of several, often-contradictory systems for organizing teaching and learning. In practice, this resulted in the prevalence of the oldest system of the 1990s with inclusion of some ECTS innovations. It is important to draw attention to the fact that state control in the area of higher education is carried out on the basis of the Regulation on organizing teaching and learning which remains unchanged since 1993.

Under such circumstances it is too early to speak about the next stage of refining ECTS — elaboration of tools to assess learning outcomes — although the majority of European countries are already moving in this direction.

The key obstacle that hinders real implementation of ECTS is a lack of understanding that changes in the organization of learning are unavoidable on the institutional level, and that such changes require comprehensible and consistent government education policy on these issues.

This causes the practice of “creative” application of ECTS in Ukrainian higher education when different documents define one credit as corresponding to 25-30, 36 or even 54 hours. Introduction of the ECTS grading scale did not involve abolishing the old national scale which stipulates giving grades using three scales (ECTS, old national scale, and internal HEI scale which links the former two). The transfer potential of ECTS is far from being utilized in its full capacity in terms of developing international and internal academic mobility, which is due to the dominance of conservative traditions to re-include courses and subjects not elaborated within this system. The issues of using ECTS in part-time programs are also not regulated.

Regrettably, such issues and circumstances promote skepticism by a considerable portion of the population towards ECTS and the Bologna Process which very often grows into overt rejection.

Introduction of the Diploma Supplement

The necessity for common understanding of obtained qualifications or competences across Europe requires an information tool that is equally understood in different countries. This role should be played by the introduction of the Diploma Supplement which significantly simplifies the procedure for recognizing qualifications in Europe.

The Ukrainian Higher Education Diploma Supplement (further in the text referred to as the Supplement) is a document certifying the nature and quality of the educational degree earned. The Supplement is issued to the diploma holder in order to provide additional, extended information on the national education system; the place of a higher education institution in this system; the level, content, and scope of the education received; and specific characteristics of learning and academic achievements, qualifications, professional rights, etc.

Ukraine has a centralized system of issuing diplomas. Diplomas are produced by one state agency according to a single common template based on orders placed by all higher education institutions accredited by the Ministry. Unlike the European practice, awarding internal diplomas at higher education institutions in Ukraine is not common, and is not seen as acceptable either by students or employers. Supplements are produced by higher education institutions on standardized state-approved forms.

According to the decision adopted by the Berlin Conference (2003), unified European Diploma Supplements are to be issued in all countries which support the Bologna Declaration.

In 2006 the Ukrainian Minister of Education and Science declared that a Diploma Supplement of the European model would be issued to graduates of the 2008/2009 academic year in a widely-used European language, free of charge, and automatically. However, the relevant Decree on introduction of the Diploma Supplement was adopted only in April 2012. It defined the procedure for placing orders, issuance, and recording of this document, which is also planned to be produced and issued in a centralized manner to all higher education institutions accredited by the Ministry by one state agency according to a single common template.

Today issuance of Diploma Supplements is not carried out on a mass-scale. In some cases Supplements were produced and issued by several private education institutions according to requirements designed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO/CEPES.

A serious problem is still presented by the lack of common understanding and unified application in the Ukrainian higher education system of the basic education concepts within the competences-based approach to teaching and learning – competences, learning outcomes, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments.

Nostrification and recognition of foreign qualifications

One of the prerequisites to ensure academic mobility, assessment of obtained qualifications, and an open and transparent international labor market is mutual recognition of documents concerning education and scientific degrees (nostrification). Ukraine is a member of international agreements regulating these issues, in particular the Hague Convention on the simplified procedure for recognition of foreign documents on education and the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

Ukraine has entered into bilateral agreements about mutual recognition and equivalence of documents concerning education and scientific degrees with a number of states, first of all with the countries of the former Soviet Union and post-socialist countries. For those holding diplomas of higher education in these countries the qualification recognition procedure is maximally simplified. However, for the majority of foreigners seeking to continue their education in Ukraine, the nostrification procedure has to be performed in full. It is important to note that during the past year the public agency responsible for delivering this procedure has changed three times. Change of agency entailed partial changes of timelines, cost, and details of the nostrification procedure itself.

According to the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution of 31 August 2011 N 924, the functions of the National Information Center for Academic Mobility (ENIC-Ukraine) were delegated to the state enterprise “Information and Image Center”. This institution officially represents Ukraine in the ENIC-NARIC Network. At the same time, the Ukrainian side does not use the whole scope of opportunities offered by this international structure.

The monopolistic status and metropolitan locations of the “Information and Image Center” hinders simplification, acceleration, and cost-reduction of the procedure to recognize foreign education qualifications.

The traditional problem of the national education system remains the recognition of scientific and research degrees obtained abroad. According to the existing rules, obtaining a scientific degree abroad does not mean its automatic recognition in the Ukrainian education space; in fact, it requires a repeated dissertation defense by somewhat simplified procedures. Numerous attempts to propose mechanisms for simplified recognition of scientific and research qualifications, including those acquired through learning within the third cycle of education, have not found support with government bodies in charge of education management and attestation of scholars and researchers. Despite the fact that the formerly independent attestation body, the Highest Attestation Board, was incorporated into the structure of the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sport, this did not cause any significant changes concerning simplification and acceleration of this procedure.

The experience of Ukrainian colleges and doctoral students of studying in countries of the European Higher Education and Research Area shows the absence of significant hindrances of academic nature. The majority of problems with continuing studies are of financial (lack of own financial resources, limited character of grant or loan programs), administrative (obtaining visa, part-time work permits), and language nature.

III. Implementation of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area in Ukraine

At the beginning of the 21st century, the issue of quality of education and its adequacy to the requirements of contemporary societal development became central in the global education discourse. The special focus on education quality assurance issues has become a distinctive feature of the Bologna Process. The importance attached to these matters was reflected by the elaboration of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area effective since 2006. They present a unique international document to guide education policy in European countries.

Ukraine has not yet developed a comprehensive system of quality assurance in higher education. It is temporarily substituted by the system of licensing and accreditation, external audits of higher education institutions, and the Rector's control inside colleges and universities. However, these components, individually or in their totality, do not exercise a systemic influence on the organization and content of teaching and learning, and do not produce sustained improvement of education quality.

The country's licensing and accreditation system still remains the sole and key instrument for state management of the field, instead of being the underpinning technology to stimulate improvement in the quality of higher education. State audits of higher education institutions are aimed at revealing deviations from essentially formalistic and often contradictory requirements in operations of education institutions without consideration of the real context of their activities. The most widely used method of internal institutional education quality assessment, "Rector's control", is intended to prepare the institution for external audit and give impulse for short-term mobilization of the institution's internal resources.

The European Standards and Guidelines were designed to promote "establishment of a widely shared set of underpinning values, expectations and good practice in relation to quality and its assurance, by institutions and agencies across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)". They comprise the following parts: Context, Aims and Principles; European standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance of higher education; European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance agencies; Peer Review System for Quality Assurance Agencies; and Future Perspectives and Challenges.

