

EUROPEAN STUDIES – IS IT A SUFFICIENT INSTRUMENT OF EUROPEANIZATION IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES?

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Abstract. *European Studies as the field of research and academic discipline presents in the majority of universities in the World. The content and scope of it cover a broad spectrum – from Area Studies characteristic mainly to the American and Asian countries to deep and thorough study of the European Union institutions, policies, law, and politics. Since the beginning of 2000s European Studies has begun its development more or less intensively in the East European countries which have European Integration ambitions. This article discusses the issue of existing and desirable content of the European Studies for the Public Administration systems to be more compatible with the EU standards and expectations. There are examples of activities on public servants and researchers education/training for these purposes.*

Keywords: *European studies, Europeanization, Eastern Partnership.*

The term European Studies now has many different meanings. First of all it is the research field which includes Big Europe Economy, Politics, 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 throughout the World. 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 institutions.

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 but since that time had 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 under the new title the Editorial and Introductory Survey strictly defines its focus on “the global, national, cultural and institutional contexts within which European Studies now operates”¹.

At the same time Michael L. Smith in his article published as early as in 2003 said that the 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

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

programmes and around 70... Masters programmes under the generic heading of European Studies.”²

Today Internet search on the European Studies term shows millions of results. There are almost no universities all over the World without the European Studies programmes or at least separate courses. The geography 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 “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.”³

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.

Comparison of curricula and syllabi of European Studies related courses in a Big Europe (in a geographical sense) 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

² Smith, Michael L. Creating a New Space: UK European Studies Programmes at the Crossroads. (2003). *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 11, 1, 21-34.

³ School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, the University of Hong Kong. <http://www.europe.hku.hk/>

issues of power and influence, governance and culture.”⁴ Michael Smith in the article cited here 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 EU. Similar approaches and scopes of the European Studies programmes can be found at many universities of EU member states.

Another situation with the European Studies is seen at the East European neighbors of the EU. Communications with the colleagues from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine within the Project “Innovating Teaching and Learning of European Studies - INOTLES” (TEMPUS Programme)⁵ have revealed generally much more restricted approaches to studies of the European Union at the partner countries than at the EU universities. Recent decade has been characterized by a broad scope of various 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 of it 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 had brought to the academic community an important document – “Concept of Education Content for the Ukraine’s European Dimension”⁶. 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”⁷. Introductory courses with mostly informational content were developed and introduced at secondary schools and in university undergraduate programs. Beginning from the general information targeted on school and university students as well as NGO activists the EU and Ukrainian organizations had broadened the coverage of European issues and the audience involving a very important group of learners – public servants.

But is it adequate or at least sufficient for the countries of the so called “Eastern Partnership” to meet the expectations and requirements concerning

⁴ FASoS Master’s Programmes European Studies Maastricht University. <http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/show/id=325697/langid=42>

⁵ INOTLES website: <http://www.inotles.eu/>

⁶ 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).

⁷ EU Study Days in Ukraine. <http://eustudydays.com/about/languageknowledge.eu/languages/english>

the Europeanization of their societies, economy, law, and political sphere? Does it provide good perspectives for these countries in their way to EU membership?

When we compare the European Studies content in Ukraine and in the countries outside Europe as a continent we will find almost absolute similarity with even broader scope in, say, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China and Japan. For these countries the 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, legislative, economic and social processes as these have little influence on their countries life.

Completely another case represents Ukraine, Moldova and other countries of the Eastern Partnership. They are not only the neighbors of the European Union – they actually are the integral part of a Big Europe with common historical, cultural, and economic heritage. These countries have declared their intension to become full members of the European Union and hence need much deeper insight into the EU affairs. They have to build their economies for to become compatible with the Common Market environment, adapt their legislation, and, the most important, develop the system of European values within their societies.

School and university courses/programs of European Studies however broadly implemented will bring positive results 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 and hence the Eastern Partnership countries should move faster in a right direction and remove a lot of 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 decisions 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 vertical 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 the sources of 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 the Eastern European countries. Accession of 10 countries which in the Soviet times belonged to the Warsaw block has given the 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 President Leonid Kuchma. One of these decrees had approved the Program of Ukraine's integration to the European Union.⁸

In fact the whole activity was intensive only during first year or two. Then the political elite of Ukraine was discouraged by the 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 the Ukrainian legislation adaptation 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 the EU issues (actually a specific kind of the European Studies). 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 eGovernment 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

⁸ 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 courses were taught by the international group of professors who came from France, Belgium, Norway, United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

During 4 years of the Project implementation about 1000 students from the public administration, NGOs, academic institutions attended the classes, prepared learning papers and presentations, passed exams. Almost 200 students visited Brussels for visiting the EU institutions – European Parliament, European Commission, and the Council of Regions. As the Project was organized and sponsored by the Norwegian corporation Telenor, one of the focuses was on the European Economic Area, and the students had visits to the Norway Representation Office at the European Union.

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 another criterion than their knowledge, qualification and skills in European Studies. So, they considered the trainings as the means of satisfying their curiosity rather than preparation to 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 more or less integral picture of the European Union structure and functioning. Hence, it was rather acquaintance than insight into the EU essence.
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 quality of 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 understanding that the recommendation of the international organizations on transferring the EU experience into the Ukrainian public service system cannot be implemented without thorough adaptation to our realities and features of Ukrainian political system.

Proceeding from this experience we at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy have established in 2010 a new Graduate Program focused on European Studies. The main idea of the Program was to combine general theoretical preparation in Political Science with deep study of European Union in a context of domestic political and social realities. This 2 years Program requires students to accumulate 120 ECTS points and defend Master Thesis on relevant issues of studies.

As a 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 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 in 2-3 years they took teaching several courses in their hands. 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:

- Institutions of the European Union
- European Union and International Law
- Research Methods in European Studies
- Public Policies of the EU
- 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 armed 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.

* 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.*

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