

Supporting the Ukrainian university sector

EUA RECOMMENDATIONS

July 2023



This publication is licensed under the Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial](#) CC BY-NC

This information may be freely used and copied for non-commercial purposes, provided that the source is acknowledged (European University Association).

European University Association asbl

Avenue de l'Yser 24

Rue du Rhône 114

1040 Brussels

Case postale 3174

Belgium

1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland

+32 (0) 2 230 55 44

+41 22 552 02 96

www.eua.eu · info@eua.eu

Executive summary

Russia's war against Ukraine continues, and, to date, its further course and duration are uncertain. In this context, support for Ukrainian higher education and research must shift from emergency relief to more sustainable and long-term support measures. Sustaining Ukrainian universities and enabling them to continue research and teaching - to the benefit of students and staff, as well as Ukrainian society at large - is therefore key. Failure to do so could cause significant long-term damage and impede Ukraine's reconstruction.

Based on the work of its Ukraine Task Force and consultations with its members and partners, the European University Association (EUA) therefore recommends to:

1. Support Ukrainian universities through inter-institutional partnerships

Partnerships are a flexible and versatile means to respond to the diverse needs of Ukrainian institutions, can support institutional and system level higher education reform initiatives, and can enable Ukraine to contribute to the European and international higher education and research community.

2. Develop virtual exchange and cooperation, including digital infrastructure

This would enable more fluid exchange and collaboration. It would also contribute to the sharing of knowledge and experience, in particular in the area of learning and teaching. For example, Ukrainian institutions could gain access to online libraries, research and teaching repositories.

3. Provide placements for Ukrainian academics and students abroad, including as part of partnership and exchange initiatives

Ukrainian academics and students in the diaspora play an important role in inter-institutional partnerships, notably due to their language skills and knowledge of both home and host institutions and systems. In addition, short-term stays could help a larger number of academics and students to continue their research and study, and facilitate access to resources and other necessary supports.

4. Consider the higher education and research sector in immediate reconstruction measures and long-term rebuilding plans

This concerns the immediate reconstruction of physical infrastructure, where possible, but also investment into the overdue reform and transformation of the higher education and research system. The Ukrainian government has

identified this as a priority and vowed to take it forward, despite the war. In this regard, Europe is well placed to contribute, due to its diversity of systems and wide experience with reform processes. Ukraine's membership of the European Higher Education Area and its close association with the European Education Area - processes which are dedicated to transnational collaboration on higher education reform, institutional exchange and mobility - are an additional enabler. Beyond immediate reconstruction, these measures would also pave the way for rebuilding measures once the war comes to an end.

5. Enhance information sharing, cooperation and coordination among major actors and stakeholders

This would help to ensure that measures enable synergies, build on one another and foster mutual learning, rather than duplicate or even compete. There is not one central actor that would necessarily take this up, but the Ukrainian government and the EU can play a vital role, alongside university networks and associations, including EUA. It is not about coordinating one big master plan, but about enabling information and knowledge sharing and designing measures and funding opportunities in a way that enables synergies and collaboration. EUA itself will contribute with a [mapping exercise](#) that will generate visibility and opportunities for exchange and collaboration.

The recommendations, presented in greater detail below, address governments, donors, universities and other research-intensive higher education institutions and organisations. They do not intend to prescribe certain actions, but to enhance collaboration and dialogue on how to better advance together.

EUA will continue to leverage different means to support Ukrainian universities. Along with these recommendations, as an immediate measure EUA has launched a call to all actors and stakeholders to share information on existing support measures.

Introduction

The Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 impelled an immediate display of solidarity and support from higher education and research institutions, governments and other organisations. Thus far, the focus has been on providing emergency support for the citizens of Ukraine, both within the country and for those having fled abroad, among them students and academics.