Ukraine still does not have standards for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions. Higher education institutions use various models of monitoring, audit, and performance management; however, they do not form an established and consistent system. Among the documents known to the authors of this Report, the best Ukrainian example of a framework document on internal education quality assurance is the Action Program for Education Quality Assurance at

Kyiv National Shevchenko University approved in November 2011. This document may be used as a model for designing similar action programs at most Ukrainian universities. It is interesting to compare this document with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions	Action Program for Education Quality Assurance at Kyiv National Shevchenko University
Policy and procedures for quality assurance	
Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programs and awards	Improvement of programs
Assessment of students	Improvement of teaching methods and increasing objectivity of assessment
Quality assurance of teaching staff	Enhancing qualifications of faculty members and ensuring their motivation to develop quality culture
Learning resources and student support	
Information systems	Self-assessment of effectiveness of activities aimed at quality assurance
Public information	Extension of University's involvement in national and international preparation programs of specialists with higher education
	University policy on building student cohort
	Establishing feedback between participants of the learning process

It is evident that over 70% of the content of both documents is similar in terms of the national education thesaurus. At the same time there are important differences noticeable between the structure and content of the documents. The Ukrainian document does not contain "Policy and procedures for quality assurance" and "Learning resources and student support". The former omission, judging from the context, is due to the difficulty of building an independent vision of the University's future resulting from a lack of consistent legislative regulation of the sector, while the latter is linked to the lack of real autonomy of the University and insufficiency of state financing.

Instead, the Ukrainian document contains such sections as "University policy on building student cohort" and "Establishing feedback between participants of the learning process", which are not characteristic for European academic practice. The first component mentioned is most likely caused by the deep demographic crisis combined with the highly-competitive and distorted market of education services, whereas the second component is the result of the prevalence of teaching over learning which may not be quickly eliminated.

The function of applying external education quality assurance standards is officially performed by the system of higher education standards, licensing requirements for education

service delivery in higher education, requirements for accreditation of a program (specialty) according to relevant education qualification levels, and separate provisions of other legal and regulatory enforcements. These documents in their totality, however, do not create holistic and adequate education quality assurance in line with the European Guidelines.

The following table presents a look at the alignment of Ukrainian education quality assurance practice with the European Standards and Guidelines:

European standards and guidelines for the external quality assurance of higher education	Components of Ukrainian practice of external education quality assurance and assessment of their effectiveness
Use of internal quality assurance procedures	Use of internal quality assurance procedures is limited because their system is in the process of development.
Development of external quality assurance processes	Definition of goals in the area of education quality improvement is often on the level of declarations, whereas real preference is given to narrow corporate interests.
Criteria for decisions	Licensing requirements for education service delivery in higher education sector and requirements for accreditation of a program (specialty) according to relevant education qualification levels serve as criteria for decisions about institutional performance appraisal. Some indicators are outdated, non-transparent, and economically unaffordable, which leads to using double standards in institutional appraisal.
Processes fit for purpose	Inadequacy of actual processes of external quality assurance makes them difficult to be fit for their purpose.
Reporting	Reporting for external quality assurance of higher education may include licensing and accreditation self-assessments of higher education institutions, conclusions of licensing and accreditation reviews, and statements of the State Inspectorate of Education Institutions. Typically, these documents are not published. The self-assessment format is strictly regulated by the Ministry. Conclusions and statements are written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership.
Follow-up procedures	Routine audits of education activities end with providing education institutions recommendations on implementation of improvements which should be subsequently reported by universities. These recommendations usually are of fragmentary, inconsistent character and often do not take into consideration the context of the institution's activities. Such an algorithm does not create stable procedures aimed at continuous improvement.
Periodic reviews	The national practice on the whole complies with European recommendations.
System-wide analyses	State quality assurance agencies (State Accreditation Board and State Inspectorate of Education Institutions) do not publish regular summary reports describing and analyzing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

The discrepancies pointed out above are due to the virtual absence of any consistent government policy on education quality assurance, although it is declared repeatedly. Therefore, corresponding ambitions of some higher education institutions may not be fully realized. This also puts restrictions on the effectiveness of performance management systems built within certain education institutions.

Nevertheless, building local performance quality management systems is becoming more and more popular in many higher education institutions. What presents a serious obstacle towards this goal is the lack of nationally tested tools of quality assurance, and the failure to combat such practices such as plagiarism, “commissioned” graduation papers, bribery, conspiracy between incompetent faculty members and undemanding students, etc.

Problems of quality assurance are to a large extent conditioned by the gap that exists between working environments and education. Employers believe that higher education institutions are too conservative and cumbersome to be able to provide quick response to changes in conditions and technologies of work. Universities count on obtaining additional funding from cooperation with employers who, in their turn, consider the act of paying taxes as the fulfillment of their obligations to sponsor education, or expect tax preferences which are not stipulated by the law.

The example of a new vision of social responsibility of business concerning education is the Intercorporate University, which starting from 2009 has joined efforts of a number of the country’s leading businesses and universities. Special attention should be given to the SKM project on elaborating competences-based professional standards. Its further implementation may result in creating an effective model of organizing cooperation between universities and business.

Ukraine enjoys the popular illusion that its education sector can be reformed from the inside, relying on its high intellectual potential, with limited external resource support. The practice has disproved this hope; development of higher education standards requires the creation of diagnostic tools to measure learning outcomes which have not been developed for the vast majority of fields since 1998.

At the same time, the Program for implementing standardized external assessment (since 2007) supported by the Government today is rightfully considered to be one of the most successful examples of implemented reforms

A real indicator of the country’s readiness to guarantee higher education quality is its investment into building new experimental platforms, implementation of modern learning technologies, and effective university management.

An independent quality assurance system involves creation of well-developed tools to motivate institutions, and for faculty and students to be committed to it. On the one hand, the most interested party in terms of gaining high-quality education is the student body. Looking at students as objects of impact rather than independent learning agents deprives the education system of its chances to succeed. On the other hand, bringing research back into the education space should create a reliable foundation for quality assurance in higher education as a main vehicle for Ukraine’s technological breakthrough.

IV. Creating a National Frame of Qualifications

Awareness of the necessity to create the National Frame of Qualifications resulted from consistent efforts to bring the national legislation closer to European models. This process was initiated at the end of 2007 – beginning of 2008, became an organized effort in the fall of 2010, and achieved its first outcome with adoption of the summary document at the end of 2011.

The following stakeholder groups were involved in the process: top government agencies responsible for European integration; public administration bodies in the spheres of education and employment; associations of major employers; individual research institutions; and non-government organizations. It is interesting to observe the lack of real engagement of interest to the development of National Frame of Qualifications shown by most universities, student organizations, trade unions, and associations of employers representing medium- and small-scale businesses. This is partially accounted for by the low level of Ukraine's integration into the European skilled labor market.

The process of elaboration of the National Frame of Qualifications was marked by a noticeable boost of activity on the part of associations of major employers. In 2010 and 2011 they developed and presented to the Ukrainian Parliament draft laws "On National Qualifications System" three times. Adoption of the proposed drafts in their original versions would have involved handing over the authority for recognition of professional qualifications from higher education institutions to major employers, and the regulation of education and employment issues and approval of professional standards from public administration bodies on education and employment to associations of major employers.

Such a course of evolution was contradictory to the interests of the remaining stakeholder groups, both real and potential. This stimulated a search for compromise and facilitated approval of the National Frame of Qualifications.

The public interest to this issue stipulated the inclusion of an elaboration of the National Frame of Qualifications to the Program of Economic Reforms for 2010–2014 initiated by Ukrainian President V.Yanukovych. In its turn, the Program gave an impulse to the active position of central executive bodies which resulted in the adoption of the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution of 23 November 2011 N 1341 "On approval of the National Frame of Qualifications".

