



EDUCATION

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PRO-EUROPEAN VALUES OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS: THE EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTING J. MONNET MODULE

Olga Goncharova

PhD in Education, Associate Professor

Bogdan Khmelnistky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1084-7112>; e-mail: goncharoo82@gmail.com

Alina Maslova

PhD in Education, Associate Professor

Bogdan Khmelnistky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1993-4837>; e-mail: mav2429@gmail.com

The article deals with the main features and principles of forming value orientations of higher education students. It emphasizes the role of higher educational institutions in fostering the conditions for the promotion of universal and European values. Based on the analysis of the research works on European integration in terms of education the authors have made a conclusion that higher education in Ukraine is characterized by systemic changes through reforms aimed at creating a system for ensuring and continuously improving the quality of higher education that aligns with the recommendations and standards of the European Higher Education Area. The aim of this paper is to share the experience of Bogdan Khmelnistky Melitopol State Pedagogical University in strengthening the EU common values in the education and training of future foreign language teachers under the framework of Jean Monnet Module of the ERASMUS+ programme. The authors describe in detail the Module's objectives and outcomes; emphasize the impact of the Module on the development of future foreign language teachers' competences in promoting the EU common values; present a list of key activities delivered within the Module framework; show how dissemination process is taking place.

Key words: the European common values, youth's value orientations, university students, future foreign language teachers, Erasmus+ project.

У статті розглянуто особливості та основні принципи формування ціннісних орієнтацій здобувачів вищої педагогічної освіти в Україні, окреслено



роль закладів вищої освіти у створенні умов для популяризації європейських цінностей. На основі аналізу наукових досліджень, присвячених інтеграції України у Європейський освітній простір, автори дійшли висновку, що вища освіта в Україні характеризується наявністю системних змін та реформ, які спрямовані на забезпечення постійного підвищення якості вищої освіти, її відповідності рекомендаціям та стандартам Європейського простору вищої освіти. Автори представляють досвід імплементації Модуля Жана Моне «Зміцнення спільних цінностей ЄС через політику багатомовності в освіті та підготовці майбутніх учителів» у Мелітопольському державному педагогічному університеті імені Богдана Хмельницького. У статті детально розкриті мета, цілі та очікувані результати Модуля; окреслено вплив Модуля на розвиток компетентності майбутніх вчителів іноземної мови щодо популяризації Європейських цінностей; надається перелік ключових заходів, які проводяться в рамках реалізації робочого пакета; показано, як відбувається процес дисемінації отриманих результатів.

Ключові слова: спільні європейські цінності, ціннісні орієнтації молоді, студенти, майбутні вчителі іноземних мов, проєкт Еразмус+.

Introduction. In the modern context of the development of our society, where Ukraine's integration into the European Union is becoming increasingly significant, the issue of forming value orientations for higher education students is particularly relevant. European integration offers young people new opportunities for self-realization, professional growth, career and social engagement. However, it is essential that this process is not just a technical adoption of norms and standards accepted in the EU. The task of Higher educational institutions today implies fostering the conditions for the development of conscious and responsible citizens with universal and European values.

The formation of value orientations is an integral part of the educational process, which must ensure the integration of students into the global cultural environment and the promotion of democratic principles. Higher educational institutions should go in line with general policy of our country, developing their students' 21st century skills, including critical thinking, tolerance, respect for human rights, social responsibility, the ability to participate in democratic initiatives and engage in intercultural interaction among the youth.

The socio-political, economic, and geopolitical circumstances resulting from the open military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine demand a thorough self-reflection and adjustment of personal value systems for all representatives of contemporary Ukrainian society. These changes are especially impactful on the impressionable student youth, enabling them to better assimilate the new realities and incorporate them into their worldview. As a result, the role of European values in shaping students, as the emerging generation responsible for advancing a pro-European Ukrainian state and economy, is of immense importance today (Kalashnykova, 2023).

Under the martial law the transformation of values is taking place, grounded in national-patriotic sentiment, pride in one's people, and their struggle for freedom and



independence in order for Ukraine to become a rightful member of the European family (Stebliuk, 2024). In this regard this issue becomes both relevant and timely and requires thorough scientific reflection and pedagogical analysis to ensure the successful formation of the EU value orientations of higher education students within the context of modern sociocultural European integration.

