



**EU TEMPUS project “Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies”
(INOTLES)**

Working Paper Series, No. 2

**EUROPEAN STUDIES AS AN APPLIED DISCIPLINE FOR THE
EASTERN PARTNERSHIP ¹**

Prof. Dr. Oleksandr Demyanchuk,

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Email: demyanchuk@ukma.kiev.ua

ABSTRACT

European Studies as interdisciplinary field of study and research is present in the majority of universities in the world. The content and scope of it, however, varies in form and scope and covers a broad spectrum, ranging from the traditional area studies characteristic mainly to the American and Asian universities to a deep and thorough study of the European Union institutions, policies, law, and politics in the European ones.

Since the beginning of the 2000s European Studies has evolved and developed to varying degrees in the Eastern Partnership countries, which have European integration ambitions. This article discusses the existing and desirable content of a European Studies curriculum, which aims to facilitate public administration systems to become more compatible with EU standards and expectations. Based on the experience and lessons learnt at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, the paper provides concrete examples of public servants trainings and researchers education/training for these purposes.

¹ This paper is based on the report at the International Conference “EU Relations with Eastern Partnership: Strategy, Opportunities, and Challenges. Chisinau-Chernivtsi-Tbilisi. Chernivtsi, Ukraine. 20-21 April, 2016.

1. Introduction

Since 2 July 1993 the idea of integration into the European Union has become an integral part of the foreign policy ambitions of Ukraine. Some of Ukraine's political leaders even defined European integration as a "main goal of national development", what was also reiterated most recently President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko. Subsequently, EU-Ukraine contractual relations have developed significantly during the past years with more than 12 bilateral policy agreements² signed, of which the most significant is the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement from 2014. Among the provisions in these agreements is the approximation of Ukrainian legislation to EU requirements and governance reforms. In order to be successful in these reforms Ukraine needed deep theoretical and applied research in the respective related fields, what resulted in European Studies evolving as the most relevant discipline within the wider field of the Social Sciences.

The term European Studies has many different meanings. First of all, it is the research field that includes Big Europe's (EU and non-EU European countries') Economy, Politics, History, Social Policy etc. Also it is strictly related to the Area Studies in a global scale for theoretical and applied purposes at public authorities, academic institutions, businesses and non-governmental organizations. And, the last but not least, this is a broad set of educational programmes and courses at all levels – from secondary schools to undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate and vocational institutions³.

It is difficult to define the time when the European Studies received its title. For example, the Journal of Contemporary European Studies before 2003 focused mainly on the Area Studies, while later broadened the coverage of issues publishing research articles mostly related to political, economic and social development of the European Union, its member states, as well as its relations with the outer World. In the first issue of the Journal of Contemporary European Studies the Editorial and Introductory Survey strictly defines its focus on "the global, national, cultural and institutional contexts within which European Studies now operates"⁴.

At the same time Michael L. Smith in his article published as early as in 2003 said that European Studies "as a distinct multidisciplinary degree programme... in UK universities dates back to the early 1970s... In 2000 about eighty institutions offered more than 120 undergraduate degree programmes and around 70... Masters programmes under the generic heading of European Studies."⁵

² Policy background: Bilateral policy agreements between the EU and Ukraine. <http://www.bilat-ukraina.eu/en/186.php>

³ Timus, Natalia, Victor Cebotari, and Anesa Hosein (2016). 'Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies: Mapping Existing Provisions and Pathways'. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*. 12 (2), pp. 653-668.

⁴ Editorial and Introductory Survey. (2003). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 11, 1, 7-20.

⁵ Smith, Michael L. Creating a New Space: UK European Studies Programmes at the Crossroads. (2003). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 11, 1, 21-34.

Today an Internet search of the term “European Studies” shows millions of results. There is hardly any university in the world without the European Studies programme or at least separate courses. The geographical stretch is very broad – from New Zealand to Asia to Africa, North and South America, and of course, Europe. The discipline syllabi and curricula essentially vary between simple brief familiarization with history, structure and principles of the European Union functioning and complex degree offering programmes on graduate and postgraduate levels. The University of Hong Kong programmes in European Studies, for example, “concentrate on European intellectual history and philosophy, the core foundations of European civilization, European politics and foreign policy, culture and identity, literature, as well as developments in Russia.”⁶

It is commonly understandable that the European Studies academic programmes at American and Asian universities are focused rather on delivering information about the European Union and wider Europe than on developing specific analytical skills in students: issues of domestic and local development are more important than Area Studies of a distant polity with unusual institutional structure and unique policy making processes. **A very similar approach is seen in the core of European Studies programmes promoted by the EU policies towards its European neighbors.**

