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Higher Education as a Space for Forming the Values of United Europe

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Abstract

The research is focused on the role of higher education in the development of European values among applicants for higher education, in particular the role of international projects that contribute to active European citizenship and spread the fundamental values of the European Union. The article uses

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the method of modeling and substantiation of the model of the development of European values among future PhDs during a Jean Monnet Module of the Erasmus+ program called “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU Member states for Ukraine” at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. The model contains four structural blocks that specify the goal, tasks, methodological approaches, principles, content of structural components, forms, methods, means, stages, functions, pedagogical conditions, and expected results. The study is aimed at developing European values in graduate students as young scientists and teachers of higher education institutions – who will become agents of qualitative changes and help establish the principles of democracy in the academic community – and deepening European integration. The results of the study are presented in the broad public discourse of Ukraine, confirmed by the data of sociological studies on European integration in Ukrainian citizens’ value orientations, accelerated by the large-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine. Since sociological studies indicate a certain fragmentation of European values instead of an integral whole in the perception of the respondents, we believe that institutions of higher education themselves are an important element that builds the state and society on the basis of European values and that international projects implemented at universities contribute to the European integration of Ukraine and the formation of the values of a united Europe in young citizens.

Keywords: axiology, values of a United Europe, future PhDs, model, Erasmus+ international projects

Ukraine’s aspirations for European integration and the current sociopolitical situation in the country lead to an appeal to the axiological foundations of a united Europe. Today, Europe has not so much a geographical as an axiological dimension, because European values are the foundation of liberal democratic institutions of the European space. According to Amelchenko (2013, p. 2), European values are a set and/or system of axiological maxims; basic principles of building a family, society, and state; and political, economic, cultural, legal, and other norms which unites a significant majority of the residents of Europe and forms the basis of their identity.

European values include 1) humanistic thinking, 2) rationality, 3) secularity, 4) rule of law, 5) democracy, and 6) the protection of human rights (EuropeanValues.info, 2010, p. 5). These components form the basis of the European values outlined in the 54 articles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, structured in seven chapters, which makes it possible to ensure the legal order created by the European Union and to form the economic, social, and political life of a multicultural society of 28 states with a population of over 500 million people. The first six chapters of the Charter are fundamental values (“Dignity,” “Freedoms,” “Equality,” “Solidarity,” “Citizens’ Rights,” and “Justice”), while the seventh chapter regulates and interprets the application of the document. The Charter received full legal force on December 1, 2009, together with the Treaty of Lisbon.

The civilizational choice of Ukraine towards European integration means that the state and society are developing based on European values and that the majority of the country’s citizens share the main value orientations of the European community. Nevertheless, as sociological studies testify, in the perception of respondents there is a certain fragmentation of European values, and not an integral axiological construction (Ukrainian society and European values, 2018).

The institute of education plays an important role in nurturing basic European values in Europe. Experts emphasize that a value-based approach is a key, determining factor in global education today. European studies have already been introduced in the higher education system of Ukraine, with the aim of popularizing European experience in various fields and developing European values. Enriching educational components with valuable knowledge, meanings, and information about European values, ideals, and democratic achievements should serve both to increase the competencies necessary for living in the European community, which will contribute to the self-realization of young people, and to further the progress of Ukraine’s European integration.

In the article, we focus on the role of projects funded by the Erasmus+ program, in particular the Jean Monnet projects, which contribute to active European citizenship and spread the fundamental

values of the European Union: respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of members of minority groups (Erasmus+, 2023, p. 370). The Jean Monnet Module of the Erasmus+ program called “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” is taking place at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, with the participation of the authors, and is aimed at studying European norms, standards, mechanisms, tools, and the best state, social, and educational practices. The target audience of the module comprises tertiary education students (educational and scientific), future PhDs, and university teachers, since most of them are already teachers or intend to be. These are the people who will become agents of qualitative changes and contribute to the affirmation of the principles of democracy in the academic community. Thus, the project is mainly aimed at social institutions – in particular in the field of higher education – separate higher education institutions, and individuals – young scientists and future university teachers and at developing in them the values of a united Europe.

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the model of the development of European values among future PhDs during the implementation of the Jean Monnet Module of the Erasmus+ program called “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University as a factor of the democratization of Ukraine’s higher education.