Taking into consideration the work accomplished by the EU and other countries, and in view of Ukraine's relevant obligations, attempts have been made to adapt the European Frame of Qualifications to the specific national context. While the National Frame of Qualifications largely repeats the Frame of European, significant differences include the following:

- ten instead of eight qualification levels, due to the addition of the “zero” level (for pre-school education) and level 9 (for doctors of science). Introduction of level 9 is quite legitimate, but only with the establishment of correspondence to the European Framework. Singling out the “zero” level remains unclear;
- definitions of some terms and concepts (competence, communication, etc.) are not properly correlated both with the national and European education thesaurus;
- some descriptors of the National Frame of Qualifications (knowledge, skills, communication, autonomy, and accountability) are used in the European Framework in different interpretations.

Independent observers argue that the approved document has a declarative character and is only an attribute of Ukraine’s commitment to European integration. The document does not provide for real harmonization of the national and European qualifications systems, whereas the task to introduce the frame of qualifications in the national legislation remains unresolved. Specifically, no tools or algorithms have been produced to align the National job index (and Guide on Qualifying Job Characteristics) and the List of specialties and fields of training for specialists with higher education.

Therefore, we may state that the Government’s decision is only the basis for further development of ten sub-laws, procedures for their implementations, training of staff employed at independent centers for development of professional and qualification standards according the competences-based approach, qualification assessment (recognition) centers (including qualifications gained through formal, non-formal and informal training), segmentation of lists of fields of training and specialties into sectoral profiles, etc.

Recognizing the need for further massive work, the Ministry of Education and Science, Youth and Sport and Ministry of Social Policy adopted the joint order of 20 April 2012 N448/225 which approved the Action Plan for implementation of the National Frame of Qualifications for the period of 2012-2015.

It is obvious that only the design of over three thousand new professional standards and fifteen thousand new qualification (education qualification) standards according to the competences-based approach shall require substantial human, time, and financial resources.

Adequate transformation of the National Frame of Qualifications into an effective tool for designing, identification, correlation, recognition, planning, and development of qualifications may only be accomplished through mutual trust and collaboration between the government, business, education community, and society.

V. Lifelong Learning

Awareness of the importance of lifelong learning is characteristic of most modern, well-developed national higher education systems. Ukraine's transition to mass-scale higher education stimulated education institutions to actively promote programs of study which initially were responsive to societal need for the preparation of cadres in new occupational areas of the emergent market economy infrastructure, and later became a foundation for setting in motion the mechanism of continuous learning in view of the rapid aging of knowledge.

It is important to note that the concept of lifelong learning is much broader in comparison with the domestic concept of "post-diploma education". It includes non-formal and informal learning and, in particular, on-the-job learning, various kinds of certification programs, training programs for the "third age" trainees, etc. The basic differences are rooted in the domestic tradition to record learning outcomes through obtaining state-approved education certificates. This may be viewed as a heritage of the long-term prevalence of statist relations in higher education, when all study programs were financed by the state and their graduates were guaranteed employment in their occupational field by the state.

In modern times, post-diploma learning includes:

- 1) re-training — acquiring another specialty on the basis of the education qualification level gained earlier as well as practical experience;
- 2) specialization — acquiring skills to perform certain tasks and responsibilities which have specific character, within the occupational field;
- 3) in-service training — acquiring capacity to perform additional tasks and responsibilities within the occupational field;
- 4) internship — acquiring experience to perform tasks and responsibilities within the occupational field.

Postgraduate and doctoral studies in practice are widely used forms of post-diploma learning, although they have not really acquired attributes of the third cycle of higher education. All known drafts of the Higher Education Law provide for transformation of the existing framework of post-diploma education: transforming postgraduate programs into the third cycle of higher education and substituting re-training by acquisition of a second higher education degree.

The key factor hindering and opposing this necessary transformation is the existing far-reaching, multi-branch network of post-diploma training institutions, which function both autonomously and as part of universities' infrastructures. The main source of revenue for these organizations is fees paid for training within re-training programs, many of which do not comply

with licensing requirements to higher education programs. However, we must point out that re-training programs offered by most recognized old and new universities deliver good, quality, second higher education degrees, taking into account the high motivation of the learners.

Specialization is common for the system of medical training, but is much less common in other occupational fields. In-service training is often delivered to meet formal professional requirements for employees in certain sectors and is usually of very low effect, except for the systemic training provided for people out of work by the State Employment Service. Internship is often replaced by an ineffective and poor imitation of the concept.

One of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process is the development of flexible education paths as a guarantee for graduates' capability to find their places in labor markets. In Ukraine flexible education paths is a relatively new concept which came into use with the implementation of a multi-level education system in the 1990s. This novelty opened the opportunity to acquire the next education qualification level under a shortened period of learning: junior specialist on the basis of a skilled-worker level; bachelor on the basis of junior specialist level; master on the basis of specialist level. However, the domestic tradition of rigidly-determined, discipline-based learning leads to a ban on changing the field of study before acquiring the full higher education. For instance, a person with a bachelor's degree in chemistry may not enter a master's program in philosophy.

The domestic specificity which enables one to partially overcome regulatory barriers to building personal flexible education paths is the presence of specific categories of training. About twenty specialties of cross-disciplinary nature may be acquired within the specialist- and master-level programs on the basis of a bachelor's degree of any kind. Graduates of such education programs show better responsiveness to the needs of the labor market and better ability to adapt to changes. This evidence motivates the most dynamic higher education institutions to develop such programs. An interesting observation is that up to 50% of students in such programs do their courses in private universities (against the fact that the share of students in private institutions hardly exceeds 10% of the total student population).

The range of specific categories of training is gradually getting more and more extended, reflecting the objective demand for development of cross-disciplinary education programs within the second cycle of learning. However, in Ukraine there is still no systemic understanding of the perspectives and high potential of this sphere for modern international labor distribution. Due to this, there is no movement towards liberalization of education paths, thus precluding further development of multi-sector education programs. The first attempt to overcome this barrier was the idea to implement career-based master's programs expressed in the Concept for Organization of Master Level Education in Ukraine (2010), implementation of which has been suspended by the Ministry up to the adoption of the new version of the Higher Education Law.

Flexible education paths allow taking breaks for gaining practical experience, for “inclusive learning” abroad, as well as for accumulating funds to complete the study. Unfortunately, domestic practice does not show sympathy for such circumstances; students studying on a budget-sponsored basis lose government funding, and young men lose their grace period for military service. It is also rather hard to account for credits earned abroad at domestic universities. This discourages students from developing their own education paths and planning for the inclusion of international components.

Ukraine still does not have the practice of recognizing competences and skills acquired in practical activities outside the traditional higher education system. Awareness of this problem is gradually being built within the employers’ and education experts’ communities, however this does not find its reflection in education legislation and practical application. There are no tools or procedures that have been created either in the country or at individual education institutions to provide for recognition of non-formal or informal higher education or even for allowing a limited number of credits.

In spring 2012, the Ministry of Social Policy published the draft of the new version of the Ukrainian Population Employment Law. This draft proposes a range of advanced novelties which may have a considerable effect on the expansion of lifelong learning. For example, the draft law envisages giving persons over 45 years of age (with insurance length of over 15 years) the right to obtain a “voucher” for professional training, and implementation of a mechanism for the unemployed population to confirm professional qualifications gained through non-formal learning.

