

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND GOVERNANCE BY NATIONAL ECONOMY

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INTEGRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF UKRAINE IN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SPACE

This article explores the transformation of higher education in Ukraine towards integration into the European educational space. On the basis of the metamorphosis of normative legal acts of Ukraine and European education documents regulating this field, the main achievements and challenges for integration of Ukraine into the European educational space are outlined. The activity of the newly created body of higher education management – the National Agency for Quality Assurance (hereinafter referred to as the National Agency), designed to catalyze changes in higher education in Ukraine, is analyzed. The results of the authors' analysis of statistical activities of higher education institutions (teachers and seekers of higher education) for their expert participation in the activities of the National Agency for the regions are offered. The paper also updates information regarding the current state of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine. The countries that will soon be actively competing for applicants from Ukraine, donor countries to Ukraine and the main problems in the field of internationalization are identified. The need for active development of the national infrastructure of scientific cooperation with European HEIs as a means of stimulating further reform of Ukrainian higher education in order to solve urgent problems, including improving its quality, is justified.

Keywords: higher education, genesis, quality, internationalization, European educational space.

Problem statement. The Ukrainian higher education market is now affected by a number of factors, among which is significant migration of Ukrainian entrants to other countries, increasing competition from foreign universities, actively promoting themselves on the Ukrainian market alone or through agency companies. At the same time, Ukraine is becoming more and more active in the international market of educational services, improving its own legislation in the context of global processes of internationalization of education. All of the above forces to analyze the changes in the higher education of Ukraine in the context of approaching the European educational space.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Many national scholars are interested in the issues of improving modern higher education and its integration into the European educational space in Ukraine. Among them it is worth noting the works by Yevgen Khan, in which he presents a retrospective of the key positions of the transition of the Ukrainian higher education system onto the European educational standards in the framework of participation in the Bologna process¹, and examines some aspects of Ukraine's² European

¹ Хан, Є. (2017). Участь України у Болонському процесі: 12 років на шляху до європейського освітнього простору. *Європейські історичні студії*, 7, 45-63.

² Хан, Є. (2015). Інтеграція України у європейський простір вищої освіти як складова цивілізаційного вибору. *Вісник Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка*, 3 (126), 54-57.

integration aspirations, by Vladimir Bakhrushin, who examined the changes in higher education in Ukraine, and in the European educational space¹ and many others. At the same time, the influence of integration processes in education is becoming more and more important, which prompts the analysis of the Ukrainian higher education market to be updated.

To achieve this goal, the following tasks have been defined: to analyze the transformation of the higher education sector of Ukraine in accordance with regulatory changes in the European educational space; to examine the activity of national higher education institutions (HEIs) in the current transformations in the field of quality of education initiated by the National Agency; to analyze the current state of internationalization of the national higher education in order to identify the problematic places and opportunities for elimination of shortcomings for the further integration of Ukraine into the European educational space.

Research result and discussion. The regulatory and legal framework for the regulation of educational activity in Ukraine consists of numerous legislative and regulatory acts, the main of which are: the Constitution of Ukraine (Articles 24, 26); The Law of Ukraine "On Education" 05/09/2017 No. 2145-VIII; The Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" of 01.07.2014 No. 1556-VII; The Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region (Lisbon, April 11, 1997), ratified by the Law of Ukraine "On Ratification of the Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region" of 03.12.1999 No. 1273-XIV; The order of recognition of the higher education degrees obtained in foreign higher educational establishments, approved by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated 05.05.2015 No. 504, registered at the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on May 27, 2015 under No. 614/27059; and other.

January 13, 2020 the President signed the Bill "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on improving educational activities in higher education." The law improved the regulation of educational licensing processes, strengthened the principles of equal access to higher education, and expanded the scope of external independent assessment technologies to measure learning outcomes at higher education levels and to enter the master's educational level, requirements for the head of the institution, the National Qualifications Framework. Such changes are due to the need to improve the legal framework of higher education of Ukraine in accordance with its obligations to reform the higher education system in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna process, in particular the new edition of the Standards and Recommendations on Quality Assurance introduced in the EU in 2015. Table 1 presents an author's analysis of the transformation of higher education in Ukraine since its independence in the context of changes in the European educational space.