The war is now in its second year, with no end in sight. Therefore, beyond immediate help and emergency support, it is important to ensure the continuation of the Ukrainian higher education and research sector, but also its further development, reform, and integration with European and international research and education cooperation. A well established, internationally connected higher education and research sector is also of vital importance for the overall resilience of Ukraine and its ability to reconstruct and reform. It is difficult to imagine Ukraine's future without science, innovation and education, which are key drivers of societal and economic development.

Therefore, the European University Association (EUA) - based on the work of its Ukraine Task Force and in consultation with its members and partners - puts forward the following set of recommendations for the support of the Ukrainian university sector¹. They suggest support for the Ukrainian higher education and research sector through strategic long-term approaches, with some coordination among all actors, to enable the best use of resources, synergies and cooperation.

The recommendations address universities and other research-intensive higher education institutions, and related research organisations and structures, national rectors' conferences and university associations, networks and alliances, including the European university alliances, as well as governments and donor organisations. They may also be of inspiration and use for other actors, such as students' unions, quality assurance (QA) agencies, NGOs and commercial partners.

¹ Here and in the following, "universities" should be understood as "universities and other research-intensive higher education institutions", which are the focus of EUA's mission and expertise. Similar support might be required for research institutions, which is beyond the scope of the present recommendations, but reflected in a recent European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) report (June 2023).

EUA RECOMMENDS

1. more active support for Ukraine's universities through inter-institutional partnerships
2. use of virtual exchange and cooperation approaches, including digital infrastructure
3. continued and enhanced provision of placements for Ukrainian academics and students abroad
4. measures for both the immediate reconstruction and long-term rebuilding of the higher education and research sector in Ukraine
5. more information sharing, collaboration and coordination among actors and stakeholders

The reconstruction of Ukraine will take enormous effort and investment. Higher education and research is just one of the many sectors that require support, and it may not be among the first priorities of many donors. Hence, good ideas are needed, and measures must be carried out with coordinated and collaborative approaches. Importantly, this should not only focus on infrastructure and equipment. Due attention should also be paid to opportunities and needs for sectoral transformation and professional development. These are clearly areas where the European and international higher education community can share lessons learnt from previous successes and failures.

This paper quotes some concrete measures that are already in place, but there are of course many others that are also noteworthy. To further contribute to coordination and collaboration EUA invites any interested parties to report their initiatives by completing this [survey](#). They will then be published on EUA's website.

Moreover, EUA commits to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations, in collaboration and coordination with its Ukrainian members and the Ukrainian authorities, as well as its members and partners across Europe.

Recommendations

1. Support Ukrainian universities through inter-institutional partnerships

- *Inter-institutional partnerships are a flexible and dynamic way to identify and allocate support.*
- *They can contribute to supporting and strengthening Ukrainian institutions and enable them to continue their academic work, in exchange with international partners.*
- *This will enable Ukrainian institutions to develop and share their academic achievements, and benefit from ongoing institutional and national reform processes.*
- *Enhancement of the higher education and research sector will also strengthen Ukraine's resilience, bolster its development capacity and keep it internationally connected.*
- *Ukrainian and European universities should continue and enhance existing partnerships, as well as developing new initiatives.*
- *Governments and donors should prioritise funding to such partnerships, and facilitate exchange of experiences.*

Suggestions for action

- **Focus on partnership:** Partnerships involving universities, and potentially other actors, provide a dynamic and flexible framework for a wider range of scalable, fit-for-purpose measures (e.g. joint programmes, joint classrooms, remote fellowships) and purposes (e.g. emergency support, capacity building). While the goals of partnerships can be flexible and may evolve, partners should have a clear agreement on aims, means and approaches, as well as timelines. They may also consider different types of partnerships and collaboration arrangements, depending on the purpose.
- **European and international connectivity:** Partnerships are a good means to enable and ensure the continued participation of Ukrainian institutions in international exchanges, including the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. They are also important for the quality and transformation capacity of the sector.