Research results: values of a United Europe – Ukrainian discourse

The events of the last 20 years confirm that Ukraine’s European choice has no alternative: for Ukrainians, Europe is rather a space of value than a geographical space. The events of 2004–2005 – the Orange Revolution – determined the growth of values in Ukrainian society such as

democratic development, state independence, freedom of speech, democratic control of the decisions of power structures, participation in political life, intellectual development, cultural competence, interesting work, participation in religious life, etc. The Euromaidan of 2013–2014, which was a Revolution of Values, testified to the desire to implement in Ukraine the values of the modern European Union (respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, in particular the rights of minorities). However, Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, launched in February 2022, challenged all the democratic values of the European civilization which includes our state as an integral part.

Despite the Ukrainian state's European integration, the process a European identity forming in the Ukrainian people is incomplete, as demonstrated by the results of sociological research. According to the results of an all-Ukrainian study conducted by the Gorshenin Institute in 2017, European worldview and values were recognized by respondents as a worthy ideal to follow. However, personal well-being and paternalistic values dominated the value orientations of the majority of the survey participants. Finally, the respondents mentioned European values: the rule of law, democracy, freedom of speech, honesty/transparency, the desire to provide equal opportunities to all citizens, etc. (Ukrainian society and European values, 2017).

The large-scale Russian military invasion of Ukraine in 2022 accelerated the shift in value orientations among Ukrainian citizens toward European integration. Thus, according to a survey conducted by the sociological group "Rating," the war undoubtedly brought Ukraine closer to the EU: three quarters of the respondents believed that Ukrainian soldiers and officers today are defending both the people of Ukraine and the people of Europe (Tenth national survey: ideological markers of war, 2022). While in 2017, only 51.6% of respondents unequivocally believed that Ukraine should integrate into the European Union (Ukrainian society and European values, 2017), in January 2023, 87% of respondents declared that they would support this geopolitical choice in the event of a referendum (against – 3%, would not vote – 8%). Support for joining

the EU and NATO is almost unanimous among representatives of all macro-regions and age and wealth groups (Twentieth National Survey, 2023).

Thus, sociological research from 2017–2022 testifies to certain dynamics in the perception of European values: from misunderstanding and moderate perception to support and conviction in the irreversibility of our country's European integration aspirations. Adherence to certain values is determined both by one's belonging to certain social-status groupings of society and one's region of residence. The category most receptive to European values is young people, focused on democratic transformations, observance of rights and freedoms, and the rule of law.

In his article "Citizenship and National Identity," the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (2005) emphasized that only a population accustomed to freedom can support the life of free institutions. Any kind of constitutional norms can only become effective public practices when they "form unity with the motives and beliefs of citizens."

Today's Ukraine is characterized by an intermittent value transformation, which should result in the formation of democratic values that will gradually be modernized and change the essence of existing political institutions to become more democratic. Therefore, "building Europe in Ukraine" is only impossible if formal institutions are borrowed and the valuable component is neglected. To avoid the rejection of the initiated "Euroreforms" and the new institutions created for their implementation, it is necessary to work purposefully and thoroughly on the formation, popularization, and spread of European democratic values in Ukrainian society. At the same time, European values should be considered not only from the point of view of ethical guidelines for citizens' behavior, but also from a pragmatic point of view: the ability to support democratic institutions and make them more effective.

The role of higher education in establishing EU values in Ukraine

The institute of education, higher education in particular, should serve to form the axiological system, since it trains future specialists – leaders of change and European integration. Scientists consider higher education institutions an important element of the country's social capital formation system: they become a crossroads of social cooperation, create an atmosphere of social trust around them, serve to form a just society, and are a necessary and significant step on the way to improving the education system, by developing its value framework (Protsenko et al., 2021).

Educational practices play an important role in spreading European values outside the EU. In particular, scientific studies convincingly prove that for more than three decades Erasmus+ programs have deepened European integration, enriched the knowledge of young people about European identity, promoted the idea of a united Europe (Lebediuk et al., 2018), influenced national higher education policies (Huisman et al., 2005), strengthened international cooperation in European higher education and inter-university networks (Marques et al., 2020), implemented the principle of language equality in the European Union, fostered tolerance and respect for the cultural and language policy of countries and individual universities (Baroncelli, 2014), supported the development of active citizens capable of forming their identity and active citizenship (Perko & Mendiweso-Bendek, 2019), raised awareness of European values among students, and strengthened the sense of belonging to the European cultural paradigm (Tupakhina, 2021).

