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# THE INTERNATIONALIZATION AS A COMPONENT OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION SPACE IN UKRAINE

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**Abstract.** *The paper is devoted to the study of the issue of internationalization as a component of the national strategy for improvement of the higher education space in Ukraine. It is shown that internationalization of higher education is an instrument of achieving academic goals, values of cooperation and mutual benefit. The internationalization of higher education is seen as a multilevel phenomenon that includes supranational, continental, national, institutional, and individual levels. The national level of internationalization of higher education is analysed in detail on the example of higher education space in Ukraine. It is noted that Ukraine has made significant achievements in the internationalization of higher education through the implementation of the Bologna reform and reform in higher education management and governance. New opportunities for higher education in Ukraine through current international research and educational projects and cooperation with international organizations are highlighted. The institutional level of internationalization of higher education is presented on the example of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Some findings of the author research of the attitude of students of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv to the issues of internationalization are also presented.*

**Keywords:** *higher education; internationalization; levels of internationalization; national level of internationalization; institutional level of internationalization, strategies.*

## INTRODUCTION

The international dimension of higher education is becoming increasingly important, complex, and confusing. After several decades of intense development internationalization has grown in scope and importance. There is no question that it has transformed the world of higher education. To operate and develop in current higher education dynamics, universities should simultaneously compete, positioning themselves, and cooperate, overcoming obstacles by joint efforts with partners.

Internationalization is a term having many aspects. A discussion in defining the internationalization in higher education was initiated by the influential research of M. Harari in 1972 (Harari, 1972), and this definition included three elements – international content of the curricula, international mobility of students and researchers, arrangements that engage a system of education cooperation programs beyond its national boundaries.

At the organizational level, the issue of internationalization has been put on the agenda by the special UNESCO commission chaired by Jacques Delors in 1996 (Delors, 1996). The report of the Commission was a landmark document which concludes about the needs to strengthen international cooperation in education. The report concludes with the conclusion of the need to strengthen international cooperation in the field of education for the joint response of participants in the educational process at all levels to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Internationalization of higher education as strengthening integration processes become a key issue in Europe during the 1990s. According to the well-known researcher of this issue Jane Knight, internationalization means a series of international activities such as academic mobility for students and teachers, international linkages, partnerships, projects, international academic programs, and research initiatives. It also means the delivery of education to other countries through new types of arrangements such as branch campuses or franchises, as well as integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the goals, teaching/learning process, research, and service functions (Knight, 2004).

By Ulrich Teichler, internationalization is worldwide/border-crossing knowledge transfer; physical mobility across countries (students, academic and administrative staff); reducing the importance of national education systems and increasing the importance of international cooperation and communication (between countries, higher education institutions and individual scholars); international research (comparative approaches); international reputation (“world-class universities”, “international quality”) (Teichler, 2017).

Philip G. Altbach positions internationalization as epiphenomenon of massification of higher education (Altbach, 2016). Philip G. Altbach also considers internationalization as policies and programs that universities and governments implement to respond to globalization, tool to make the most of globalization as well as sending students to study abroad, setting up a branch campus overseas, engaging of inter-institutional partnership (Altbach, Reisberg, Rumbley, 2009).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The main topics of research on internationalization in higher education are mobility of students and academic staff; mutual influence of higher education systems on each other; internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning and research; institutional strategies of internationalization; knowledge transfer; cooperation and competition; and national and supranational policies as regarding the international dimension of higher education (Kehm, Teichler, 2007). Here we systematize the literature on this issue and analyse the relevant documents. The obtained data are supplemented by the results of a survey of students of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv on the processes of change in higher education and internationalization, carried out by the author to obtain first-hand information from people working in the university system at this level.

The purpose of this paper is: (i) a detailed analysis of the national level of internationalization of higher education on the example of the higher education space in Ukraine as a national

strategy for its improvement; (ii) discussion of the achievements of the higher education system of Ukraine in the internationalization of higher education and new opportunities for higher education in Ukraine through current international research and educational projects and cooperation with international organizations; (iii) an analysis of the specifics of the institutional level of internationalization of higher education and its illustration on the example of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

## MAIN RESULTS

Researchers define five levels of internationalization that form four interrelated and interdependent links in a chain “a global community – a country – an institution – an individual”. *The first*, supranational (global) level is macro-level which is the widest level of internationalization, and which creates a global “higher education climate”. We have analyzed it in (Zayachuk, 2015 a). *The second level* of internationalization, continental concerns groups of countries that have common educational traditions. For us the continental level is European Higher Education Area, which is reformed in such strategic directions: Structural reform (Bologna); Reform in educational management and governance; Reforms in higher education funding. It was analyzed by us in (Zayachuk, 2015 b). In this paper we analyse the other two levels of internationalization of higher education, namely national and institutional ones.