VI. Economics of Higher Education: Public, Corporate and Private Interest

One of the major outcomes of the transformation that the higher education system has undergone during the time of Ukraine's independence is diversification of its funding sources. First, state funding lost the status of the only source, and later the role of budget financing significantly changed. Fundamental changes in the structure of Ukraine's economy led to a considerable decrease of employment in the public sector due to mass-scale privatization and de-militarization of the economy. Despite a corresponding decrease in the demand for training specialists with higher education for public sector needs, the number of students receiving a state-sponsored education (through budget financing) remained unchanged for a long time, and even increased in the mid-2000s (only in 2011 it was reduced due to secondary school reform).

Ukraine's transition to mass-scale higher education (in the period from 1993/94 through 2007/08 the number of students in universities, academies and institutes grew by 2.85 times) was actually financed by citizens' private contributions through tuition fees (the share of contributions made by individuals and legal entities in financing higher education first grew from 0% to 65% and only in recent years went down to about 50%).

It is also important to emphasize the noticeable change in the structure of budget financing — from full coverage of education institutions' costs in 1980s to hardly covering the cost of staff wages, students' grants, and communal services. With only a few exceptions, education institutions receive no fund allocations for capital construction, laboratory facilities, or international activity projects. Moreover, private institutions are banned to receive any state order for training specialists. The government education policy is characterized by a systemic restriction of corporate sector participation in financing education institutions. There is not a single real program for stimulating businesses to finance higher education; there aren't any tax preferences, programs of co-financing, government guarantees of investment into education, or bank loans guarantees. The scope of financing the acquisition of a higher education degree from local community budgets is fairly small.

Therefore, in reality higher education is financed through state budget allocations and private contributions in tuition fees in approximately equal shares. At the same time, it must be mentioned that Ukraine spends quite a large amount of funds on the national scale. Budget expenditures on higher education in Ukraine in recent years make up from 2 to 2.3% of GDP or 6 to 6.8% of the overall consolidated budget expenditures. These indicators are one of the highest in comparison with EU countries (on the level of Scandinavian countries). In addition, budget expenditures on higher education make up approximately 30% of all public expenditures on education. However, due to low GDP, the annual average costs allocated per

one student who studied on the budget-sponsored basis in 2010/11 made up about 2,270 euro. This sum equals only 51% of the expenditure level in Estonia (the lowest in EU) or 28% of the EU-27 average (based on 2008 data). It is obvious that such a level of higher education financing makes attainment of Europe's best education quality standards very unlikely.

A distinctive feature of the Ukrainian education system is the strict separation of students into two categories: those who receive state support and those who pay fees through contributions from individuals or legal entities. For the first category education is free (universities receive budget allocations through the mechanism of state order placement); approximately 70% of such students receive social, academic or inscribed scholarships and can participate in government-supported foreign internship programs. Those who fall into the second category are obliged to pay full amount of their tuition fees (even the reduction of tax burden for 15% of the fee paid is not accessible to all) and may not count on any kind of state scholarship. This practice contradicts the European approach of equitable conditions and non-discriminatory education, even more so in view of the fact that the tools used to differentiate students do not elicit an appropriate level of public trust, and it is extremely difficult to cross the boundary between the categories.

It has also become common to cross-finance education of the first category at the expense of the second category. This is due to the situation that actual costs per student who studies on a state-sponsored basis together with the provision of grant support are higher than actual state funding received at most education institutions. As a result, persons gaining education through private contributions from individuals or legal entities at state higher education institutions partially cover costs for education of a more privileged group of students. Rare cases of reverse subsidization are judged to be a serious violation of budget legislation with corresponding risks for university management. The price which private institutions have to pay for a certain degree of financial autonomy they enjoy is no budget allocations at all – which leads to obvious inequality in competition for attracting the best students.

Almost everywhere in the world there is growing compatibility of prices for education services which are funded through both public and private contributions. This allows for engaging highly qualified faculty in higher education systems and gradually increasing the research scope. At the same time, Ukraine has a law effective since 2003 which puts rigid restrictions on raising students' fees. It may be argued that this law performs a certain social function, but its force leads to rather contradictory outcomes. Indeed, in the period from 2002 to 2012 the average monthly pay in Ukraine increased over 7 times, the minimal wage (which serves as a reference point for calculating wages for the majority of educators) increased by 5.8 to 5.9 times, while the consumer price index (which serves as a reference point for calculating tuition fees) increased by only 2.7 to 2.8 times. As a result, the share of costs to cover wages in institutions' expenditures has risen dramatically (often reaching from 70% to 75% without students grants) at the expense of costs allocated to research and development. At the same

time, the rate at which salary levels increase in the education sector is traditionally slower than the country's average, which in its turn results in unattractiveness of a teaching and research career and the outflow of the most promising cohort of young faculty members (including those who leave the country).

A separate discussion should be devoted to teacher remuneration policy. Data presented below refers to income earned by the main categories of teaching staff in two classical state universities as of the end of 2011 (in Euros per year, €1 = UAH 10.6):

	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant (with scientific degree)	Assistant (without scientific degree)
Research University in Kyiv	10 224 €	9 198 €	4 793 €	4 168 €
Leading Regional University	6 035 €	4 362 €	2 779 €	2 446 €

It is quite noticeable that the sums are very low even in comparison with teacher remuneration in East-European countries which are already members of the European Union. Separate evaluation should be done on the differences in remuneration of faculty members in different state universities financed from the state budget in the situation when the scope and content of their jobs are essentially similar.

Under such conditions, what stands out is the non-rational cost structure of higher education institutions due to existing state norms and requirements. Below are a few examples to illustrate the point:

- 1) The norm established for faculty size requires 1 faculty member per 13 students (in many cases for 6 to 10 students) in full-time programs. The Presidential Program of Economic Reforms provides for increasing the ratio to 18 students per faculty member, however no practical steps have been taken in this direction;
- 2) Surprisingly excessive is the norm for total area of education institution premises per student (from 14 to 18 sq. m.) which demands considerable effort and cost for compliance (capital expenditures, equipment and maintenance costs, heating costs in regions with cold climate, especially given the lack of energy-saving technologies plus high fuel costs);
- 3) A requirement to provide, at the institution's expense, the availability of 12 personal computers per each 100 full-time students at universities, academies, and institutes. This requirement is absurd in the era when practically every student possesses mobile computers (laptops, netbooks, ipads, etc.) and uses wireless communication networks, and imposes large expenditures for purchase, maintenance, repair, and wear of fast-ageing equipment, as well as ineffective electricity costs. In addition, a special

review should be undertaken of the norm to provide 6 sq. m. of space for computer – an outdated standard retained from sanitary norms concerning the use of cathode-ray screens of the early 1990s.

The analysis of the situation proves the absence of focused and consistent state policy concerning financial support of higher education development. Large amounts of public funds, on the scale of the overall domestic economy, are used in a grossly irrational manner. No instruments have been built to stimulate businesses to co-finance education and research. The significant proportion of tuition fees received by universities is spent to maintain cost-consuming infrastructure rather than to invest into research and development.

To sum up, Ukraine has obtained a distorted system of relations between the state, the corporate sector, and the public in the field of economics of higher education. The society does not have appropriate impact on building a socially-balanced model for financing higher education. The state has proven to be incapable of giving real support to education development priorities, resulting in cost-based funding without assessment of its effectiveness. Business has adopted a parasitic position that takes advantage of the difficult situation in labor markets. Citizens are forced to deliver obligations to support education when these obligations to contribute are disproportional to the existing levels of income, while implications of such an arrangement are not adequately understood by the government.

