



Key events of the EU-Ukraine cooperation. December, 2013

ERASMUS+ TO GRANT UKRAINIANS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN 150 COUNTRIES

Good EU scholarships help students get high-quality education abroad.



"After 2 years of MA studies I'm getting diplomas from three universities," **Olena Yanyts'ka** says of her experience studying within the Erasmus Mundus program. "This is the only EU programme that offers education in two or even three countries at the same time. And according to the conditions of consortium, you get diplomas from the countries where you've been studying."

Olena is about to receive MA certificates in "European literature and culture" from the universities of Strasbourg,

Thessaloniki and Bologna. On November 14-16, she spoke about the EU educational opportunities at the 'Education Abroad Fair' in Kyiv. The European Commission displayed its 'Study in Europe' stand at the fair for the third time. This year, two new academic cooperation programs were presented: Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie.

The "Ukrayinsky Dim", where the educational exhibition was held, was crowded with young people during the fair. Dozens of booths were lined up to distribute informational brochures promoting the benefits of studying at their universities or in their countries.

"If I understand correctly, Erasmus Mundus coordinates the application procedure from the start," says student **Oleksandr Komarov**, explaining what attracted him to the "Study in Europe" stand. "This guarantees that in the case where the person is accepted by the university, he or she will surely get the scholarship."

But Olena Yanytska clarifies that students must apply on their own in accordance with the requirements of each university. "The main difference is that Erasmus Mundus covers all the costs. None of the EU member states individually offer such profound financial support for MA studies. The student is provided with full tuition and a monthly scholarship of €1,000."

Starting in 2014, **Erasmus Mundus transforms into the new Erasmus+ programme**. In addition to decent funding, it will offer Ukrainian students and researchers studying opportunities in a wider range of countries. The new program will apply between 2014 and 2020 and combines three current EU educational programs already operating in Ukraine: Tempus, Erasmus Mundus and Jean Monnet.

"Why Erasmus+? Because it opens the Erasmus program for more countries and creates new programs, opening up additional opportunities for researchers," **Svitlana Shytikova**, director of the National Tempus Office in Ukraine, explains the innovations.

"Before, the program was open for only 27 countries-participants and now it includes 34. These are the EU Member States, candidate countries (Turkey and Macedonia), as well as Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. At the same time, in previous years the program was open for 27 partners and now they are about 150. The program will operate with three components: learning mobility, degree mobility, and cooperation and policy support for projects in higher education," Shytikova concludes.



The learning mobility component means that on the basis of bilateral agreements, universities can provide their students with credits that can be transferred abroad, while teachers can take part in lecturing and research programs in other countries. The degree mobility offers an opportunity to create unique masters programs and obtain a masters degree from a foreign university. Finally, the cooperation component allows the possibility of establishing strategic partnerships and knowledge alliances. Thus, Erasmus+ will support and modernise higher education and the professional development of university staff in participating countries.

About **1,800 Ukrainian students** and academics have already taken advantage of the mobility offered through Erasmus Mundus. The last call selected nine new partnerships, which will support mobility for **299 Ukrainian nationals**. Currently Ukraine is also involved in 82 Tempus projects, including 33 projects to be financed in 2013, supporting capacity building and modernisation of higher education institutions and systems.

Read more: [Leaflet Erasmus+](#)

BURGE: FREE TRADE WITH THE EU WOULD CHANGE UKRAINIAN ECONOMY (VIDEO OF THE LECTURE)

Nicholas Burge, Head of trade and economic section of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, believes that implementation of the Association Agreement, including its provisions on deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA), would change the Ukrainian economy.

This was his key message delivered in a lecture at [EU Study Days](#), EU Delegation's education initiative. Watch the [video](#) of this lecture, or read about its key ideas.

AA signature is just a beginning. Signature of the association agreement is just a launch of a long process of the AA implementation. By signing the deal Ukraine and the EU, however, will commit themselves to fully implement the document. This may completely change the whole landscape of Ukrainian economy and would have significant impact on daily life of every Ukrainian citizen.