*The third*, national level of internationalization of higher education creates a local “higher education weather”. It applies the *strategy*, which would work best in the country context; the *incentives*, which should be offered; the *governance arrangements* that should be launched to facilitate higher education transformation. The national level includes different internal governmental and nongovernmental organizations that are active in the direction of internationalization of higher education. On the government side, it is departments of education, foreign affairs, science and technology, culture, employment, and immigration. National programmes which are provided by different government departments include academic mobility programs, international research initiatives, and student recruitment programs. The companies offering education programs and services are included too. The national level has an important influence on the international dimension of higher education through policy and programs (Knight, 2004).

According to the National Doctrine of Education of Ukraine, access of education received in Ukraine to the market of international educational services, deepening international cooperation, participation of educational institutions in international projects are considered as strategic task of educational policy of Ukraine (National doctrine..., 2002). Ukraine’s accession to Bologna was an undoubted success and unquestionable motivator. This took place on June 19–20, 2005, at the Fourth Summit of Bologna process in Bergen (Norway). After signing the Bologna Declaration, Ukraine became part of the renewal process. Later a new Law on Higher Education 2014 (Law of Ukraine..., 2014) aligns with the requirements of Bologna for the country to integrate with in the European Higher Education Area; enables universities to act with greater autonomy; anti-plagiarism norms and liability for academic dishonesty; establishment of the National Quality Assurance Agency; promotes decentralized decision making and responsibility for reputation.

In the context of Europeanization (Lokshyna, 2019) and under the Bologna reform, Ukraine committed to significant changes. The most striking results in the frame of Structural reform (Bologna) are:

- adaptation of study courses to the two-cycles bachelor’s/master’s study system;
- introduction of the European credit transfer system (ECTS);
- implementation the Diploma Supplement of the European Standard;

- international academic students' mobility;
- increase of the external staff mobility;
- joint degree programs of training specialist in European Area of Higher Education;
- partnerships.

The most striking results in the frame of Reform in educational management and governance are:

- new mechanisms for rectors' elections, maximum two terms (5+5; 7+7 for national universities);
- granting rights for the universities to deal with their revenues;
- separate governmental unit – National Quality Assurance Agency;
- new mechanism of electronic admission for the University for equal access to higher education (starting in 2016);
- automatic placement of state orders.

The detailed analysis of this issue can be found in the author's work (Zayachuk, 2020).

International scientific projects, international educational projects, and cooperation with international organizations provide *new opportunities for the development of higher education in Ukraine* (International Cooperation, 2021). One of the main priorities is the integration of Ukraine into the European Research Area. This is facilitated by bilateral international cooperation with the EU member states, with the countries of the Eastern Partnership as well as a participation in the EU Framework program "Horizon 2020" for research and innovation. Ukraine takes part as an associated member in the following programs: the "Euratom" research and training program, the "Science for Peace and Security" NATO program etc. Ukrainian research organizations and universities co-operate with international organizations and foundations, including the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the Special Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), etc.

The Ukrainian universities and scientific institutions take an active part in *bilateral scientific and technical cooperation* within the framework of *intergovernmental agreements*. Announcements of the calls for proposals for Ukrainian-Polish, Ukrainian-Turkish, Ukrainian-Slovak, and Ukrainian-Lithuanian research and development projects are done for the next 2022–2023. According to the results of calls for proposals for the last 2021–2022, list of joint research and development projects selected for funding is: Ukrainian-Belarusian – 10; Ukrainian-French – 13; Ukrainian-Austrian – 10; Ukrainian-Latvian – 6; Ukrainian-Czech – 10 (Bilateral Cooperation, 2021).

In 2015 Ukraine became an associate member of the European Union Research and Innovation Framework Programme "*Horizon 2020*". This membership provided the Ukrainian participants with an equal status with their European partners, as well as opened opportunities for influencing the content of the Programme. "*Horizon 2020*", designed for 2014–2020, is the largest Framework program of the European Union (with total budget of around 80 billion euro) financing science and innovation. The program focuses on three main objectives: to make Europe an attractive place for top-notch scientists; to promote the development of innovation and competitiveness of European industry and business; to solve the most urgent issues of modern European society with help of science.