VII. Social Dimension in Higher Education

Awareness of the issue of the social dimension in higher education is a distinctive characteristic of education policy in the last decade. It does not imply that individual aspects of the social dimension had been completely beyond public concern before, but they acquired certain systemic meaningfulness only in the context of the Bologna Process.

In the contemporary sense, at the core of the social dimension issue is the dilemma between providing for equal access to higher education and the need for “positive discrimination” of certain citizen groups concerning their opportunity to obtain higher education. This dilemma is grounded in a range of universal problems to be found in all education systems with certain local modifications. At the same time, some problems of national education practices arise from the socio-historical conditions of building these systems. We shall have a closer look at these problems further in this section.

Ensuring equal access to higher education

The general tendency during the last fifteen years has been growing accessibility of higher education for the Ukrainian population. This is evidenced by student enrollment rates at higher education institutions of various levels, as well as expansion of the HEI network and their branches. The key factor in this process was the diversification of sources from which higher education was supported, including development of private institutions.

Accessibility of higher education is greatly influenced by the societal stereotypes held by the population concerning its overall prestige and the attractiveness of certain fields and professions. The vast majority of higher education institutions, while making decisions about opening new degree programs, take guidance not from labor market trends and behavior, or degree of market saturation with similar education products, but from demand shown by admission candidates and their parents. Attractiveness of the programs is characterized by ordering occupational groups from the largest numbers of students applying to those programs to the lowest: economics and management, engineering, education, law, medicine, liberal arts, sciences, art and culture, transport, agriculture.

The key instrument for ensuring equal access to higher education in state education policy is standardized external assessment (SEA), which has been extended to a vast majority of admission applicants since 2008 (piloting phase was implemented in 2003). Despite certain shortcomings, SEA generally has met its intended objective and is rightfully considered to be the most successful education innovation in Ukraine in the first decade of the 21st century. The achievements of SEA have included transparency and objectivity of assessment, a high

degree of anticorruption protection, rational character of tasks and procedures, and universality in application of test results.

However, standardized external assessment helps resolve the issue of equal access only for the first cycle of higher education — at the entrance point for the education qualification level of bachelor. Admissions to junior specialist studies (on the basis of basic secondary education), master's and postgraduate programs are conducted through institutionally-administered entrance examinations within institutions where, in wide opinion, various corruption schemes are employed.

Another important impact factor is the regional aspect of accessibility to higher education. Higher education institutions are not placed uniformly throughout Ukraine. The majority of them are located in the city of Kyiv, and in the Kharkiv, Lviv, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Odesa and Zaporizhzhia regions. The fewest education institutions are found in Volyn, Sumy, and Mykolaiv regions. The smaller number of institutions limits the choice of degree programs in terms of occupational fields and degree levels. At the same time, different regions show differences in the share of budget-sponsored places — ranging from 40% to 60% of the student cohort.

The most important factor which restricts access to higher education is the economic status of a citizen or his/her family. Ukraine belongs to the countries with a high degree of differentiation by property status and a quite high poverty level. Despite awareness of the importance of overcoming poverty, Ukraine cannot report about noticeable success in this direction. The rate of growth of the minimum subsistence rate and minimal wage do not meet provide the standards set out in the European Social Charter. This imposes very real limitations on the opportunity for potential students from low-income families to gain a higher education.

Students' education costs include not only official tuition fees (not paid by students studying on state-sponsored basis) but also other additional costs associated with accommodations (especially in a different location), food, clothing, transport, books, etc. The fact that families are unable to support these expenses causes many students to combine study and work, transfer to a correspondence course format, take repeated breaks, not to mention the choice of the least costly degree programs offered by certainly not the best schools. For the lowest-income households even such compromises do not make higher education accessible.

The problem of poverty becomes especially acute in individual regions and places of settlement. The most common categories of typical poor families are families with many children and incomplete families (single mothers, disabled, old people). Among these groups children from incomplete families and families with many children find higher education to be the least accessible, even though middle-aged and older people traditionally have high motivation to

provide children with the opportunity to obtain a higher education, being ready to refuse from meeting many of their own needs in order to give chances to their children.

A specific, non-typical category of the relatively poor population is made up of people employed in the budget-sponsored sector, who nevertheless have a relatively wide local network of social contacts and may arrange access to higher education for their children in higher education institutions on the local or regional levels.

A typical cause of poverty in many regions is the low employment rate among the capable, middle-aged population when fully-capable and skilled employees are unable to provide a normal level of living for themselves and their families. A special risk-group includes the population of mono-functional towns. As one way to address the difficult issue of ensuring access to higher education for children from impoverished families in such towns, quite a few HEI branches were opened in these towns offering programs at affordable levels of pricing. One example may be a town in Dnipropetrovsk region with the population of about 125,000 people where over ten higher education institutions of different accreditation levels and branches operate. Such a situation creates an illusion of higher education accessibility; however, in the majority of these institutions the real quality of faculty, research, and methodological support, as well as infrastructure, does not meet the established requirements. At the same time, within 100 – 120 kilometers two regional centers have large networks of higher education institutions.

An especially vulnerable group in terms of access to higher education is young people from rural areas. This situation is caused by low economic status, social isolation, and limited access to additional education services (prep courses, coaching, etc.).

Therefore, poverty places considerable hindrance on access to quality higher education. At the same time, formal obtaining of a higher education degree is accessible to the majority of population.

Ukraine experiences problems with alcoholism, drug addiction, tuberculosis, AIDS; a lot of young people are incarcerated. These social factors present real barriers to ensuring higher education accessibility for these young people.

The Ukrainian Constitution guarantees citizens' right to freedom of world outlook and religion. Higher education institutions do not set limitations on students in relation to their denomination, nor do they create conditions for students' keeping to their religious rituals and customs during academic activities. An exception is education institutions created through support of certain religious denominations (or for meeting their needs).

“Positive discrimination” in higher education

In most countries worldwide higher education is an important factor in the development of the society's social structure. No society is ideally equitable, but in the modern world the prevailing view stresses the need to strive for maximally possible equity in assuring access to education as a fundamental human value. A common instrument to level baseline conditions for obtaining higher education is to give either formalized or non-formalized preferences to certain applicant groups which is often referred to as “positive discrimination”.

The same practice also exists in Ukraine. These preferences have been impacted by traditions of the Soviet era - considerations concerning social protection and political trends. They are legally established in a number of Ukrainian laws and the President's and Government's Resolutions.

The State ensures “positive discrimination” through Regulations on Admission to Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine which in 2012 stipulate the following:

1. Non-competitive enrollment:

war veterans, participants of peacekeeping missions;

orphans and children deprived of parental care (up to 23 years of age);

disabled persons from I and II groups and disabled children;

persons who suffered through the Chernobyl catastrophe (the most affected are given the right to be enrolled on the basis of an interview);

children of military servicemen and officials employed in law-enforcement bodies who were killed while on duty;

children of miners-veterans;

children whose parents died or became invalids at coal extracting facilities;

participants of international secondary school student Olympiads who seek enrollment to field-specific programs.

2. Enrollment by a separate competition for specially allocated state-sponsored places:

young people from rural areas who seek education to work in villages;

contracted military servicemen and military college graduates when seeking enrollment to military higher education establishments.