The generalizations presented in table. 1, allow stating the following:

1. From the first days of independence, Ukraine has announced a course on integrating national higher education into the international educational space, in particular by joining the Bologna Process.
2. National higher education, on the one hand, still has the influence of the negative phenomena of the past of our country: economic and demographic crises, authoritarian traditions both in teaching and management of education, on the other – the pressure of globalization processes, which exacerbate competition in the educational services market.
3. Educational reform in Ukraine is progressing rather slowly, which in the context of globalization of the educational space creates additional risks and difficulties for the national higher education.
4. The revival of the processes of international cooperation in national education, as well as the actual start-up of the National Agency, one of the key tasks of which is to create a new system of quality assurance in higher education, can be considered positive.

As noted above, a new body of higher education governance has been established in Ukraine – the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The date of its creation is considered to be the first of September 2015, but in fact as a permanent collegial body for the implementation of the state policy in the field of quality assurance of higher education, it started functioning in February 2019 after its final composition and approval of the latest version of the Charter. The Agency's mission is "to become a catalyst of some positive changes in higher education and formation its culture of quality"².

¹ Бахрушин, В. (2020). Як змінюється вища освіта в Україні та в Європейському освітньому просторі. *Освітня політика. Портал громадських експертів* <<http://education-ua.org/ru/component/content/article/12-articles/1296-yak-zmnyuetsya-vishcha-osvita-v-ukrajini-ta-v-evropejskomu-osvitnomu-prostori>> (2020, March, 26).

² Офіційний сайт Національного агентства із забезпечення якості вищої освіти (2019). *Стратегія Національного агентства із забезпечення якості вищої освіти до 2022 р.* <<https://naqa.gov.ua/місія-та-стратегія-агентства/>> (2020, March, 26).

Table 1

**The Genesis of Higher Education in Ukraine in the Context of Approaching
the European Educational Space**

№	Years	Ratified documents	Innovation in higher education	Factors of influence on higher education of Ukraine
1	2	3	4	5
1.	1991	The Law of Ukraine "On Education"	Relationship with education of other countries is recognized as one of the basic principles of education in Ukraine	Declaration of Ukraine's independence, the gap between many educational and economic feedbacks and society as a whole
2.	1993	Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the State National Program" Education ("Ukraine of the XXI Century")	One of the principles of the Program's implementation is proclaiming the openness of the education system related to its ... integration into the world educational structures	Separation of education from national sources; outdated authoritarian pedagogy established in a totalitarian state; the ongoing socio-economic crisis
3.	1997	Ratification of the Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region (Lisbon Convention)	The legislation recognized definitions of common terms and principles related to the recognition of higher education qualifications; recognized qualifications awarded in other countries that provide access to higher education - mutual recognition of higher education diplomas in the European Region	Access to higher education for the masses; technology development; globalization
4.	2004	The program of action for implementation of the Bologna Declaration in higher education and science of Ukraine for 2004-2005	Integration of higher education of Ukraine into the world and European educational space is defined as the priority direction of its development, preconditions for joining the Bologna process are created: introduction of two-cycle training, introduction of credit-module system, test control of the quality of education, expansion of student mobility.	Letter from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine "On the Beginning of the New 2004/2005 Academic Year" outlining further steps in reforming Ukraine's higher education, as well as recognizing the problems that have been accumulated in the educational sphere and the ways to overcome them
5.	2005	The program of action for implementation of the Bologna Declaration in higher education and science of Ukraine for 2004-2005	Integration of higher education of Ukraine into the world and European educational space is defined as the priority direction of its development, preconditions for joining the Bologna process are created: introduction of two-cycle training, introduction of credit-module system, test control of the quality of education, expansion of student mobility.	Letter from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine "On the Beginning of the New 2004/2005 Academic Year" outlining further steps in reforming Ukraine's higher education, as well as recognizing the problems that have been accumulated in the educational sphere and the ways to overcome them
6.	2007	"Action Plan for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and its Integration into the European and World Education Society for the Period up to 2010" by the Ministry of Education and Science.	Start of consolidation of universities through unification; educational process at all universities of the III-IV levels of accreditation is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); an external independent assessment of knowledge of graduates of secondary schools is introduced.	The sharp drop in the birth rate in Ukraine in the first years of independence has responded to the decrease in the number of graduates of secondary schools and, accordingly, a decrease in the number of university entrants