Every year various Ukrainian institutions and organizations are increasingly involved in the "*Horizon 2020*" programme. According to the results of 446 competitions for 117 Ukrainian organizations, which have taken part in the "*Horizon 2020*" program since 2014, 90 projects are funded by the amount of 17,232 million euro and 9 of which are coordinated by Ukrainian organizations. During this time 1,990 Ukrainian institutions and organizations prepared and submitted for consideration 915 project proposals. The total cost of projects involving 117 Ukrainian organizations is equal to 465.851.011 euro (HORIZON 2020, 2021).

Agreement between Ukraine and the *European Organization for Nuclear Research* (CERN) was signed in 2013 in Geneva and validated by the Supreme Council of Ukraine on September 02, 2014. Ukraine became an associate member of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) on October 05, 2016. Associate membership of Ukraine in European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) promotes the activation of Ukraine's scientific potential for fundamental research in physics and nuclear physics and creates favourable conditions for Ukraine's integration into the European scientific space (European Organization for Nuclear Research, 2021).

Collaboration between Ukraine and NATO in the field of science started in 1991. Since 2004 the NATO scientific agenda has become the "*Science for Peace and Security*" program (SPS). This program brings together researchers and experts from Ukraine and NATO countries that solve security issues through scientific cooperation. The priority issues of the program are the development of information technologies, cell biology and biotechnology, new materials, environmental protection, rational use of natural resources, as well as scientific developments in combating terrorism and new threats. According to the Mission of Ukraine to NATO, number of long-term projects "*Science for Peace and Security*" NATO program in cooperation with Ukraine during 2018–2020 are: 2018 – 23 projects; 2019 – 25 projects; 2020 – 28 projects. The number of Ukrainian scientists who are implementing long-term projects "*Science for Peace and Security*" NATO program during 2018–2020 are: 2018 – 83 Ukrainian scientists; 2019 – 91 Ukrainian scientists; 2020 – 77 Ukrainian scientists (NATO, 2021).

EU promotes academic mobility programs that provide large numbers of university students and teachers with educational experiences outside their home countries. Tempus in Ukraine has been operating since 1993, Erasmus Mundus – since 2004. Since 2014 Ukraine is a partner country of Erasmus+ Programme.

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. It is based on the partnership between organizations from the EU Member States and other countries in the world. Ukraine is a partner country of the EU-funded Erasmus+ Programme supporting projects, partnerships, events, and mobility in the fields of education, professional development, youth policy and sports in 2014–2020. The 2021–2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life.

In the field of higher education, Ukrainian higher education institutions can participate in the following areas of the international dimension of the Erasmus+ program: international academic mobility of university staff and students (projects of international credit mobility) on the basis of inter-institutional agreements (ex-Erasmus); youth mobility projects for informal and non-formal education to develop lifelong learning competencies; realization of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Programs and receiving individual Master Degree scholarships (ex-Erasmus Mundus); virtual exchanges and training for education and youth (from 2021); capacity building in the field of higher education – reforming higher education (ex-Tempus); strategic partnerships; alliances of knowledge; Jean Monet's direction from European Studies (Erasmus+, 2021). Detailed statistics concerning mobility of students and staff to Europe and to Ukraine, number of applications, selected projects for the period 2014–2020 and new opportunities for Ukraine within Erasmus+ for 2021–2027 can be found in Ukraine in EU Programme Erasmus+ (2021). As an example, the diagram in Fig. 1 shows the dynamics in the number of Erasmus+ Participants from Ukraine to EU and from EU to Ukraine. I want to highlight specially increasing in the percentage of Participants from EU relative to the number of participants from Ukraine (yellow column). On my opinion, this trend indicates an increase in interest in Ukraine from European partners.

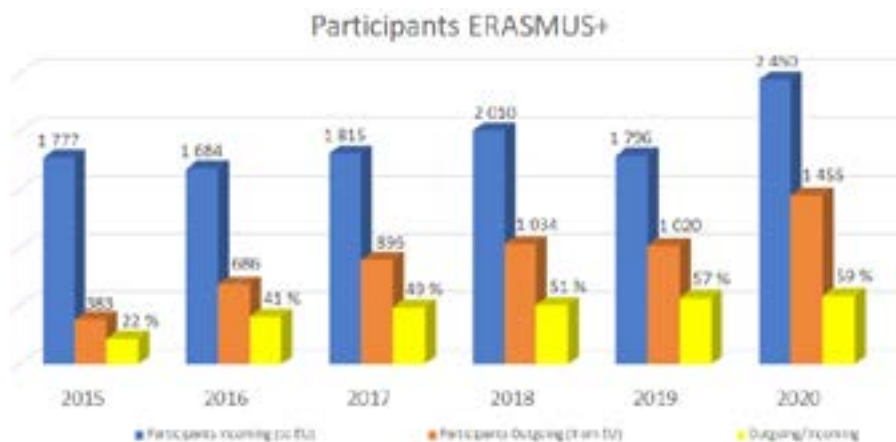


Fig. 1.