Considering Europeanization as the adoption of EU rules and norms reflected in discourses and practices, Makarychev and Butnaru-Troncota (2022) study the process of transferring EU values to the eastern region, in particular through international projects financed by the EU. The authors focus particularly on the Jean Monnet projects, which are the Erasmus+ programs that directly aim to develop EU studies worldwide by promoting cooperation between students and staff in the field of teaching and research on European integration.

Using the example of the Erasmus+: Jean Monnet Module called “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” (2022–2025) at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, we have developed and substantiated a model for development of European values among future PhDs. The concept of university autonomy is inextricably linked to such fundamental values as academic freedom and social responsibility of and for higher education. The institutional autonomy of universities, represented by various models of autonomy in the EU countries, is an example of preservation and multiplication of the European democratic values in the system of higher education. University autonomy is an important element of democracy in society. Societies are considered democratic when academic freedom and institutional autonomy are respected. At the same time, these basic values of the European Higher Education Area can be realized only in democratic societies. This interdependence, as well as the influence on university autonomy of political culture, historically rooted practices and management models, has been proven in studies conducted in different countries (Karran et al., 2017; Hocevar et al., 2017; Holmén, 2022; Kalinicheva, 2022).

Introducing the module “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” contributes to the development of democracy, further cooperation between societies with common values, the participation of young people in democratic life, and their stronger role in the development of civil society. The goal of the project is to popularize among postgraduate students who are future teachers of various subjects, of European history and civilizational development, to spread European democratic values and European experience of university autonomy in EU countries, and to inform about the organizational, financial, staffing, and academic autonomy in European universities and the relevance of higher education integration of Ukraine into the European Higher Education Area. The tasks of the project include popularizing the best educational practices of the EU among postgraduate students, teachers, and the general public regarding the creation of an effective model of university

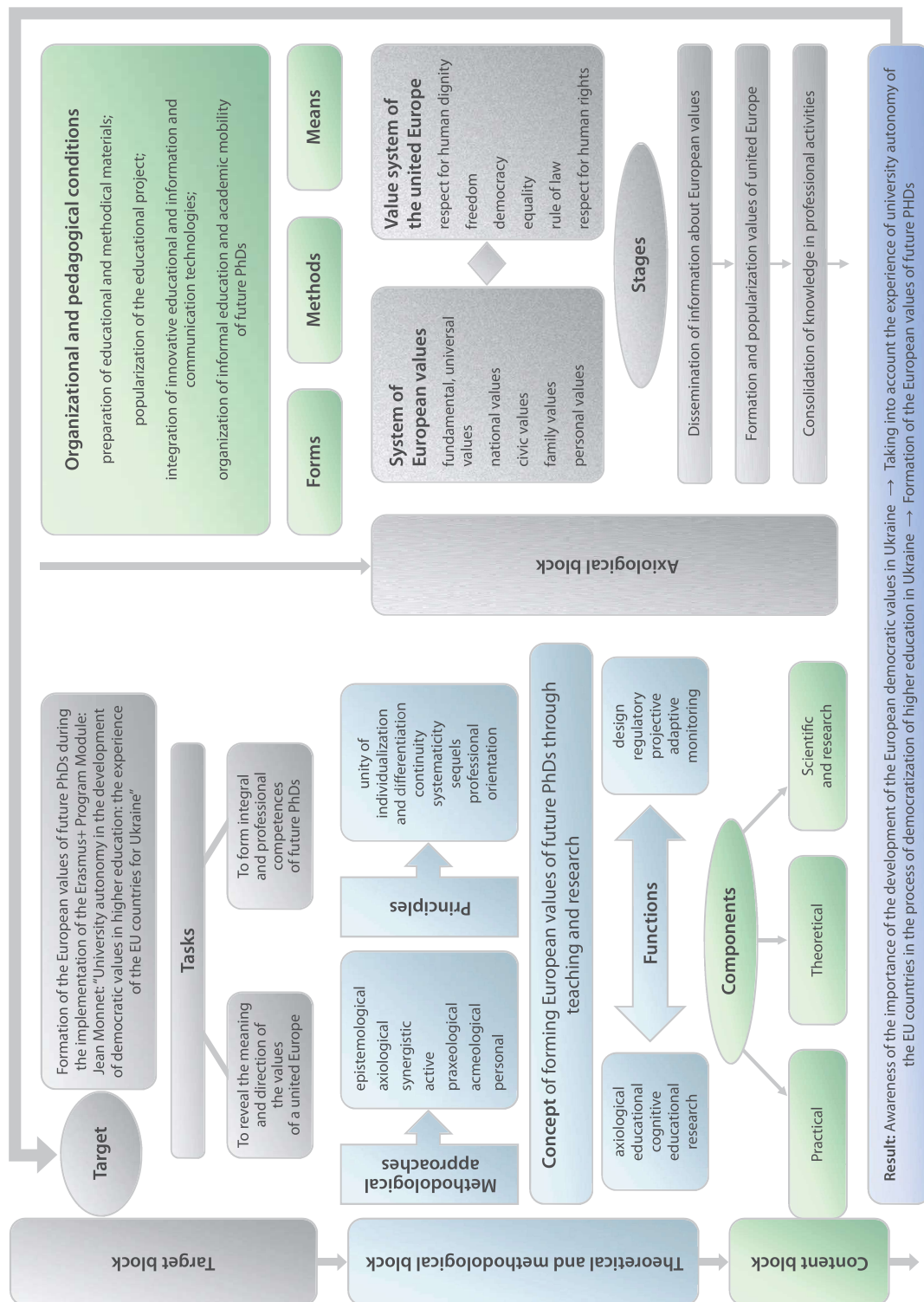
autonomy and the development of educational innovations in higher education. After all, integrating Ukrainian higher education into the European Higher Education Area contributes to Ukrainians' understanding of the common values of the European Union and strengthens the sense of belonging to it.