3. Possibility to enroll on the basis of entrance examination results without taking standardized external assessment:

persons with special needs (group I and II invalids, children-invalids);

military servicemen in fixed-term service, when seeking enrollment to full-time programs of military higher education institutions;

Ukrainian citizens dismissed from fixed-term military service in the year of admission to higher education institutions;

contracted military servicemen when seeking enrollment to correspondence course programs;

persons who have an illness which precludes them from taking standardized external assessment;

persons who completed a full secondary education in 2007 and earlier;

citizens who in the year of admission completed a full secondary education abroad.

4. Granting additional score points to some applicants:

winners of the last stage of all-Ukrainian secondary school student Olympiads in basic subjects, and all-Ukrainian competitions — defense of research papers when seeking enrollment to field-specific programs;

persons who completed preparatory courses for entrance to a specific higher education institution to be enrolled in sciences, mathematics and engineering programs (very limited).

5. Enrollment in cases of equal number of score points:

children from families with many children;

children of certain categories of military servicemen when seeking enrollment to military higher education establishments;

residents of mountainous settlements;

secondary school graduates who received secondary education certificates with distinction;

some categories of persons subject to separate government decisions;

applicants who receive this right according to the Admissions Policy of a higher education institution.

The number of places allocated for enrollment of preferential categories of applicants is defined by the higher education institutions; however, this number may not exceed 25% of state-sponsored places.

In Ukraine there are approximately 100,000 orphans and children deprived of parental care, which makes up 0.2% of its population; in 2011 the number of individuals with disabilities was 2,709,000 persons, or 6% of the population; over 2,300,000 persons have the status of those affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe, which makes up 5% of the population. There is

no official centralized record-keeping of children of miners and those whose parents died or became invalids at coal extracting facilities, or children of military servicemen who were killed while on duty. Therefore we may say that ensuring access to higher education for representatives of preferential categories should be manifested in their presence in higher education institutions in proportion corresponding to their representation in the country's population of corresponding age groups.

Today, about 2% of the overall student cohort currently enrolled in higher education institutions are those representing preferential categories. The most representative group is students-orphans who make up approximately 43% of all students who enjoyed special preferences. Students of other preferential categories are underrepresented in higher education, in particular students with disabilities; they make up about 0.6% of the overall student cohort.

As in other countries, there are also non-formalized preferences which are not legally enforced, but take their effect on the level of common understanding. Such preferential groups include:

- children (relatives) of faculty and administration staff;
- talented sportspersons or performers;
- children from families of local (sectoral) elites;
- persons gaining preferences due to corrupt practices.

Preferences of both types are quite numerous; they extend to a wide range of applicant groups and are not always logical or well-understood, and certainly are not equivalent. Practically all preferences are aimed at providing access to state-sponsored places for individuals who have not received adequate scores according to general rules. Everyone recognizes the need to transform this system; however, this may be achieved only in the high-level context of building the country's social and education policy.

Collision between equitable access and “positive discrimination” in national education practice

The question of the appropriateness of retaining “positive discrimination” is constantly present in the national education discourse. The two opposing views are retention or even elaboration of preferences, and their complete abolishment. At the same time there are many propositions promoting compromise (e.g., retain preferences for admission to bachelor's programs and ban them for admission to master's programs, etc.).

One of the possible approaches is to develop a new system of financing higher education which would eliminate the need for “positive discrimination”. Such a system may be based on complete and formal equality of all applicant categories enjoying equal right to obtain a

monetary loan for education with the possibility of a preferential repayment scheme for certain population groups.

The solution to this problem may not be found solely in the area of education. It is obvious that the problem can only be addressed on the political level; however, in that case the decision would be associated with interests of certain political forces and specific demands of the electorate. Therefore, addressing this chronic societal problem may only be done with wide public consensus of stakeholders, which would take considerable amount of time, focused efforts, and tolerant treatment of opponents.

National specificity of the social dimension in higher education

The multi-faceted character of social dimension issues also includes some nationally- specific characteristics inherent for Ukraine only or for post-soviet countries in general.

One of such specific characteristics is the desire to obtain master's degree by almost all who study at higher education institutions. If specialist diplomas were to be recognized as equivalent to the master's degree, Ukraine would be among the European leaders in terms of the share of people with master's qualifications among the economically-active population. On the one hand, this reflects the high prestige of higher education in the society, and on the other hand it testifies about citizens' efforts to achieve maximum competitiveness by obtaining the highest formal recognitions in education. At the same time, public consciousness retains the idea of high-quality, five- to six-year higher education prevalent during Soviet times and doubts about the sufficiency of the three- or four-year bachelor's program based on the European model.

The other observed characteristic is the relatively large share of those who successfully complete programs at higher education institutions (the drop-out rate is different for different schools, but on the country's scale it is not high). This is due to the following factors:

- high prestige placed on completed higher education mentioned above;

- a dependence on budget allocations not only for meeting enrollment targets, but also on the graduation rate;

- a dependence of higher education institutions on tuition fees paid by contract-based students;

- the relation between enrollment in a university course and getting permission to delay military service for men.

The grant allowance for students also has certain specificity in the Ukrainian context. From 50% to 70% of students enrolled in state-sponsored places receive state grants (official sources tend to quote higher numbers while sociologists record lower rates). The size of an

academic grant together with indexation today makes up UAH 725, or 66.3% of the official minimal subsidence; the grant received by straight “A” students with the average grade of 5.0 makes up UAH 806, or 73.7% of the official minimal subsidence. However the fact that grants are not available for all students enrolled in private universities or contract-based students at state higher education institutions, problems with transparency of distribution of the available grant funds, and insufficient motivational differentiation of its size do not only fail to address, but may also fuel considerable social tensions within student communities.

A separate topic is accommodations in student hostels. Findings of the survey specially conducted by Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Ukraine Sociology Service in March 2012 revealed that half of all students (49.9%) come from other locations. However, only 33.7% of them live in hostels and 10.7% rent accommodation, out of which approximately half did not get a place in hostels and another half refused because of the living conditions there. Most students live in rooms for 3 or 4 people with restrooms only for the whole floor; a quarter of respondents mentioned absence of hot water in hostels. At the same time, almost all hostels have places for preparing food and almost 75% have the Internet. Certainly, such accommodation conditions do not correspond to the European practice; however, they do allow dealing with most immediate life matters at a relatively small cost.

The leading world economies recognize the high quality of private higher education; this is supported by the leading positions of private universities in prestigious global rankings. In Europe the state supports private higher education institutions by providing partial financing and/or tax preferences, etc. Unfortunately, Ukraine does not have the practice of allocating state support to this sector of education, thus limiting its possibilities in assuring education quality, and restricting certain rights of its students, faculty, and staff members.

Student and alumni employability

Building employability competences and acquisition of required skills are among the core objectives of European education policy. Modern Europe does not demonstrate any evident successes in this area.

Let us look at this problem in Ukraine in two planes: alumni employment and combined work and study among full-time students.

The system of alumni job placement which guaranteed practically 100% employment of young people during Soviet times is virtually destroyed. This is accounted for by the prevalence of private employers and weak links of such employers with higher education institutions, and by the reluctance of most alumni to take non-prestigious jobs with low remuneration in the public sector (especially in rural areas). In recent years establishment of special university units on alumni job placement has been initiated. However, today not all institutions have such

functions: during the survey in March 2012, 27.9% of students said they knew nothing about the availability of such units. Only 15.9% of students rely on links between their school and employers, and 16.1% rely on job placement for state-sponsored students. This can be taken as an assessment of the real degree of assistance provided for alumni employment.