Main text. The literature review proved that the issue of forming value orientations among student youth has been reflected in the works of both foreign (W. Ballegooij, M. Buhbe, M.D. Crego, J. Dollmann, J. Jacobsen, R. Mańko, A. Meth, S.J. Mayer, L. Walter, etc.) and domestic scholars (N. Bondarenko, L. Derkach, A. Chernyakova, N. Fedorenko, O. Ionova, T. Kalashnykova, S. Luparenko, T. Malanchuk, M. Nesprava, S. Stebliuk, S. Zolotukhina, etc.). Notwithstanding the solid amount of works mentioned, it is obvious that the issue under discussion demands further attention regarding the experience of ERASMUS+ project (J. Monnet Module) implementation as far as foreign scholars highlight the lack of educational courses on the European Union and its core values in school and university curricula (Asderaki & Sideri, 2020).

Thus, **the aim of this paper** is to share the experience of Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University in strengthening the EU common values in the education and training of future foreign language teachers under the framework of J. Monnet Module of the ERASMUS+ programme.

The adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 marked a significant step in promoting and spreading shared European values across the EU member states. According to M.D. Crego, R. Mańko and W. Ballegooij (2020) the EU common values are:

1) human dignity which presupposes uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every human being regardless of his or her belonging to specific societal groups, religion, gender, etc.;

2) freedom which is understood as a complex of values including freedom of movement and speech, individual autonomy and a number of individual freedoms (respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information);

3) democracy which implies a system of governance where ultimate authority resides with the people. This value ensures the conduct of regular, fair, and free elections, granting all adult citizens of the EU the political rights necessary to make a genuinely free choice at the polls;

4) equality which encompasses non-discrimination and ensures equal outcomes or opportunities regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, political beliefs, social background, wealth, or birth. This concept also entails respecting cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity, promoting gender equality, and safeguarding the rights of children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities;

5) rule of law which includes free functioning of a durable system of laws, institutions, norms, and community commitment withing the EU;

6) human rights protect every individual from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

As far as intention of Ukraine to become a member of the European Union



proved to be firm, our country is now determined to adjust all spheres of life, including education, to meet the EU standards and mentioned above values, ensure further cooperation with the EU, and adopt the best European practices, thereby fostering the conditions for Ukraine's potential membership in the European Union.

Despite living under the martial law the first steps in this direction have been made. The key milestones in this process include the submission of the application for the EU membership (February 28, 2022) and the granting of candidate status for the EU membership (June 23, 2022).

Additionally, with the beginning of war with Russian Federation a certain shift has been made in beliefs and values of Ukrainians towards accepting the European way of life. The results of the empirical surveys prove that European values form the basis of a thriving society and are therefore regarded as essential guiding principles (Buhbe, 2017), (Walter et al. 2022). The endorsement of such EU values as human dignity, individual freedoms (respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information), democracy, equality, rule of law, human rights, peace, solidarity, tolerance, the value of human life and Ukraine's integration into the EU have become particularly relevant now, given Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression towards Ukraine. Walter et al. (2022) points out that 83% of respondents would support Ukraine's accession to the European Union and acquire the values common for the EU member-states. The research of L. Derkach and M. Nesprava (2022) on youth value orientations also proves conscious European choice of Ukrainian youth, European self-identification, and generally positive attitude towards the EU.

European integration within the context of university education is characterized by systemic changes through reforms aimed at creating a system for ensuring and continuously improving the quality of higher education that aligns with the recommendations and standards of the European Higher Education Area. An important aspect of this integration is the encouragement of reforms in universities and research institutions through the funding of joint international projects (Chernyakova, 2022). This initiative is confirmed at the legislative level by the Roadmap for the state's European integration in the fields of education and science until 2027 published by the Ministry of Education and Science (2024). One of the three strategic goals of this document is the following: participants in the educational process and researchers are familiar with and share the EU values and take advantage of the European educational and research space. Within this goal, participants in the educational process are expected to become a "catalyst for spreading European values in Ukraine", for which educational modules promoting key EU values will be introduced into the structure of teacher training and professional development. Additionally, mechanisms will be proposed for bringing European educators and professionals to work in Ukrainian educational institutions to popularize leading European values (Ministry of Education and Science, 2023).