Makarychev and Butnaru-Troncota (2022), when summarizing the experience of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet projects in the countries of the Eastern Partnership, claim that the majority of participants perceive the knowledge gained from the point of view of statehood, and not in the categories of European values. Indeed, the main tasks of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module in question is to provide future PhDs with knowledge about the system of university autonomy in EU countries as regards the principles, policy, and practice of four components of university autonomy – academic, financial, organizational, and staffing – as well as to analyze the experience of EU countries regarding the implementation of university autonomy. As Makarychev and Butnaru-Troncota (2022) convincingly prove, the study of the legal framework and effective management practices in the field of higher education in EU countries lays the axiological basis of Europeanization, promotes the development of respect for democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights, and thus develops European values in postgraduate students.

A model for the development of the European values of future PhDs during the implementation of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine.” Based on an analysis of the literature on the subject, regulatory and legal documents at the national and local (university) level of European countries, and the experience of teaching this educational module, we have developed a model for the formation of European values of future PhDs during the implementation of the module at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University.

The model contains four blocks that provide the structure and specify the goal, tasks, methodological approaches, principles, content, forms, methods, means, stages, functions, pedagogical conditions, and expected results (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. A model for the development of the European values of future PhDs during the implementation of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine.”



In describing the purpose block, we focused on the fact that the model will be aimed at forming European values in future PhDs in various degree programs at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. This will be manifested in the degree of compliance with general and professional competencies and academic results in their chosen specialties and in the effective activity of future PhDs – leaders of change based on democracy and self-governance at higher educational institutions.

The target block of the model contains the goal (forming European values in future PhDs at BGKU) and the tasks that will achieve this goal:

- to reveal the content and direction of the values of united Europe for the axiological attitude of future PhDs towards their effective implementation in professional activities and
- to develop integral and professional competences in future PhDs in the educational process.

The theoretical and methodological block contains the concept of forming European values in future PhDs through teaching and research, methodological approaches (epistemological, axiological, synergistic, activity, praxeological, acmeological, and personal) and principles (unity of individualization and differentiation, continuity, systematicity, consistency, and professional orientation), as well as functions (axiological, educational, cognitive, educational, research, design, regulatory, projection, adaptive, and monitoring).