2. European Studies in Eastern Europe – what scope?

Comparison of curricula and syllabi of European Studies related courses in a Big Europe (in a continental sense rather than merely EU countries) reveals a significant gap in a scope and content which exists between the EU universities/schools and those at the neighboring countries. Actually all the universities at EU member states offer Bachelor, Master and PhD degrees in European Studies focusing on History, Economics, Politics, and Social Policies of the European Union and its neighbors. For example, one of the leading institutions in the field – Maastricht University – defines its Master Degree Programme in European Studies as follows: “The Master of Arts in European Studies focuses on the international dimensions of policy, governance and administration. The programme looks beyond the institutions of the European Union and the mechanics of European integration to examine global developments and multi-level governance in a broader context. The programme employs an interdisciplinary approach, combining political science, history, international relations, economics and cultural studies. The focus is on the underlying issues of power and influence, governance and culture.”⁷ Michael Smith in the article cited above tells about the European Studies post-graduate programmes at the UK universities as oriented on deep knowledge and analytic skills development in law, politics, public policy making, and international affairs of the EU⁸. Similar approaches and scopes of the European Studies programmes can be found at many universities of EU member states.

⁶ School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, the University of Hong Kong.
<http://www.europe.hku.hk/>

⁷ FASoS Master’s Programmes European Studies Maastricht University.
<http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/show/id=325697/langid=42>

⁸ Smith, Michael L. Creating a New Space: UK European Studies Programmes at the Crossroads. (2003).
Journal of Contemporary European Studies, **11**, 1, 21-34.

Another situation of European Studies can be observed in Eastern Europe. Exchanges with colleagues from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine within the Project “Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies - INOTLES” (TEMPUS Programme)⁹ have generally revealed much more restricted approaches to the study of the European Union in partner countries than at EU universities. During the recent decade a broad variety of programs and activities aimed at bringing to Ukraine and other post-soviet countries knowledge about the European Union, its institutional structure, legislation, policies, and numerous opportunities to strengthen relations between the EU and neighboring states as well as citizens on both sides of the regions. A significant role in these processes was played by the Ministry of Education and Science, which had undertaken decisive steps towards the Bologna Process. Scattered before, the efforts of numerous NGOs, secondary and higher education experts paid off in terms of providing the academic community an important document – “Concept of Education Content for the Ukraine’s European Dimension”¹⁰. For example, the “EU Study Days in Ukraine” which is the Project of EU Mission in Ukraine has defined its mission as follows: “to offer Ukrainian university students and alumni deeper and broader knowledge about the main characteristics of the EU and the relations between the EU and Ukraine”¹¹. Introductory courses with mostly informational content were developed and introduced at secondary schools and in university undergraduate programs¹². Starting from the general information targeted towards school and university students as well as NGO activists the EU and Ukrainian civic organizations gradually broadened their coverage of European issues and their target audience, involving now in addition a very important group of learners: public servants.

But is it adequate or at least sufficient for the “Eastern Partnership” countries of the so called to meet the expectations and requirements concerning the Europeanization of their societies, economy, law, and political sphere? Does it provide good perspectives for these countries in their way to EU membership?

3. European Studies in Eastern Partnership Countries: a distinct approach is needed

When we compare the European Studies content in Ukraine and in the countries outside Europe as a continent we will find significant similarity with even broader scope in, say, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China and Japan than in, for example, many Ukrainian universities. For those countries European Studies are mostly the special kind of Area Studies as they include European History, Geography, Economy and Social Studies without deep insight into the essence of political,

⁹ INOTLES website: <http://www.inotles.eu/>.

¹⁰ Kontseptsiya zmistu osvity dlia Yevropeys'kogo vymiru Ukrainy. /Concept of the Education Content for the Ukraine’s European Perspective. Authors: S. Kobernik, N. Kuzmyna, O.Ovcharuk et al. <http://osvita.ua/school/method/581/> (last visit 09 April 2016).

¹¹ EU Study Days in Ukraine. <http://eustudydays.com/about/languageknowledge.eu/languages/english>

¹² Despite intensive start in 2002-2005 this activity has appeared to be close to decay both at schools and universities. European Studies at schools in 2007-2013 had become out of the focus. Universities also offered usually minimal or very specific courses in the field. For example, in the biggest Ukrainian Kyiv Taras Shevchenko National University European Studies can be found only in the History curriculum (as the American and European Studies): see http://history.univ.kiev.ua/uk/component/content/article?id=ID_69.

legislative, economic and social processes as these have little influence on their countries and their citizens lives.