Elimination of border barriers in EU-Ukrainian trade. As any traditional FTA, EU-Ukraine DCFTA would lead to substantial elimination of tariffs and customs in bilateral trade. Hence, the association agreement would open up Ukrainian and European markets to each other. Complete DCFTA implementation would reduce 98% of current tariffs to zero, while the remaining 2% would be reduced significantly. Given the EU's role in Ukraine's foreign trade as well the Ukrainian part in EU's trade, the deal is much more important for Kyiv. EU-Ukraine AA is also asymmetrical in terms of implementation, since Ukraine will reduce its custom tariffs gradually during transition period while the EU will open up its market straightforward after the documents enters into force.

What makes EU-Ukraine FTA deep and comprehensive? The association agreement proposes Ukraine not a classical FTA but deep and comprehensive FTA. It foresees elimination of so-called behind-the-border trade barriers such as divergence in standards, norms and regulations. By signing the association agreement Ukraine would be committed to align its regulations with the whole body of EU acquis. This would not only provide Ukrainian producers with unrestricted access to European market but also open up global markets that also recognize European standards. In addition, alignment with European technical regulations will save Ukrainian producers up to 15% of adaptation costs which they currently pay to enter EU market. The association agreement also does not have any provisions preventing Ukrainian firms to trade with Russia or any other CIS country. The Moscow-led customs union itself gradually aligns its standards with the European standards.

Converging costs. Ukrainian government argues that DCFTA implementation would cost Ukrainian economy up to EUR 500 billion. Although there is no study confirming this calculation, modernization should be considered as investments rather than costs. If Ukraine does not reform its economy and fails to increase competitiveness of its producers what would be the cost of stagnation? Following the AA signature, the EU and international funds would increase their financial support to Ukraine aimed at boosting reforms. Foreign investors would be also willing to enter Ukrainian market being confident in its modernization. Thus, the costs of comprehensive reforms would not be covered by Ukraine alone. The EU, however, is willing to assist Ukrainian reforms but not to pay the country's debts.

Success story in CEES region. Proposed reforms have been already tested in Central-Eastern European states that went through similar revolutionary reforms. In 1990 Polish GDP per capita was only 8% higher than that of



Ukraine. This, however, was dramatically changed only in 5 years when Polish GDP per capita was already 178% higher than that of Ukraine. By 2013 the difference only increased. The same tendency is true to the amount of foreign investments in CEES countries and Ukraine. The EU proposed Ukraine a tested prescription of reforms that has proved its efficiency. There is no reason why Ukraine cannot follow success of CEES countries.

€4 MILLION WILL HELP BORDER AREAS IN UKRAINE AND BELARUS

The EU is going to finance the implementation of regional projects in the border areas of Eastern Partnership countries.



The total amount of investment reaches €2.5 million, of which €4 million will be allocated to the border areas of Ukraine and Belarus.

These figures were presented at a conference on territorial cooperation, which took place on November 14 in Zhytomyr.

The conference revealed that most of the problems are common across all border areas and therefore need common solutions. "There are a lot of regional issues that could and should be handled through trans-border cooperation," says **Oleksiy Sekarev**, programme director of the Eastern

Partnership Territorial Cooperation Support Programme (EaPTC). "In addition to fighting the effects of the Chernobyl accident, these common challenges also include river pollution, management of common conservation areas, common management of mining, educational projects, employment issues, cultural exchange, etc.," he adds.

This EU-funded initiative is special thanks to its double vector: it aims at boosting living conditions of citizens as well as at promoting cooperation between countries on the local level. According to Sekarev, the EU's aim is to bring the neighbouring countries together and to make them think about cooperation instead of confrontation. Taking into account local practices and current experience of trans-border cooperation, the region is ready for this and needs the support that the EU offers.

Oleksandr Melnyk, the deputy head of the regional policy department of Ukraine's Regional Development Ministry, argues that the EaPTC creates "a platform for solving regional problems, where the central role is to be played by the region and its habitants themselves." **Tetyana Derevyankina**, the programme's communication expert, shares this opinion. She says that the programme is unique precisely because it boosts the direct participation of the community in the project's activities. The local nature of the initiatives allows the program to focus attention on issues that are important for the local communities but are neglected by the central authorities.