### Dynamics in the number of Erasmus+ Participants from Ukraine and from EU for the period 2015–2020

Source: Source: Compiled by the author based on data from: Ukraine in EU Programme Erasmus+, 2021.

Ukraine has been actively involved in the programmes of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), one of the largest educational organizations in the world. In 1998 Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the German Academic Exchange Service was signed. This agreement involved the establishment of DAAD representation in Kyiv. DAAD supports different types of initiatives: Lecturer Programme, Short-term and long-term Assistant professor programmes, inter-university partnerships (DAAD, 2021).

The fourth, institutional level of internationalization includes the *policy of a particular educational institution*, the vision and mission statements, the specific goals that the university is seeking to achieve, the monitoring systems, the outcome indicators, the accountability mechanisms, and *structural subdivisions* dealing with the strategy of international activity of a particular educational institution. If *national-level rationales driving Internationalization* are human resources development, strategic alliances, commercial trade, nation building, and social and cultural development, *institutional-level rationales driving Internationalization* are international profile and reputation, student and staff development, income generation, strategic alliances, and research and knowledge production.

*Approaches* to internationalization of higher education at the institutional level are:

- *Activities*: internationalization is described in terms of activities such as study abroad, curriculum and academic programs, institutional linkages and networks, development projects, and branch campuses.

- *Outcomes*: internationalization is presented in the form of desired outcomes such as student competencies, increased profile, more international agreements, and partners or projects.

- *Rationales*: internationalization is described with respect to the primary motivations or rationales driving it. This can include academic standards, income generation, cultural diversity, and student and staff development.

- *Process*: internationalization is a process where an international dimension is integrated into teaching, learning, and service functions of the institution.

- *At home*: internationalization is interpreted to be the creation of a culture or climate on campus that promotes and supports international/intercultural understanding and focuses on campus-based activities.

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• *Abroad*: internationalization is seen as the cross-border delivery of education to other countries through a variety of delivery modes (face to face, distance, e-learning) and through different administrative arrangements (franchises, twinning, branch campuses, etc.).

The *strategies* term referred to both *program* and *organizational* initiatives at the institutional level. We provide examples of program and organizational strategies at the institutional level.

*Program Strategies* includes Student exchange programmes; Foreign language study; Internationalized curricula; Area or thematic studies; Work/study abroad; International students; Joint/double-degree programs; Cross-cultural training; Faculty/staff mobility programmes; Visiting lectures and scholars; Joint research projects; International conferences and seminars; Published articles and papers; International research agreements; Community service and intercultural project work; International linkages, partnerships, and networks; International and intercultural campus events.

*Organization Strategies* includes Active involvement of faculty and staff; Articulated rationale and goals for internationalization; Recognition of international dimension in institutional mission statements, planning, and policy documents; Appropriate organizational structures Systems (formal and informal) for communication, liaison, and coordination; Balance between centralized and decentralized promotion and management of internationalization; Involvement of academic support units, i.e., library, teaching and learning, curriculum development, faculty and staff training; Student support services for incoming and outgoing students, i.e., orientation programs, counselling, cross-cultural training, visa advice; Faculty and staff professional development activities; Support for international assignments and sabbaticals.

At the institutional level, policies can be interpreted as a very broad range of policy and procedure statements would be implicated ranging from quality assurance, planning, finances, staffing, faculty development, admission, research, curriculum, student support, contract, and project work, and so on (Knight, 2004).

*Our example* to illustrate internationalization at the institutional level is Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. On this example, we note that in the developed Strategy 2025 (The University Development..., 2021), deepening the integration of the University into the world educational and scientific space is one of the strategic goals to be achieved by the University. This area of work involves participation of the University in international projects and programmes; compliance of curricula with European and world standards; development of programs with joint diplomas; increasing positions in the leading world rankings; providing teaching courses in English; increasing the number of foreign students; development of international agreements with effective work programmes; academic mobility of scientists, teachers, and students.

In the context of program strategies of internationalization at the institutional level, as of 2021, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv during the period 2007–2016 participated in 6 Erasmus Mundus projects (coordinators: University of Deusto and University of Turku) and 7 Tempus projects; under new Erasmus+ programme since 2014, the University has developed 67 interinstitutional Erasmus+ agreements with partner universities on academic mobility within Erasmus+ KA1, have 5 ongoing projects within Erasmus+ KA 2 and 2 previous projects Erasmus+ KA 2. There are 3 Joint/double-degree programs in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. In the frame of research collaboration, the University has ongoing Project supported by Horizon 2020, namely “Responsible research and innovation grounding practices in BIOSciencies”. Also, University has two scientific journals, referring in Web of Science and Scopus, namely “Biology Series” and “Journal of Physical Studies”. Let’s add that in February 2020 the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv reorganized the International Office and has implemented the institute of the coordinator of academic mobility, which cooperates with the International Office and operates at each faculty of the university (International Office, 2021).