Completely another cases represent Ukraine, Moldova and other countries of the Eastern Partnership. They are not only European Union neighbours, but they are an integral part of a Big Europe with a common historical, cultural, and economic heritage. These countries have declared their intention to become full members of the European Union and hence need much deeper insight into EU affairs: They have to adjust their economies to become compatible with the Common Market environment, adapt their legislation, and, most importantly, develop the system of European values within their societies.

Secondary education and higher education institutions are key stakeholders in this comprehensive reform process. School and university courses/programs of European Studies, however, broadly implemented will bring positive results only in a couple of decades. Meanwhile the gap between the European Union and the rest of Europe in economy, trade, and life standards in general becomes deeper. Therefore the Eastern Partnership countries need to move faster in the right direction and remove many external as well as domestic barriers of political, administrative and legislative nature.

One of the problems, which inhibits the Europeanization processes, is the system of political decision making, which has been inherited from the Soviet authoritarian regime. It may be characterized by at least (and not completely) the following drawbacks:

- The administrative hierarchy of deciding in the Ukrainian (and in the other Eastern Partnership countries) political system contradicts the main principles and procedures of decision making in the EU and its member states.
- Despite the reforms begun after the Revolution of Dignity (2014) all the sectors of social life are still highly regulated and hence are prone to corruption.
- The State Budget system is rigidly centralized and controlled by the executives rather than legislature.
- Street bureaucracy services quality is still on a very low level.
- The whole legislation is based mainly on the old values and moral principles and hard to be accommodated to the EU laws.

We may consider 2003 as the year of beginning the European Studies boost in Eastern European countries. The accession of ten countries which in the Soviet times belonged to the Warsaw block has given hope to the rest of Europe for further EU enlargement and perspectives for the EU membership. As I have said in the first lines of this article it was also time when the goals and scope of European Studies had been revised in the European academic community. The European integration

perspectives had called upon a chain of decrees by the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma. One of these decrees had approved the Program of Ukraine's integration to the European Union.¹³

In fact the whole activity was only intensively pursued during the first year or two. Then the political elite of Ukraine was discouraged by EU officials because of indefinite terms and vague perspectives of accession. To that moment the success of this activity appeared to be minimal (which perhaps was one of the reasons why the European officials were so strictly negative). The whole work on aligning Ukrainian legislation to the European one completely failed and was stopped. Public servants were being dismissed from their positions so often that there was no sense to organize a large scale in-service training for them.

Nevertheless a lot of efforts continued to be applied to the public servants in-service training on EU issues (actually a specific kind of the European Studies) from some Ukrainian universities and NGOs. Telenor Corporation (Norway) and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with a formal support of the State Committee on Public Service of Ukraine signed in 2006 the Agreement on the Project "Democracy and Public Service Capacity Building in Ukraine". The Project had been implemented at in the period 2006-2010. The main activities of the Project were trainings in seven separate courses:

- Democracy and e-Government Public Sector Modernization
 - European Union and the European Economic Area
 - EU Neighborhood Policy and Programmes
 - ICT Based Modern Project Management and Leadership
 - Development and Implementation of Public Policies
 - Administrative Decisions
- Collaboration between the State and Civil Organizations

The courses were taught by an international group of professors who came from France, Belgium, Norway, United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

During the four years of project implementation about 1000 students from the public administration, NGOs, academic institutions attended classes, prepared learning papers and presentations, passed exams. Almost 200 students traveled to Brussels for visiting the EU institutions, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council of Regions. As the project was organized and sponsored by the Norwegian corporation Telenor, one of the foci was on the European Economic Area, and students also visited the Norway Representation Office at the European Union.

¹³ Pro Programu integratsii Ukrainy do Yevropeiskogo Soyuzu./ On the Program of Ukraine's Integration to the European Union. – Decree by Leonid Kuchma, the President of Ukraine. No. 1072/2000 on 14.09.2000 with the amendment by the decree No. 1411/2004 on 16.11.2004. - <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1072/2000>

The Project performance survey had brought us to several conclusions.

1. The public servants were not motivated by the perspectives of advancement because their promotion depended on other criteria than their knowledge, qualification and skills in European Studies. Therefore they considered the trainings as means of satisfying their curiosity rather than as a preparation for new functions.
2. The students had not enough general preliminary knowledge (Philosophy, Political Theory, International Relations etc.) which made trainings less efficient.
3. The amount of information conveyed to the students was too big to create a more or less integral picture of the European Union structure and functioning. Hence, what could be achieved was rather acquaintance than insight into the EU processes.
4. As the students mostly did not have sufficient knowledge of foreign languages the trainers had to rely upon the translated texts which also decreased the quality of the training and restricted understanding of the EU main institutions and principles of their functioning.