- **Inclusion of staff and students from discontinued institutions:** Initiatives should also benefit staff and students from institutions which have ceased to operate. If not included as regular members, they could be granted guest status, similar to that provided under Erasmus+ exchanges.
- **Due attention to all missions, including contribution to society:** Enhancement of Ukrainian universities' capacity to contribute to society should be included in inter-institutional partnerships, as well as the support strategies and measures of governments and donors. Universities are drivers of technical, economic, social and cultural developments, as stressed in EUA's 2030 vision "Universities without walls". During the Covid-19 crisis, universities demonstrated their value as places of multi- and transdisciplinary knowledge and education, social actors - contributing to community support and engagement, and heralds of culture. Many Ukrainian universities function as community centres and hospitals and provide a wide range of supports and solutions for their communities. These activities deserve support and enhancement. They must also be documented and promoted, as they will be crucial for Ukraine's future reconstruction and transformation.
- **Support higher education reform at institutional and system level:** Partnerships and peer learning can support some of the ongoing reform efforts, e.g. enhancing the institutional governance system, strengthening institutional quality assurance, and modernising education provision and methods, which are of use both in the immediate and long term.

Rationale

Ensuring that Ukrainian universities can continue their work despite the challenging circumstances caused by the war is of crucial importance. Failure to do so will likely weaken Ukraine's resilience - increasing brain drain and the number of discontinued institutions - with negative consequences across Ukrainian society. In addition, it could bring about long-lasting damage to the higher education and research sector, which may take decades to recover. Therefore, to ensure their existence and continuation, universities require targeted support. This will allow them to follow education and research missions, engage in international exchange and collaboration, and contribute proactively to Ukrainian society. University partnerships offer a versatile and flexible means to provide this support.

Many universities are located in parts of the country that are relatively safe and continue to fully carry out their functions. However, even institutions that have been damaged or destroyed continue to function from other places, be it within Ukraine or abroad. While many students and academics are abroad, an estimated 80% are still in Ukraine. It is important to enable them to continue their education and careers. On a related note, institutions depend on the contributions of academic and students, who respectively research and teach, and study and pay tuition fees.

Apart from their own members, some institutions have also taken in internally displaced students and staff. These institutions are also important societal actors, providing urgently needed support to Ukrainian society and its citizens. They are also part of the country's capacity for reconstruction and post-war rebuilding and transformation.

Partnerships would allow support for ongoing higher education reform, which commenced before the war. Exchanges with Ukrainian colleagues have frequently addressed the need to modernise governance and enable more autonomy and accountability, but also enhance curricular and teaching competence. Partnerships would also boost Ukraine's participation in European and international higher education and research.

Universities in Ukraine have a wide range of needs, which can often be better addressed in dialogue and collaboration with university partners abroad.

While funding support can be allocated through different routes and methods, inter-institutional partnership and cooperation arrangements provide a flexible, dynamic and cost-effective approach. Inter-institutional partnerships can combine and synergise funding from different national, regional and EU initiatives, including universities' own funds. This is clearly an area where Europe can rely on longstanding experience in various contexts, e.g. European and national research and education funding programmes, as well as institutional practice.

DISPLACEMENT OF CITIZENS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Approximately 17.6 million Ukrainians will require humanitarian aid in 2023, 8 million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries and across Europe. An estimated 5.9 million are internally displaced within Ukraine.

Source: [UNHCR](#)

The vast majority of the 281 Ukrainian universities and 234 other higher education institutions (colleges, academies) continue to function, some of them in online or blended mode. Around 40 universities are displaced.

PARTNERSHIP

A [2022 EUA survey of national rectors' conferences across Europe](#) confirmed the enhancement of existing inter-university partnerships and the development of new partnerships.

The [Polish National Academy's "Solidarity with Ukraine" programme](#) awarded the 18 Polish universities participating in European university alliances €3.4 million for activities with Ukrainian partners in 2023.

Both the [Ukraine Digital initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) and the [UK-Ukraine Twinning Initiative](#) support dozens of partnerships between Ukrainian universities and partners abroad.