In the process of teaching the Jean Monnet Module, the project group used a complex combination of methodological approaches and principles. The use of the epistemological approach made it possible to apply the basic methods of scientific knowledge in the teaching process: thoroughly analyzing the essence of the processes under study and the conceptual and categorical apparatus; defining the content, criteria, and components of university autonomy in European countries, the directions of democratization of higher education in European countries, and their national characteristics; establishing the relationship between the scientific knowledge of higher education students and their axiological/acmeological components;

creating a group of like-minded people focused on forming the values of a united Europe among young Ukrainian scholars. The application of the acmeological approach indicates that the subject of the educational process, which is future PhDs, objectifies their needs, motives, values, attitudes towards themselves and others, and achieves scientific and professional excellence.

Individualization and differentiation are manifested in the technologies used to prepare future PhDs, the choice of scientific research, and the organization and conduct of various forms of scientific work within the framework of research training. The implementation of this principle in the system for training future PhDs will orient the values of future teachers towards self-knowledge, self-development and self-evaluation, building their own “self-concept” as a person, a specialist, and a unique personality in the context of European values.

The principle of continuity and consistency reflects the sequence of the training process over time, its structure, and stages. This principle is a demonstration of the temporal and spatial interconnection of the stages of scientific training of future PhDs. Continuity means building a training system from the beginning of the research work. The process of training future PhDs is implemented as a progressive movement aimed at obtaining new knowledge within the limits of one’s own research and on the basis of interdisciplinary connections and at building an axiological system that makes it possible to implement professional knowledge, abilities, skills, technologies, etc.

The principle of systematicity is based on the scientific approaches that 1) the influence on a person is effective only if it is purposeful and systematic (the orderliness of the knowledge system as the content of education) and 2) each educational topic has its own scientific logic, a system of concepts arising from each other, and its own regularities that reflect certain facts and phenomena. Systematicity also means the need to establish order between topics and sections of the module as well as intersubject connections. The principle of systematicity determines the process of planning the training sessions of the module in accordance with the agreed program and developed programmatic materials, which

determines the system of teachers' work in the process of conducting thematic lectures and seminar classes. Systematicity should also be manifested in the organization of the module teaching process and the requirements for higher education applicants in the process of conducting each practical session. It is necessary to form knowledge about the system of modern European values and the system of values (rights and freedoms) of the united Europe among future PhDs.

We have determined the main ways of implementing the principle of professional orientation while teaching the module: 1) including professional techniques and actions that will determine the success of the participants' professional activity, 2) including elements of research work in the educational process, and 3) introducing methods and techniques for forming axiological principles in the context of democratizing the educational process.

The content block of the system model contains theoretical, practical, and research components. The theoretical component involves mastering professional knowledge from the Jean Monnet Module called "University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine" (2022–2025). The practical component aims at forming professional competences through interactive seminar classes, training courses, intensive lessons, independent work, a round table on "University autonomy: The balance between state regulation and responsible independence," debates on "University autonomy: A sufficient or necessary condition for the quality of higher education," a scientific conference on "University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine," and practical application in professional activities. The scientific and research component should help postgraduate students use the theoretical knowledge acquired during the program when they conduct scientific research within the framework of their educational program and to develop skills learned through research and participation in round tables, debates, and scientific conferences.

A number of organizational and pedagogical conditions should serve the purpose and tasks of the educational module in question:

1. Preparation of educational and methodological materials (text and presentations of lectures, an electronic study guide, scientific articles in Ukrainian specialized and foreign publications),
2. Promotion of the educational project through the website of the module and social networks,
3. Integration in the educational process of the university Modular Learning and Information and Communications Technologies, problem-oriented learning, team-oriented learning, learning based on research and solving situational tasks, and project-oriented learning,
4. Organization of the informal education and academic mobility of future PhDs,
5. Development of critical thinking, creative potential, and professional skills among future PhDs, and
6. Approbation of the results of scientific and pedagogical work of teachers and post-graduate students through participation in Ukrainian and international scientific and practical conferences and publication of scientific articles in Ukrainian and foreign professional journals.

The content of the Jean Monnet Module “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” is revealed through lectures, interactive seminar classes, training courses, intensive lessons, independent work, round tables, debates, scientific conferences, and practical application in professional activities. In the teaching process, the members of the project team (lecturers) use a wide range of traditional and innovative methods and techniques of educational and research activities, as well as informative and communicative means of education.