Continuation of the table 1

1	2	3	4	5
7.	2014	Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education"	Significant progress in the implementation of the main ideas of the Bologna Declaration and other documents of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area (concerning the system of degrees, access to the second cycle, the main components of the quality assurance system of higher education)	Significant impact of the demographic crisis of the 1990s; restraint of student mobility declared in the legislative documents due to problems of accepting of credits obtained in other educational institutions; recognition and enrollment the time of work of Ukrainian scholars and teachers at European universities is problematic.
8.	2017	Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union	Cooperation in the field of higher education in reforming and modernizing the higher education system, promoting convergence in higher education within the Bologna process, improving the quality of higher education, enhancing the capacity of higher education institutions, activating student and teacher mobility, cooperation in order to facilitate an access to higher education is declared, etc.	Formation of an open market for educational services. A significant outflow of Ukrainian entrants to European higher education institutions. 2019 - National Agency started its activity.
9.	2020	The Law of Ukraine "On Amendments to Some Laws of Ukraine Concerning Improvement of Educational Activities in Higher Education"	Regulation of licensing of educational activities, admission to higher education, implementation of interdisciplinary educational programs, issues of quality assurance of higher education, student-centered education, forms of education, requirements for the head of the institution, the National Qualifications Framework.	Significant revitalization of cooperation of national universities with international partners. Programs such as Erasmus +, Horizon 2020 and others provide academic mobility, create international educational programs, and internationalize the educational process.

Source: Developed by the authors based on^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}

¹ Закон України про освіту, 1991 (Верховна Рада Української Радянської Соціалістичної Республіки). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1060-12>> (2020, March, 26).

² Постанова про Державну національну програму "Освіта" ("Україна XXI століття"), 1993 (Кабінет міністрів України). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/896-93-%D0%BF>> (2020, March, 26).

³ Конвенція про визнання кваліфікацій з вищої освіти в європейському регіоні, 1997. (Рада Європи, Організація Об'єднаних Націй). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_308> (2020, March, 26).

⁴ Наказ про затвердження програми дій щодо реалізації положень Болонської декларації в системі вищої освіти і науки України на 2004-2005 роки 2004 (Міністерство освіти і науки України). Освіта. UA <http://osvita.ua/legislation/Vishya_osvita/3127/> (2020, March, 26).

⁵ Лист про початок нового 2004/2005 навчального року, 2004 (Міністерства освіти і науки України). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v_440290-04> (2020, March, 26).

⁶ Угода про асоціацію між Україною, з однієї сторони, та Європейським Союзом, Європейським співтовариством з атомної енергії і їхніми державами-членами, з іншої сторони, 2014 (Україна, Європейський Союз, Європейське співтовариство з атомної енергії). Офіційний сайт Верховної Ради України. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/984_011> (2020, March, 26).

⁷ Судебно-юридическая газета (2019). Відмова від диплома державного зразка: у ВРУ зареєстровано відповідний законопроект <<https://sud.ua/ru/news/publication/153190-vidmova-vid-diploma-derzhavnogo-zrazka-uvru-zareyestrovano-vidpovidniy-zakonoproekt>> (2020, March, 26).

The Agency consists of 21 people, including scientific and pedagogical staff, representatives of employers and students. During 2019, the Register of Experts of the National Agency for accreditation of educational programs was formed, which includes 1806 people who successfully passed specialized trainings. Among the experts, there are 1,423 scientific and pedagogical workers and 383 higher education applicants, representing 78.8% and 21.2% respectively¹. Table 2 shows the number of students enrolled in a particular region of Ukraine, the number of HEIs working there, and the number of certified experts from the region. We believe that such data clearly illustrate which regions have been more active in responding to changes in the field of higher education quality.