It goes without saying that ERASMUS+ programmes promote European values in higher education as they shape the framework and principles that guide universities, colleges, and institutions of higher learning across Europe. These principles include academic freedom, which promotes open dialogue, critical thinking,



and the pursuit of truth; autonomy of higher education institutions, which allows them to govern themselves in terms of curriculum design, research priorities, and internal policies; excellence and innovation in education and research, aimed at advancing knowledge, fostering skills for the future, and contributing to societal progress; inclusivity and accessibility, which ensure that students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds have access to education; internationalization, as programs like ERASMUS+ have become an instrument in fostering cross-border educational opportunities, encouraging the exchange of knowledge and cultural experiences.

One of such ERASMUS+ programmes in the sphere of education is the Jean Monnet Module, a teaching and research initiative, which focuses on promoting excellence in European Union studies and encouraging dialogue between the academic world and policymakers. Jean Monnet Module's primary aim is to enhance the understanding of European integration by fostering learning, debate, and reflection on European Union matters. It encourages teaching that relates to European integration and the role of the EU in a global context. This includes political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of European studies.

Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University is currently implementing the Jean Monnet Module "Strengthening the EU Common Values through the Policy of Multilingualism in the Education and Training of Future Teachers" (101083321-SEUCV-ETT-ERASMUS-JMO-2022-HEI-TCH-RSCH) (2023-2026). This Module is designed to enhance the Ukrainian educational process, align it with the EU values and language standards. It is expected that after mastering this Module future foreign language teachers will modernize Ukraine's approach to education and contribute to the broader process of European integration, especially in the context of Ukraine's aspirations to strengthen ties with the EU.

As a result of learning on this module, students should have demonstrated the following **outcomes**: knowledge and experience in the EU common values (human dignity, freedom of movement, democracy, equality, rule of law, human rights); awareness of the policy of multilingualism and the EU's educational matters (language policy, reforms, curricula, learning strategies, creativity, development in language learning and teaching sphere, etc.); ability to strengthen the EU common values through teaching a foreign language to Ukrainian primary and secondary schoolchildren taking into account all European education requirements; ability to introduce the European common values and language standards into Ukrainian educational space while teaching foreign languages to children from an early age; ability to contribute to the linguistic diversity and language learning in Ukraine, based on the main vectors of EU's policy of multilingualism, thus strengthening the EU common values.

There are two main objectives of the Module: strengthening EU common values (the Module seeks to promote and reinforce key EU values, because the educational system, based on these values, helps to align Ukraine's educational standards with those of the European Union) and multilingualism in teacher education (a core focus of the Module is on the European policy of multilingualism, which highlights the importance of linguistic diversity and the promotion of foreign language skills, the



module integrates multilingualism into the training of future teachers, preparing them to teach in ways that respect and foster linguistic diversity).

During each cycle of Jean Monnet Module implementation the members of the project team organise and deliver the following **key activities**:

- Methodological seminar "Implementing European standards in methodology of teaching foreign languages in Ukraine".
- Round table "Europe-oriented Ukrainian Foreign Language Teacher".
- Training for primary and secondary school teachers "The EU's policy of multilingualism as a foundation for early foreign language learning and teaching in Ukraine".
- National scientific and practical conference "Strengthening common European values through education".
- One-week intensive course for students "Europe-oriented Ukrainian Foreign Language Teacher".
- Student mini-conference "The EU common values promotion and dissemination through foreign language teaching" based on practice results, Portfolio presentation.

The dissemination of progress and outcomes of the Jean Monnet Module is carried out regularly through different social media resources. To provide updates on the Module a separate page has been created on the official university website. Additionally, the Module's Instagram and Facebook pages are used to share information. Updates include announcements of upcoming events, examples of students' work, portfolios, as well as photo and video content documenting various activities held within the module. These channels ensure that information is consistently refreshed, keeping the academic community and the public informed about the Module's progress.

Conclusion. In conclusion, it should be said that European values in higher education reflect a commitment to fostering societies where knowledge, inclusion, and democracy flourish, encouraging both individual and collective advancement. These principles are also intertwined with European cultural and political contexts, such as the European Union's emphasis on social cohesion and innovation. We believe that such ERASMUS+ initiatives as Jean Monnet Module, which is being currently implemented in Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University, reflect the EU's commitment to education as a means of promoting social and cultural integration. Multilingualism, as a cornerstone of European identity, is seen not just as a communication tool but as a way to foster understanding and solidarity among diverse European nations. For Ukraine, engaging with EU educational standards and policies like multilingualism can boost its efforts to integrate more closely with the EU, both culturally and politically. The ongoing implementation of the Jean Monnet Module in Ukraine exemplifies how education can play a vital role in reinforcing shared values and supporting multilingualism.



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