The axiological block of the system model contains the following components: information about the system of modern European values, the system of values (rights and freedoms) of united Europe, and the stages of European value formation in future PhDs at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University.

The following values are distinguished in the structure of modern European values: 1) fundamental, universal values (life, human, goodness,

nature, society, happiness, justice, freedom, equality, humanism, work, knowledge [truth], and beauty [harmony]); 2) national values (values of national culture): native language, national idea, national symbols, national holidays, traditions and customs, and folklore; 3) civic values (values of a democratic society): tolerance for dissent, democratic rights and responsibilities, respect for the cultural and national traditions of other peoples, religious tolerance, continuous education, information culture, etc.; 4) family values (values of family life): respect, love, trust, loyalty, mutual help, support, and responsibility, honoring ancestors, etc.); 5) individual, personal values: moral and volitional qualities (kindness, honesty, responsibility, principles, discipline, initiative, diligence, mercy, etc.), health, self-realization, education, success, competitiveness, creativity, optimism in life and the desire for self-improvement, compliance with the rules of etiquette, etc.

In the process of teaching the thematic lectures of the module, the lecturers of the project team stress these six values of a united Europe: 1) respect for human dignity, 2) freedom, 3) democracy, 4) equality, 5) rule of law, and 6) respect for human rights.

Consolidation of the acquired knowledge about European democratic values should demonstrate the future PhDs' understanding of the content and essence of the fundamental, political, social, and cultural values of the European community. Fundamental values are the right to life, the inviolability of the individual, the right to property and the freedom to dispose of it, and the right to one's own beliefs and freedom of conscience. Political rights and freedoms are represented by such values as the right to unite with other citizens in public organizations, political parties, and trade unions in order to protect one's interests; the right to assemble to defend one's rights, freedoms, and interests; the right to freedom and security; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; the right to elect the government and be elected; and freedom of movement and residence in any EU country. Social rights ensure the right to education, professional development, the right to work, and to fair remuneration for it; health care and proper medical care; the child's right to protection and care; the provision of pensions; state support for people with disabilities,

mothers, children, etc.; the right to environmental safety and the protection of consumer interests; and non-interference in family life. Cultural rights and freedoms ensure the right to preserve cultural identity, determining the value of national identity.

The result of training future PhDs at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University under the Erasmus+ Program Jean Monnet Module “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” should be an awareness of the importance of building European democratic values in Ukraine. This should be done by using the experience of democratic governance and democratization of higher education in European countries, in particular, the experience of university autonomy in the EU countries. The formation of European values among future PhDs should serve the democratization of the national higher education system and the sociopolitical progress of our country. The indicator of formation of European values in future PhDs is their knowledge, skills, and abilities to solve professional tasks, situations, and problems on the axiological basis of united Europe.

Conclusions

Forming European values of future PhDs at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University within the framework of the Erasmus+ program Jean Monnet Module is a component of the institution of civic education, which is of particular importance in the transformation of post-Soviet values, and is an effective tool capable of forming a democratic value-based foundation for reforming Ukraine’s social and political institutions on the way to a united Europe.

International projects financed under Erasmus+, especially the Jean Monnet projects, which promote European integration through teaching and research, are aimed not only at transferring knowledge about European norms, standards, mechanisms, tools, and best state, social, and educational practices, but also at spreading the fundamental values of the European Union. The model for forming European values among

future PhDs developed during the implementation of the module called “University autonomy in the development of democratic values in higher education: The experience of the EU countries for Ukraine” at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University consists of four blocks that structure and specify the project’s target, tasks, methodological approaches, principles, content, forms, methods, means, stages, functions, pedagogical conditions, and expected results.

The priority in the process of forming European democratic values among young scholars should be the transition from a paternalistic political culture to a participative culture of partaking, which involves the effective participation of the expert and public community in the discussion and the adoption of socially important decisions, the democratization of political life, and the creation of a system of public relations based on principles of open access, transparency, and publicity.

Thanks to the European research, postgraduate students, young scientists, and teachers of higher education institutions will become agents of qualitative changes, contributing to the establishment of democratic principles in the academic community, popularizing the best educational practices of the EU among the general public, and strengthening the sense of belonging to the EU.

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