Two-thirds of full-time students (65.5%) feel the need to combine work and study due to financial or career considerations. Approximately 40% of students have part- or full-time employment. However, only 14.6% are engaged in the field related to their future profession. The situation looks better for students enrolled in higher education institutions in large cities with wider opportunities for temporary employment and higher pay. The prospects are much worse in medium-size and small towns where the general unemployment rate is significantly higher.

Overall, the problem of young people's employment tends to be getting more acute, which also reflects the relation with the general economic situation across Europe. The Ukrainian government has understood the need to implement systemic measures to place proper checks on this tendency, which is reflected in the adoption of the First Job Place Act (2004) and new social initiatives of the Ukrainian President proposed in 2012. These efforts deserve appreciation, although their practical effectiveness is still to be proved.

VIII. Transformation of Higher Education: Student Factor

Awareness and attitude of students towards the Bologna Process

Ukraine is a participant in the international trend of modern higher education development based on building partnerships between universities and students. Such partnership means official recognition of student-centered learning as a cornerstone of the modern philosophy of higher education: building teaching and learning as a process in the development of joint competences; organization of learning on the basis of individually-tailored education paths; and encouraging students to participate in HEI management and education quality assurance.

The Bologna Process is intended to embody the strategy of building partner relations between education institutions (administration and faculty) and students, and Ukraine has pledged its commitment to it. In Ukraine (like in many European countries) the implementation of the Bologna Process principles and recommendations, which at times can be inconsistent, does not receive a unanimous welcome from students. This is enhanced by a popular view about the high level of the Soviet education system, the accomplishments of which have to be rejected for the sake of the contemporary European model. It is also very convenient for some students and their teachers to shift individual responsibility for learning outcomes onto organizational innovations associated with the Bologna Process.

Findings of the survey conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and Ukraine Sociology Service in March 2012 revealed that 42.7% of undergraduate students consider themselves to possess good understanding of Bologna Process principles, and 7% of students have no idea about the Bologna Process at all. Lower awareness levels were demonstrated by correspondence course students and contract-based students. On the basis of students' answers to concrete questions about characteristics of the Bologna Process, it may be concluded that students somewhat overestimate their degree of understanding the process.

Students quote the following to be main elements of higher education organization within the Bologna Process:

- 1) the need for systematic learning throughout a semester to accumulate scores (50.4%);
- 2) opportunity to obtain the European Diploma Supplement (31.7%);
- 3) opportunity to gain admission to master's programs in other Ukrainian HEIs and globally (27.8%);
- 4) opportunities for internal student mobility (19.9%);

- 5) possibility to choose at least a part of their courses independently and to design their own study plan (18.1%):
- 6) opportunities for student mobility internationally up to and for obtaining a bachelor's degree in a foreign HEI free of charge (17.4%).

It is interesting to note that while components 1, 3, and 5 are realistic, components 2, 4 and 6 are rather difficult to implement in the Ukrainian context. In addition, students involved in mass-scale humanitarian and economic studies are more familiar with the possibility to choose a part of their courses independently, while law and engineering students have fewer opportunities to exercise this option. It is evident that starting from component 3 the awareness level does not exceed 20%.

Promoting student mobility

Ukrainian students are willing to obtain mobility: internal mobility attracts 43.9% of respondents, and international mobility – 69.6%; these rates increase with the growing success in their studies. Unfortunately, we have nothing with which to encourage these students: inside the country only 1.9% of respondents participated in such exchanges, and 4.6% participated in exchanges with foreign colleges and universities. The last-quoted number seems to be realistic only if counting participants of short-term study visits.

On a general scale, Ukraine is the country where out-going mobility prevails over in-coming mobility. According to the data provided by the Ukrainian State Statistics Agency, approximately 43,000 foreign students study in Ukraine (as of the beginning of the 2011/12 academic year) with annual new enrollment of over 8,000 persons. The largest numbers of foreign students come to Ukraine from Turkmenistan, China, the Russian Federation, India, and Jordan. At the same time, even more Ukrainians earn their degrees abroad. The most popular destinations (to our estimates) are Poland, Germany, USA, and the Russian Federation.

According to surveys of Ukrainian and European students, as well as experts from EU governments, the main obstacles to international mobility are:

Obstacles to International Mobility		
Ukrainian students	European students	EU experts
Lack of money	Lack of money	Lack of money
Insufficient foreign language proficiency	Personal circumstances	Problems with recognition
Visa difficulties	Organization of learning	Organization of learning
Lack of information	Problems with recognition	Lack of information and support

Ukrainian students	European students	EU experts
Lack of need	Insufficient foreign language proficiency	Insufficient foreign language proficiency
	Lack of information	Personal circumstances
	Limited access to mobility programs	Legal difficulties

Comparison of the above factors allows making a number of inferences about the similarities and differences of obstacles faced by Ukrainian and European students concerning mobility. The common problem is lack of money; this is especially acute in relation to the low standard of living in Ukraine. For Ukrainian students a serious hindrance is presented by insufficient foreign language proficiency and visa difficulties; however, these factors are not so important for European students. The foreign language proficiency problem is inherited from secondary school, while visa difficulties are consequences of the political factor.

At the same time, Europeans emphasize personal circumstances, recognition problems, and the organization of learning, which are not perceived by Ukrainian students as serious obstacles.

Participation in education quality assurance

The importance of recognizing students as competent, active, and constructive partners in higher education management and quality assurance has been repeatedly stressed during Ministerial Conferences and is enshrined in key documents of the Bologna Process.

The Prague Communiqué affirms that students should participate in and influence the organization and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions (2001). This approach is based on the premise that students, as one of the key beneficiaries of higher education, should have the right and opportunity to influence the content of education and learning outcomes.

These principles are recognized in Ukraine but do not receive real institutional support - organizational, methodological, moral, and material. This status quo is explained by the sluggishness of public opinion about these matters, insufficient awareness and activity of student organizations and communities, and an unawareness of such need from the side of university leadership and state education management bodies.

More active involvement of students in higher education quality assurance requires elaboration of a well-designed toolkit for performance assessment and monitoring in education institutions, as well as the elaboration of students' influence on its improvement. In practice, the role of students is narrowed to participation in more or less formalized sociological surveys

on their satisfaction with learning and education services, “voting with their feet” when choosing elective courses and by their attendance of classes. The right of students to participate in issues concerning teaching and learning improvement, as set out in the Ukrainian Higher Education Law, in most cases remains to be mere formality. One of the few exceptions is engagement of student leaders in conducting due diligence during institutional accreditation of a higher education institution. Similar practice during internal assessment of structural units by HEI management is almost never used.

The prospects for extending students’ participation in higher education quality assurance in Ukraine are related to real implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and follow-up documents (after 2006). Students’ participation at all stages of the education quality assurance process should become the norm. This concerns internal quality assurance, external quality assurance, and the activities of external quality assurance agencies. Students’ participation in internal quality assurance requires defining their role and place in the institutional policy and approved quality assurance procedures in the following areas: engagement in the official mechanism of approval, review, and monitoring of education programs; the possibility to influence the design of criteria, rules, and procedures for evaluation of student performance; selection of faculty and appraisal of their performance; sufficient availability of learning and information resources; and access to public information.

The achievement of a high degree of responsibility of external quality assurance in higher education requires students’ involvement in the design of assessment processes and criteria, collection of objective data on HEI performance, and the possibility to participate in a high-level review of the performance of the education system.