Table 2

**Participation of teaching staff and students in the work of National Agency
for the region as of 28.01.2020**

Region (region, city)	The proportion of students of HEI region in the total number of students of Ukrainian HEIs as of academic year 2017-2018,%	Share of HEIs of the region in the total number of Ukrainian HEIs as of academic year 2017-2018,%	Share of experts of the region from the total number of experts of the National Agency as of 2019,%	Deviation (column 4 from column 3), (+, -)
1	2	3	4	5
Vinnitsia	2,67	3,5	6,08	2,58
Volyn	1,37	2,1	1,7	-0,4
Dnipropetrovsk	7,10	8,3	6,0	-2,3
Donetsk	1,83	4,4	0,8	-3,6
Zhytomyr	1,53	3,0	3,5	0,5
Transcarpathian	1,56	2,1	1,1	-1
Zaporizhzhia	4,52	3,6	4,1	0,5
Ivano-Frankivsk	2,29	2,4	2,2	-0,2
Kyiv	1,64	3,2	4,9	1,7
Kyiv (city)	26,45	15,1	18,7	3,6
Kirovohrad	0,67	2,4	1,3	-1,1
Luhansk	1,26	2,0	0,6	-1,4
Lviv	8,17	6,5	8,0	1,5
Mykolaiv	1,88	2,6	0,7	-1,9
Odesa	7,02	6,1	5,8	-0,3
Poltava	3,0	2,7	3,7	1
Rivne	1,96	2,1	1,6	-0,5
Sumy	2,29	2,1	4,0	1,9
Ternopil	2,52	2,7	1,1	-1,6
Kharkiv	11,59	9,9	10,7	0,8
Kherson	1,53	3,3	2,0	-1,3
Khmelnyskyi	1,98	2,7	2,4	-0,3
Cherkasy	2,36	2,4	4,4	2
Chernivtsi	1,64	2,4	0,7	-1,7
Chernihiv	1,17	2,4	4,1	1,7
Total	100	100	100	-

Source: Calculated by the authors

¹ Офіційний сайт Національного агентства із забезпечення якості вищої освіти (2019). *Ресстр експертів Національного агентства* <<https://naqa.gov.ua/експерти/>> (2020, February, 17).

Table 2 shows that the most actively participated in the activities of the National Agency as its experts are the representatives from the following regions: Kyiv region and the city Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Sumy, Poltava regions. In February 2020 "The Annual Report of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education for 2019" was published¹. It emphasizes the internationalization of higher education of Ukraine as one of the strategic objectives of the National Agency and provides information on the directions of its implementation. First, the internationalization of the educational process in the HEI should be done through the mobility of teachers and students, the conclusion and real operation of bilateral agreements with foreign partners, double diploma programs, invitation of foreign lecturers, etc. Second, it can be done through the certification of Ukrainian educational programs by foreign accreditation agencies, which will confirm their compliance with the requirements of the European educational space. Third, it should be done through the cooperation of the HEI and the National Agency itself with international donors. Fourth, through the cooperation of the National Agency with foreign agencies, providing quality assurance through membership in international associations and evaluation of the processes and procedures of the National Agency itself by foreign colleagues. We will further explore the issues of studying students with Ukrainian citizenship abroad and foreign students in Ukraine.

Since 2009, the CEDOS, an independent non-profit research centre, has been engaged in research and analysis of social processes, including higher education. Today, the latest figures on the number of Ukrainian citizens studying at foreign universities are available for study in the 2016-2017 academic years. This is due to the length of time statistic data have been obtained in different countries. According to² in the 2016-2017 academic years, there were 77,424 Ukrainian citizens who studied at foreign universities, which is about 8% of the total number of Ukrainians enrolled in full-time higher education programs. Often, the entrants chose Poland, Russia, Germany, Canada, Czech Republic, Italy, the USA, Spain, Austria, France, and Slovakia (Figure 1).