And finally, some results of my own research – a survey of students of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv on processes of changes in higher education and on internationalization, realized in September 2021. I wanted to get first-hand information from different persons involved in the university systems at different levels. Here are some answers on specific questions showing in Figs. 2–4.

As we can see from data in Fig. 2, 10 percent of our students have participated in international student academic mobility programs, 20 percent are planning to do it, and the rest are not yet involved in the process.



Fig. 2.

**Participation in an international student academic mobility program, including Erasmus, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, September 2021**

Source: Designed by author.

Concerning primary motivations which are driving students' decision to participate in international academic mobility programmes, including Erasmus, we can see that almost 45 percent are motivated by student personal development, 25 percent are motivated by academic standards and student professional development, and 16 percent of students consider that cultural diversity is important (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3.

**Primary motivations driving students' decision to participate in international student academic mobility programs, including Erasmus, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, September 2021**

Source: Designed by author.

Concerning programme strategies of internationalization at the institutional level, the most visible for our students are student exchange programs and foreign language study (Fig. 4).



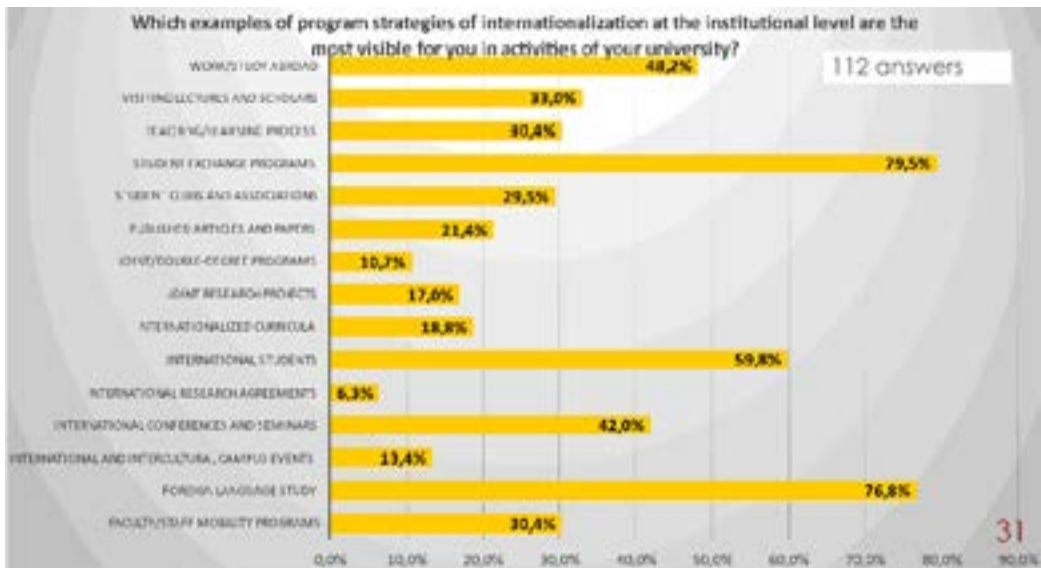


Fig. 4.

**Examples of program strategies of internationalization at the institutional level which are the most visible for students, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, September 2021**

Source: Designed by author.

## CONCLUSIONS

Nowadays internationalization of higher education has become a confident component of the national strategy for improvement of higher education space in Ukraine as well as an instrument of achieving academic goals, values of cooperation and mutual benefit. A discussion in defining the internationalization in higher education was initiated by the research of Harari in 1972, and at the organizational level, the issue of internationalization has been put on the agenda by the special UNESCO commission chaired by Delors in 1996. Researchers define the internationalization of higher education as a multilevel phenomenon which includes supranational, continental, national, institutional, and individual levels. At the national level Ukraine has made significant achievements in the internationalization of higher education through the implementation of the Bologna reform and reform in higher education management and governance, as well as has new opportunities for its higher education system due to current international research and educational projects and cooperation with international organizations. The samples illustrating the program and organization strategies of internationalization at the institutional level on the example of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv shows that every institution should find own internationalization strategy. The findings of author's research, namely a survey of students at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv on the issue of internationalization, show that our university is on the path to implementing its internationalization strategy.

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