Building students’ experience in assessment of independent agencies performing external quality assurance will become possible only after obtaining legislative permission for their creation.

One of the most advanced and promising technologies to ensure higher education quality improvement is the Total Quality Management (TQM) methodology. The characteristic feature of TQM is definition of the roles of all participants in the process and elaboration of policies and procedures for their participation in the continuous improvement process. In the education process the student acts firstly as an internal consumer of education services; secondly, as a consumer of services provided by the HEI support functions; thirdly, as a HEI co-worker who participates in research and the generation of new knowledge together with the faculty; and fourthly, as the embodiment of HEI performance outcome. This methodology, equally understood and perceived in many countries of the world, would facilitate harmonization of the national system of student participation in education quality assurance with traditions of the European Higher Education Area.

Participation in management of higher education institutions

At the Berlin Ministerial Conference (2003), ministers responsible for higher education noted constructive participation of student organizations in the Bologna Process and underlined the need to engage students on a permanent basis as full partners in higher education management. In Vienna (2010) the Ministerial Conference once again stressed the necessity for students' participation in making decisions at the European, national, and institutional levels.

During the last decade Ukraine's higher education has seen strengthening of the movement to support students' extended participation in HEI management. This process, which is fully in line with overall European tendencies, was initiated by students and student organizations and has traditionally found support in the Ministry, Government, and Ukrainian Parliament. The organizational form of student participation in HEI management has become the student self-government body.

The Higher Education Law of 2002 did not specify rights and responsibilities of student self-government bodies. Students' participation in HEI management and their actual influence on decision-making were legislated with the introduction and acceptance of amendments to this Law in January 2010. Student organizations acquired the right to represent the students' position in the main managerial bodies of higher education institutions: the Academic Boards of the departments, the Academic Board of the university, and the workforce conference.

In countries of the European Higher Education Area students' representation on collegial steering bodies of HEI management varies; the average proportion is from 15% to 20%, which ensures a sufficient level of independent student influence on decision-making. In some countries, the level of student representation is considerably higher: 25% in Romania, 33% in Finland, and 50% in Denmark. In Ukraine, since 2010 this rate is legally established as at least 10%.

Ukrainian students' right for representation in collegial bodies ensures at least 10% of votes during elections of university rectors; approval of financial plans and HEI reports; appointment and dismissal of vice-rectors, institute directors, and heads of departments; approval of programs and curricula; determining areas for research; performance appraisal of structural units, etc.

Students delegated to Academic Boards and workforce conferences participate in discussions and taking decisions, and gain real vision of HEI management processes. Through their elected representatives, student bodies have acquired access to important information about education, social, general maintenance and other issues. A new practice being implemented is to create student coalitions for election of rectors which support candidates with more student-oriented views.

Analysis of the initial implementation of the new legislation has revealed the most common violations observed: acceptance to HEI steering bodies of students who were not elected according to the established procedure; expelling, renewing, or transferring students from contract-based programs to state-sponsored scheme and vice versa; allowing or banning hostel accommodation without consent

of the student self-government body; appointment of lead officials to be responsible for processing student matters without participation of students' representatives.

A negative tendency observed in the development of student self-government after they gained substantial powers has become the desire of various political parties and public associations to involve students into the sphere of their own political activities, and attempts of HEI administrations to stream the activities of student organizations according to their own convenience.

It is important to note that the law, either on the national or on the local level, does not envisage mechanisms for regular consultations with representatives of student communities and associations or their participation in public and advisory bodies; in particular, no consultations are held with the members of the European Students' Union, the Ukrainian Association of Students Self-Government, and other student organizations.

IX. Problems of Corruption in Higher Education

This section is based on the “Report on the results of implementation of corruption combating and prevention actions in 2011” published by the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice at the beginning of April 2012.

Studies undertaken during several recent years have shown that corruption in education is one of the most prevailing and dangerous forms of malpractice in terms of its social impact. Corrupt practices in higher education mostly have a latent character. The act of corruption itself is not evident, its “cost” is not determined, and a considerable part of corrupt actions are not perceived as being corruption (i.e., using personal contacts, exchange of favors, etc.).

In many cases, the meaning and consequences of charity contributions with all the attributes of “quasi-corruption” or questionable payments are quite obvious and straightforward. It is the common character of such charity contributions which makes them an important factor in building the perception about the corrupt nature of education institutions. Therefore, it is important to identify those corrupt practices which have the element of “cost” and are clearly defined in the mass mentality as corrupt. These forms have the greatest impact on building the populations’ perception of the prevalence of corruption. For this purpose the Ministry of Justice used the indicator of the ratio of official and non-official (corruption-related or “questionable”) payments of households to cover education services.

In the structure of household education expenditures, the proportion of official payments is variable for different institutions, while the proportion of non-official payments remains relatively stable (ranging, according to the Ministry of Justice data, from 35% to 48%). It is obvious that this rate (both overall and for different levels of education) shows the baseline level of the “corruption element” of education which may be expressed in terms of cost; the average official and non-official payments at HEIs are in the range of 6,000 UAH and 1,500 UAH respectively. The size of corruption-related costs depends on the field of education and increases with the learner’s age.

The findings of several nation-wide surveys conducted in Ukraine in the period between 2010 and 2011 may be used to conduct further research:

- 1) Ilko Kucheriv of the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, together with the Ukrainian Sociology Service, conducted a survey in higher education institutions from 23 March to 03 April 2011. The findings showed that 33.2% of all respondents had a direct experience of encountering corruption in HEI; 37.7% had no such experience; and the remaining 29.1% said they had heard from other people who had experienced such cases personally. The researchers made the conclusion that among the range of corrupt practices encountered by students, bribery was by far the leader”.

- 2) According to the estimates of the nation-wide survey conducted by the Institute for Applied Humanitarian Research (July 2010), corrupt practices in contacts between respondents with “state and communal education institutions” occurred in 53% of all contacts (in this case not only bribery, but also other forms of corruption were considered).
- 3) The study undertaken by UNITER Project (June 2011) revealed certain findings in the survey where the occurrence of corrupt practices was treated differentially, depending on whether it was “voluntary bribery”, “forced bribery” or “using contacts and relations”. The following results were obtained for higher education institutions: “voluntary bribery” — 25.5%, “forced bribery” — 49.7%, and “using contacts and relations” — 20.0%.
- 4) It is also important to give consideration to findings of the international comparative study conducted by Transparency International using the methodology of TI Global Corruption Barometer intended to record actual engagement in corrupt activities. In 2010, Ukraine found itself in the group of countries where, according to respondents, the share of persons who gave bribes in the education system ranged from 30% to 48%.

In line with the officially proclaimed focus on fighting corruption, there are almost daily reports made available in the Internet about catching bribe-takers in higher education institutions. In most case these are faculty and junior administration staff; bribes in sums ranging from tens to several hundreds of euros are given for passing grades on examinations and for receiving credits.

It is important to stress that surveys conducted during the last decade have contributed to the identification of the most vulnerable areas and procedures subject to corrupt practices. Much experience has been accumulated by HEI administrations, public organizations, and associations concerning actions to fight these malpractices. At the same time, sustainable progress in combating corruption may only be achieved through implementation of a targeted program of actions to remove corruption-breeding functions in education itself and in the government’s management of the field. Real fundamental changes in higher education shall become reality only after the assertion of a new ethos of relations within the academic community.

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