Projects initiated by civil society contribute to the establishment of a dialogue with the local self-governing bodies. "The kick-off and running of the projects by the NGOs plays a very important role in the development of civil society," emphasises Lyubov Palyvoda, the programme expert. Participants "feel a responsibility for the success of common projects and are more ready to control the activity of the self-governing bodies," she says.

Two factors are crucial for getting a grant to run the project: direct benefit to citizens and clear trans-border effects (i.e. the project must be useful on both sides of the border). As a result, such initiatives will not only improve living conditions and contribute to the economic development of the border areas, but will also strengthen the bilateral relations between countries.

Background

Territorial cooperation programmes open the possibility for the Eastern Partnership countries to define and solve common problems in the border areas. By so doing, they ensure sustainable economic and social development on



the local level. The Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Support Programme (EaPTC) encompasses four regional trans-border programmes: Azerbaijan – Georgia, Armenia – Georgia, Belarus – Ukraine, and Moldova – Ukraine. The EaPTC aims at enhancing the potential of local and regional state bodies and civil society organisations and gives them new possibilities for financing the implementation of common economically and socially important projects.

EXPERTS NOTE THE CRIMEAN IT SECTOR'S PROMISING OUTLOOK

The Crimean region looks quite promising in terms of the IT industry's development, say experts of an EU-funded project. The project seeks to prepare Crimea for attracting huge investments in the IT sector.



Different countries, including the USA, Great Britain, and Germany, are ready to make investments in Crimea's IT sector. However, prior to increasing their IT investments in Ukraine, the investors should be aware of the country's potential in the IT sphere, says **David Banks**, an Irish investment expert who is also engaged in the EU Project "Foreign Direct Investment Promotion in Sevastopol".

Banks points at the high quality of higher education in Crimea. At the same time, Ukraine has low taxes and the salaries of highly-skilled professionals in the country are much lower than those of their colleagues in the US or

Germany. These factors make Crimea very attractive in terms of development of the IT sector.

"The IT cluster 'Crimea,' which is currently under construction, is tasked with delivering information to potential investors and developing competitive proposals," he says, adding that this is exactly what the project is aimed at doing here.

To date, almost 300 IT companies are working in Crimea, with many of them benefitting from the fact that they are clients of well-known IT giants, such as *Windows*, *Kaspersky*, *Apple*, *Yandex*, etc. Despite these advantages, it is still not easy to find high-skilled IT professionals in Crimea, claims **Denys Muratov**, an expert at *WavesAudio* company.

"Once we wanted to build a team of smart developers, but faced difficulties with finding appropriate professionals. This pushed us to move to Kyiv to scout candidates there," Muratov stresses.

Read the full article: <http://euukrainecoop.com/2013/11/15/crimea-2/>

EXPERTS: UKRAINIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SECTOR IS ALIGNING WITH EU NORMS

The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement will improve the business climate in Ukraine, including in the telecommunications sector, which will benefit Ukrainian consumers.

This was the key message delivered by **Andrew Rasbash**, *head of co-operation of the EU Delegation to Ukraine*, on November 12 at the final press conference of a telecommunications Twinning project in Kyiv.

According to **Rasbash**, the project's main goal consisted of bringing Ukrainian telecommunications regulations in line with the EU's *acquis communautaire*. "If the Association Agreement is signed and implemented, Ukraine, in a few years time, will become a full part of the EU's single telephone communications market," he stressed.

The Twinning project, to which the EU earmarked **€1.3 million**, "has been the most ambitious project in telecommunications sphere that I have ever seen," said **Fabio del Alisal**, the *EU member states project leader (Spain)*. According to del Alisal, the project has achieved 41 key results, accomplished seven study visits to EU member states, and over 500 Ukrainian and 65 European experts have been working together on its implementation.



