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metaVET

ADVOCATING FOR UKRAINE'S FULL MEMBERSHIP IN ERASMUS+

POSITION PAPER



APRIL 2023

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Vocational Training - EVBB**



Funded by
the European Union

Prepared by: European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training - EVBB
Date: June 2023
Location: Brussels, Belgium

Policy recommendations to facilitate education-based cooperation with Ukraine

Erasmus+, the European Union's flagship program for education, training, youth, and sport, has played a pivotal role in fostering cooperation and mobility among European countries. Since its inception in 1987, the program has expanded its scope and reach, welcoming various countries into its fold. This position paper **advocates for Ukraine's full membership in Erasmus+** as a mechanism to promote **educational excellence, cultural understanding, and international cooperation** between Ukraine and EU countries.

The Ukrainian education system has a deep-rooted historical legacy; however, its current advancement has been **adversely affected** by the ongoing war in the country. Ukraine's education sector faces several serious problems that have hampered its progress and hindered its ability to fully harness the potential of its academic and training institutions. The ongoing war in Ukraine has had a profound and devastating impact on the country's education system. It has resulted in the physical destruction of schools and universities, displacement of students and teachers, financial strain on educational resources, and a general disruption of the learning environment. These consequences have collectively hindered the progress of education in Ukraine and posed significant challenges to the academic development and future prospects of its citizens. The political landscape in Ukraine has been marked by **significant developments** in recent years, with the country actively seeking closer ties with the European Union.

Ukraine's current participation to Erasmus Mundus projects is a testament to its dedication to enhancing the quality and international reach of its education system. The role played by Ukrainian institutions within Erasmus Mundus projects underscores its the unwavering commitment of the country to the improvement of the quality and global presence of its education system. Furthermore, recently, three Ukrainian organizations established partnerships with Erasmus Mundus projects under the European Union's Erasmus+ Program. Notably, out of the 90 projects chosen for funding in this competition, **Ukraine already contributed two projects** to the Teaching of Erasmus Mundus joint master's programs and one project to the Development of Erasmus Mundus master's programs, highlighting its dedication to international academic collaboration and excellence. However, the benefits of full membership in the Erasmus+ program would be manifold, providing enhanced mobility, capacity building, internationalization, and research collaboration opportunities. By committing to educational reforms and advocating for full membership, Ukraine can further strengthen its position in the global education landscape and contribute significantly to the Erasmus+ community. Given this portfolio of opportunities laying within hand's reach, it is imperative that Ukraine is granted full membership in the Erasmus+ program to fully harness the potential for educational and cultural enrichment it offers.

Policy Recommendations for Ukraine's Full Membership in Erasmus+

- **Commitment to Education-oriented International Collaboration:** Recognize Ukraine's dedication to improving its education system through active participation in Erasmus Mundus projects as a sign of its commitment to international collaboration.
- **Advocate for Full Membership to the Erasmus+ programme:** Advocate for Ukraine's full membership in the Erasmus+ program, emphasizing the manifold benefits it would bring.
- **Enhancement of Academic and Vocational Excellence:** Emphasize the potential to enhance academic excellence by granting Ukrainian students and academic staff access to a broader spectrum of educational and research opportunities in Europe.

- **Promotion of Student & Staff Mobility:** Highlight the role of Erasmus+ in promoting student mobility, which allows Ukrainian students to study abroad and develop essential soft skills, contributing to a global perspective among the youth.
- **Geopolitical Stability:** Underline the geopolitical significance of Ukraine's full membership in Erasmus+, as it aligns with the EU's commitment to regional stability and development.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of Erasmus+ participation on Ukrainian education, including measures of academic quality, student satisfaction, and internationalization efforts.

Position Paper of the VET4EU2 Group on Ukraine's full Membership to the Erasmus+ programme

European organizations working in the field of vocational education and training have demonstrated support for Ukraine's educational aspirations. The dedication of a segment of the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB) Annual Conference to Ukraine's education system is a notable demonstration of international support for Ukraine's endeavours to strengthen its connections with European institutions. During this conference, representatives of Ukrainian education institutions passionately voiced their commitment to European values, with one resounding statement emerging: "**Ukraine today is fighting for the European values**". This sentiment highlights Ukraine's determination to align with the principles of democracy, human rights, and academic excellence maintained by the European Union. Such endorsements from international organizations serve as a **powerful reminder** of the shared values that unite Ukraine and the European Union, making Ukraine's full membership in Erasmus+ not just desirable but essential for fostering cooperation and progress.

To highlight the urgent need for Ukraine's involvement, the European Association of Institutes of Vocational Training (EVBB) decided to bring these points together in a **petition letter** to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) with the support of other EU actors, through the European Parliament Petition website. Through this petition they strongly suggest the inclusion of Ukrainian educational institutions as full partners in the Erasmus+ program. Ukraine has demonstrated its dedication to EU collaboration, and many European organizations are keen to work with Ukrainian colleagues. The petition letter requests that Ukraine be considered as a Third Country in the Erasmus+ program, as other non-EU affiliated nations have. In turn, this will allow Ukrainian partners to get involved in various initiatives while also strengthening connections between the EU and Ukraine.

Ukraine's full membership in Erasmus+ would be a mutually beneficial arrangement, offering academic, cultural, economic, and geopolitical advantages. It would enhance academic excellence, promote student mobility, foster research collaboration, and contribute to regional stability. While challenges exist, they can be overcome through cooperation and support. The inclusion of Ukraine in Erasmus+ would not only benefit the country but also strengthen the program itself by expanding its reach and impact in Eastern Europe. It is a step towards a more integrated, peaceful, and prosperous European continent.

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