Altogether, this brought not sufficient effect of the project activities. Both trainers and students during the discussions came to the understanding that the recommendation of the international organizations on transferring the EU experience into the Ukrainian public service system cannot be implemented without a thorough adaptation to Ukrainian realities and specific features of the Ukrainian political system.

Based on this experience the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy established in 2010 a new Graduate Program focused on European Studies. The main idea of the program is to combine general theoretical preparation in political science with a comprehensive study of the European Union in the context of domestic political and social realities. This 2-year program requires students to accumulate 120 ECTS points and defend a master thesis on relevant issues covered during their studies.

As part of the European Studies Graduate Program we have offered students the more narrowed curriculum in German and European Studies implemented jointly with the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany due to the financial support of DAAD. This curriculum included Germany-related courses instead of Ukraine-oriented ones, and required students to spend one semester in Jena.

At the beginning the Germany-related courses were taught by visiting professors from Jena but due to a number of scholarships for Ukrainian teachers and professors it was possible that those colleagues were able after 2-3 years to take over the teaching of several courses. Simultaneously our post-graduate students did their research on various European Studies related topics, and in 2010-2016 five

Candidate dissertations and one – for Doctor of Science* were defended. It is worthwhile to note that all these dissertations were oriented on investigation of EU affairs rather than on issues of European integration of Ukraine or merely EU neighborhood policies.

The last advance in developing European Studies at our University was due to the fulfilment of the Project “Innovative Teaching and Learning of European Studies – INOTLES” under the TEMPUS umbrella. During 2014-2016 the consortium of 9 universities from the Netherlands, Belgium, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia developed and implemented 5 modules: 1. Institutions of the European Union; 2. European Union and International Law; 3. Research Methods in European Studies; 4. Public Policies of the EU; 5. EU Foreign Policy

Together with the theoretical courses in political science (for example, the course “Theories of Political Decisions Making”) and practical disciplines on Ukrainian Political and Public Administration systems we have created a harmonized graduate program, which may help in developing a theoretical background for the future full-scale European integration of Ukraine.

Now our University prepares the new program for public servants’ in-service training. The courses are developed, the learning materials collected, teachers trained and familiarised with innovative methods of teaching. This new program differs from the traditional ones in the character of skills and knowledge that the trainees will receive: to build the Public Administration system and to staff it with the properly educated specialists it is necessary to base training on the democratic values and rationale characteristic to the EU institutions.

4. Conclusions

Despite some success in propagating European Studies across Ukrainian educational institutions and (to less extent) among the organizations dealing with various in-service trainings for public servants the whole activity efficiency could be estimated as quite low. There are several reasons for such a situation.

1. Mostly teaching is delivered by the people who have little incentives to improve their courses both in content and methods of teaching and learning. Any educational system is conservative and Ukrainian one is an example of a strongest institutional and operational rigidity. Hence the changes of curricula adaptation to the benefit of European Studies are highly limited. The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy is one of a few lucky exceptions as it has a goal to join a community of leading European universities and will to improve its curricula to reach this goal.

* Ukraine has two levels of academic degrees – Candidate of Sciences (more or less equivalent to PhD) and Doctor of Science (like Habilitat in Germany and Poland). – *O.D.*

2. Training public servants in the field of European Studies today reminds rather a philanthropic activity than a purposeful nationally demanded process because those who had passed training make very little (if any) use of the knowledge and skills acquired. Public administration institutional structure and functions do not provide incentives for training participants to develop analytic approaches, implement procedures, habits and values characteristic to the European administrative units.
3. The development and spreading of European Studies requires a lot of resources – financial (for teachers’ salary, equipment, literature), human (both senior and junior lecturers and researchers), informational (access to a vast amount of publications – both books and periodicals, adequate translation of some of them into national language) as well as ideological (development of new European values and habits within the system of Public Administration and around it). Today the whole activity is relied upon the international aid and external assistance– grants, projects, etc. The domestic investments are close to zero.

The problems listed above should not discourage both Ukrainian and international actors in implementing the European Studies at various levels of the educational system. To change the situation for the better we need to go by small meaningful steps creating both supply and demand for the knowledge and skills in the field. The newly established Center of Innovative Teaching and Learning of European Studies at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy should become a “crystallization” specimen for creating the system of propagating European Studies in Ukraine.