Andrew Rasbash, head of co-operation of the EU Delegation to Ukraine (centre), and Fabio del Alisal, the EU member states project leader (left)

Ihor Syrotenko, the *beneficiary project leader (Ukraine)*, agrees with del Alisal, stressing that every party engaged in the project's implementation, from both the European and Ukrainian sides, has contributed significantly to making it successful in the future. "The main concern now is to ensure that all the project's achievements are put into practice appropriately," Syrotenko said.

In this regard, he noted that the National Commission has already mapped out future activities to put the project's results to work. Responding to this, **Petro Yatsuk**, *chairman of the National Commission for State Regulation of Communications and Informatisation*,

stressed that the work that has been completed and the experience gained through the project confirms Ukraine's readiness to enter into association with the EU in the telecommunications sphere.

Background

The final press conference of the EU-funded Twinning project, "Supporting Enhancement of the Regulatory and Legal Competence of the National Commission for State Regulation of Communications and Informatisation Regarding Telecommunications Sector Regulation" took place in Kyiv on November 12.

The conference was an opportunity for project leaders from the EU and Ukraine, Ukrainian and EU Delegation officials, and other stakeholders to sum up the results of the project's implementation and to assess whether it achieved its main objectives. The event also served as a platform to look ahead to the main challenges to the project's smooth and appropriate delivery going forward.

The overall objective of the project is to support the development of telecommunications regulation in Ukraine in line with the EU's *acquis communautaire* and *best practices*. *More specifically, it is aimed at strengthening the independence and administrative capacity of the National Commission for State Regulation of Communications and Informatisation* in order to ensure its ability to take appropriate regulatory measures, enforce its own decisions and regulations, and to guarantee fair competition in the market. The project, which ran for 21 months, had a budget of €1.3 million.

Launched in 1998, Twinning has become a major institution-building tool. It aims to help beneficiary countries, including Ukraine, develop modern and efficient administrations with the structures, human resources, and management skills needed to implement the EU's *acquis communautaire*. *One of Twinning's key ideas is to provide administrations and semi-public organizations in beneficiary countries with the opportunity to work with counterparts in EU member states.*

Ukraine was granted the opportunity to benefit from a Twinning project for the first time in 2006.

For more information: <http://nkrzi.gov.ua/uk/1356593298/1356593654>

UKRAINIAN RAILWAYS WILL IMPROVE THANKS TO EU SUPPORT

Modernisation of the Ukrainian railway service is one of the priorities of EU-Ukraine cooperation in the transport sector.



Jan Tombiński, head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, on the inaugural event of a new Twinning project aimed at increasing the efficiency of Ukrainian railway transportation

This issue was discussed during the inaugural event of a new Twinning project aimed at increasing the efficiency of Ukrainian railway transportation. The project will be implemented by a consortium of Ukrainian, Spanish and Polish railway agencies. It was presented to the public on November 26 in Kyiv.

Speaking about the prospects for the Ukrainian railway sector, **Jan Tombiński**, head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, stressed the necessity of ensuring that Ukraine's railway infrastructure is compatible with that of its western neighbours. The diplomat reminded the audience that the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda foresees the gradual convergence of Ukrainian transport

legislation with relevant European norms and standards.

Ukraine needs to open its railway market to competition, Tombiński said, adding that Kyiv should also eliminate trans-sectoral subsidies between freight and passenger railway transportation. This, according to the diplomat, is also among Ukraine's commitments to the World Trade Organization (WTO). "In the coming years, the EU will invest €28 billion in the railway infrastructure of its member states," Tombiński said, underlining the importance of the sector for the EU's economy. Since 2007, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has already allocated about **€700 million** to Ukrainian transport sector projects. "This money, however, will be wasted without the necessary reforms," Tombiński added.

Gerardo Angel Bugallo Ottone, Spanish ambassador to Ukraine, emphasised that the current challenges in the Ukrainian transport sector are similar to problems that Spain has successfully tackled in the past. "As in Ukraine, railway transport plays a key role in the Spanish transport sector," the ambassador noted, adding that today the Spanish network of high-speed trains is considered to be one of the best in Europe.

Slawomir Matuszak, representative of the Polish embassy to Ukraine, for his part, focused on the Twinning project's goals. He stressed that Spanish and Polish experts will assist Ukraine in developing its railway transport legislation and in preparing the sectoral development programme. Matuszak added that the issues of tariffs and technical and safety norms will be also covered by the Twinning project.