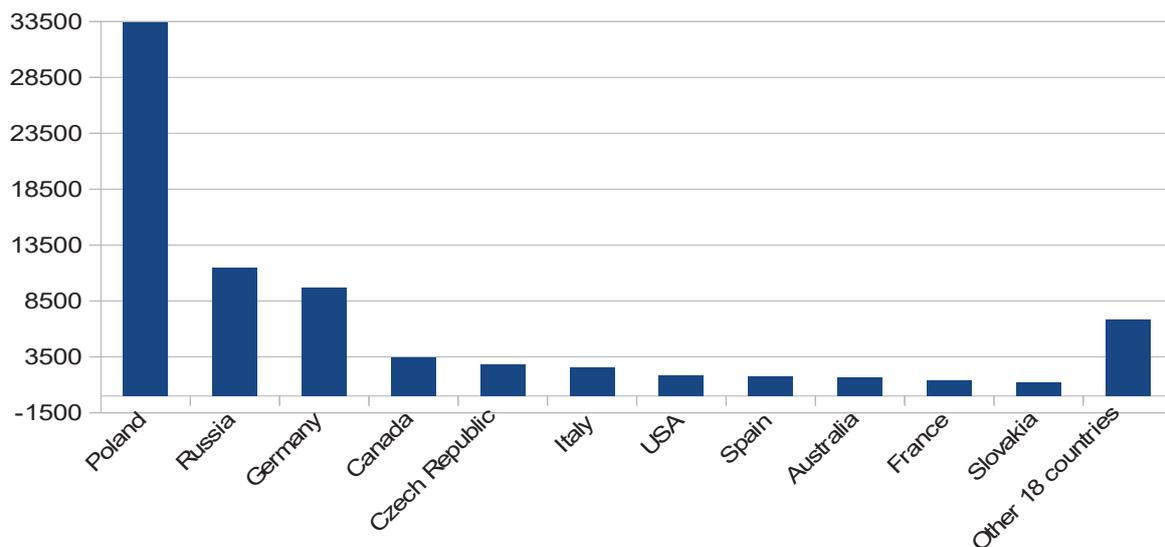


Fig.1. Top countries of students' choice from Ukraine [developed by the authors]

The study also analyzes and identifies countries for which Ukrainian students are strategically important, that is, the countries whose universities are most dependent on the income that Ukrainian students bring. According to it, Ukrainian students are strategically important for Poland (accounting for 55% of all foreign students in Polish universities, and their investments balance the demographic decline and departure of Polish youth in the HEIs of other EU countries), Slovakia (accounting for about 30% of the total foreign students) and Bulgaria (almost 20% of all foreign students). The author of the study assumes that the HEIs

¹ Квіт, С. (ред.) (2020). *Річний звіт Національного агентства із забезпечення якості вищої освіти за 2019 рік*. Київ: Національне агентство із забезпечення якості вищої освіти, 244.

² Стадний, Є. (2019). *Українське студентство за кордоном: дані до 2017/18 навчального року*. Київ: Аналітичний центр CEDOS, 10.

of these countries will continue to "expand their recruitment in Ukraine" and, therefore, actively compete with Ukrainian HEIs for entrants in the near future.

Particular attention in the study was given to the analysis of data about Ukrainian citizens who study in Russia. It was noted that the statistical data included Ukrainian citizens studying in Russian HEIs under budget quotas, which the Russian Government began to allocate significantly more specifically to people with Ukrainian citizenship after aggression against Ukraine, but did not take into account data from Russia about Ukrainian citizens who study in occupied Crimea and Sevastopol. Despite the fact that Russia does not receive a significant economic effect from the studying of Ukrainian students, but it has "a significant political role for the Russian Federation". Thus, in the 2014-2015 academic years, over 3 thousand people were enrolled under the budget quotas for Russian HEIs, which is ten times more than the previous academic year. Russia today and in the future will actively compete for graduates of Ukrainian schools, especially from territories that are not controlled by Ukraine.

Summarizing the topic of a rapid increase in the number of Ukrainians receiving higher education abroad, let us note that such education has become more accessible and desirable in recent years, since it is considered by many to be an opportunity to immigrate to EU countries with higher living standards. Thus, a sociological study of Ukrainian students in the Czech Republic found¹, that "People ... will not rush back to Ukraine. After 5-8 years of studying, they have already rooted in the local culture, gaining social connections, often have partners here, and there should be a very good incentive for such people to return to Ukraine". Therefore, the issue of outflow of Ukrainian entrants is not solved by higher education reform alone, it is more complex and concerns many aspects of life. At the moment, for Ukrainian HEIs, the solution may be to further establish scientific cooperation with European higher education institutions, which would give Ukrainian students and scholars wide access to European education, the opportunity to develop common scientific topics, but remain students within the Ukrainian educational system.

Next, let us consider the issue of Ukrainian HEIs educational services for foreign citizens. According to the latest data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine in 2017, 49.0 thousand students, foreign citizens, studied at universities, academies and institutes. The "Annual Report of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education for 2019" presents the following information: "In 2019 over 81,000 foreign students from 154 countries are trained in our country ... (2014 – 63,172, 2015 – 63906, 2016 – 64066, 2017 – 66310, 2018 – 75605); educational activities are provided by about 450 HEIs to foreign citizens (88% of which are public, 12% are private)." Fig. 2 presents a comparison of the number of foreign students studying in Ukraine by their nationality.