Background

The Twinning project, "Institutional Support to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine on Increasing the Operation Performance and the Competitiveness of Rail Transport in Ukraine," aims at modernising Ukrainian railways. The overall budget of the project equals EUR 1,8 million.

As of November 2013, the overall Twinning work plan consists of 61 projects including 26 completed initiatives and 35 projects in various stages of preparation or implementation.

Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure is the beneficiary of six twinning projects. Three of these projects have already been completed, two are in the implementation stage and one is under preparation.

EFFECTIVE REGIONAL POLICY CAN BOOST GROWTH, EXPERTS SAY

EU Regional development programmes have proved to be efficient tool to boost growth and prosperity.



This was one of the main messages delivered by **Ronald Hall**, *Principal Adviser at the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy*, on 26-27 November at the International Forum on Regional Development and State Regional Policy in Ukraine.



Andrew Rasbash, head of co-operation of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, and Ronald Hall, principal adviser at the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, at the international forum on Regional Development and State Regional Policy in Ukraine

Hall says that the EU model of delivering growth through integrated regional development programmes, focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the territories, could also be applied in Ukraine.

At times of global challenges and economic hardships this approach could bring citizens' life to a new level. However, in order to achieve this goal high-skilled assistance and support is needed, the expert says.

The EU has been supporting Ukraine in development of its regional policies and strategies for more than 10 years, **Anatoliy Maksiuta**, *Ukraine's First Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister*, reminds. "Thanks to EU support, 82 projects of technical assistance for regional development in the fields of environment protection, border management, energy efficiency, health care, education, etc. are being implemented in Ukraine," Maksiuta stressed.

Andrew Rasbash, *Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Ukraine*, presented EU Cooperation programmes on Regional Development.

The Support to Ukraine's Regional Development programme (overall budget 31 million) provides assistance to policy makers on national/regional level and provides also significant funds for the implementation of very concrete projects in Ukrainian regions and municipalities.

Further, the EU has recently decided to make additionally **€55 million** available for a Budget Support to Regional Policy. These funds will be provided to the Ukrainian State budget and could also be used for the implementation of concrete regional development projects and programmes during a 4-5 years period, he said.

The EU's support to Ukraine is bearing fruit, according to Rasbash. He welcomed the adoption by Ukraine of State Regional Development Strategy for 2020. On the other hand, he noted a strong need in proceeding with the Law on Fundamentals of State Regional Policy, which is currently being considered by Verkhovna Rada. Further, the Strategy needs to be followed by an Action Plan/Operational Programme, covering a period of at least four years. This Action Plan has to define clear annual targets, measured by objectively verifiable indicators. The EU Financial Assistance, provided within the Budget support, will be linked to the achievements of these indicators.

"There was great progress in last years, but the coming year will be very challenging," he concluded.

Background



A two-day International Forum “Regional Development and State Regional Policy in Ukraine: Status and perspectives of changes in the context of global challenges and European best practice” was held on 26-27 November 2013 in Kyiv.

The forum provided an opportunity to discuss issues related to the main challenges and prospects of state regional policy and strategy in Ukraine, for over 200 participants from Ukraine and abroad. During the event, two extensive research studies on the status and prospects for change of Ukrainian regional development policy were presented and discussed with the audience: The OECD Territorial Review and the Analytical Review of the Support to Ukraine’s Regional Development project.

The EU-funded “Support to Ukraine’s Regional Development Policy” project was launched in January 2013 and will operate until July 2016. The programme’s overall objective is to contribute to the social, economic and territorial cohesion of Ukraine.

Implementation of the project will assist Ukraine’s authorities and other stakeholders in developing and implementing effective regional development policies. The programme’s overall budget is €1 million.

For further information please visit: www.surdp.eu

Useful links:

For more information on EU-Ukraine relations, consult the following resources
<http://euukrainecoop.com/useful-links/>

Calendar of past and future events: <http://euukrainecoop.com/calendar/>