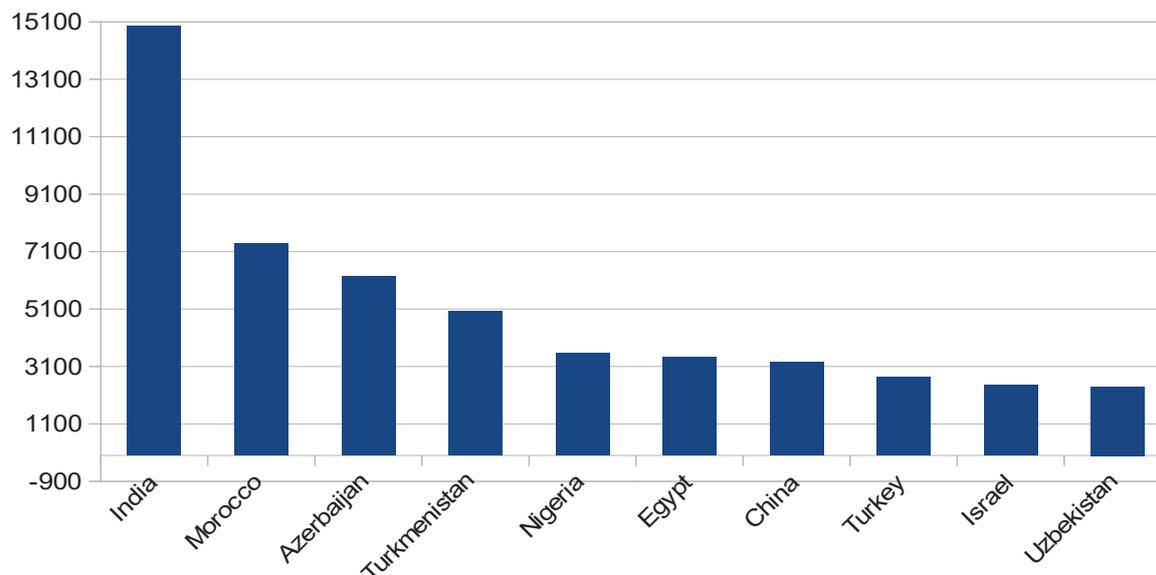


Fig. 2. Top 10 countries of foreign students' origin

¹ Щур, М. (2018). Студентська еміграція з України: проблема чи можливість? Веб-портал Радіо Свобода. <<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29288946.html>> (2020, March, 27).

The fact that more and more foreigners are seeking higher education in Ukraine is important not only from an economic point of view, but also an important indicator of a certain image of Ukraine in the world. At the same time, the National Agency notes "a number of significant problems that exist in the system of providing educational services to foreign citizens, primarily related to the quality of appropriate services to foreigners by educational institutions", which "contributes to the improper fulfillment of official duties by representatives of HEI, supervisors, other authorities and enterprises that provide recruitment services for training foreign nationals." Among the problems that currently exist in this area are the following:

uncontrolled implementation of invitations for potential candidates for studying, which indicates the existence of HEI agreements with unscrupulous intermediary enterprises;

the availability of correspondence education for foreign nationals, the purpose of which is often not to provide educational services, but only to obtain financial dividends from foreigners;

significant worsening of the crime situation in international student exchange: an increase of corruption by the representatives of law enforcement, controlling bodies, administrations of HEIs.

The National Agency notes that today in Ukraine there is a situation where "representatives of educational institutions, control and law enforcement agencies, with the assistance of intermediary firms" are trying to "obtain funds through the illegal use of international student exchange (sale of invitations, illegal receipt of funds for the organization of visa support, temporary legalization of foreigners in our country, falsification of educational documents, organization of channels of illegal migration, smuggling of narcotic substances, etc.).

Conclusion. All the above problems, which have accumulated today in the field of higher education of Ukraine, should stimulate national educational reform, and control over the quality of educational services and active implementation of scientific cooperation with European universities into the activities of national HEIs will help the latter to find their place in the international educational space.

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