Similar initiatives are reportedly under consideration in other countries.

[4EU+](#), one of the European university alliances, established the [Eastern Partnership University Cluster \(EAPUC\)](#), as a platform for cooperation with four Ukrainian universities, one Moldovan and one Georgian university.

2. Develop virtual exchange and cooperation, including digital infrastructure

- *Universities should explore various approaches for online, blended and hybrid exchange and cooperation, such as joint programmes and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), including the necessary investments in staff development and virtual infrastructure.*
- *National authorities and donors should recognise and support virtual exchange and cooperation, on an equal footing to physical presence measures.*

Suggestions for action

- Learning and teaching collaboration, through joint programmes, COIL and other formats, offers learning opportunities for academics and students, including language acquisition and intercultural learning. Quality of design and provision is key for their acceptance, success and sustainability.
- Remote non-residential fellowships, with or without remuneration, provide Ukrainian academics with peer contact and access to virtual resources. A relatively light and flexible approach, it requires some engagement, dedication and time from both sides. They require a contact point and facilitator, which could be international and national university associations and rectors' conferences.
- Peer support and mentoring are proven and acknowledged means for exchange and enhancement among disciplinary communities, with benefits for research and teaching.
- Access to online resources, including research publications is a condition for research, scholarship and education, and requires resources to continue. Therefore, access to research publications and repositories, but also to online labs and teaching repositories, is an important issue. Where possible, Ukrainian universities should be granted access to institutional and national facilities. Several initiatives currently explore the issue.
- Enhancement of the IT facilities and capacities of Ukrainian's institutions. would broaden the versatile use of existing technologies and competencies within institutions' different missions.

SHARING & COLLABORATION

The European Commission published a call for an [Erasmus+ structural project grant](#) (max. €5 million) for a Ukrainian Open University. The deadline for proposals was 17 February 2023.

Remote fellowships are promoted by [Scholars at Risk](#), and are already being explored by some universities and organisations. In January 2023, the French Centre for Research in Humanities and Social Sciences (CEFRES) announced [non-residential fellowships for Ukrainian researchers in humanities and social sciences](#), provided with other French and Czech partners. The Inspireurope+ project organised an online info-session on the issue ([programme & recording](#)), and will provide practical guidelines shortly.

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) set up a task force to better understand the needs of Ukrainian veterinary education institutions and to coordinate support. This will also include open access for students to online lectures, virtual simulation centres, staff and student exchange (virtual or in-person).

The Union of Rectors of Ukraine reports good practice examples of individual institutions granted access by publishers. Together with the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Scientific and Technical Library of Ukraine, it is exploring the needs of individual higher education and research institutions, and how they can be best fulfilled.

The Rectors' Conference of French-speaking Universities in Belgium (Conseil des Recteurs - CREF) and the [CIVIS alliance](#) called on academic publishers to provide immediate assistance to Ukrainian universities and enable access to scientific publications.

The [Research for Life platform](#) offers researchers from countries in crisis free access to some publications.

Rationale

As physical mobility within and outside of Ukraine is hampered, the benefits of virtual exchange and collaboration should be more systematically explored. Beyond overcoming the current challenges, this could also contribute to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching, and its internationalisation.

Cooperation on virtual and blended learning provision - through a variety of formats such as joint programmes, COIL, remote peer exchanges and fellowships - offers Ukrainians opportunities to continue their teaching, learning and research, both inside and outside of Ukraine. European partners will also garner a better understanding of the situation in Ukraine and the needs of their partners. For all parties, this offers an opportunity to enhance internationalisation and further apply and develop digital skills and formats. To ensure appropriate quality, this should include pedagogical staff enhancement and learning design, as well as infrastructural capacities. Beyond the current emergency, this will be an investment in the future of higher education teaching and cooperation.

3. Provide placements for Ukrainian academics and students abroad, including as part of partnership and exchange initiatives

- *Higher education institutions should continue and enhance their hosting offer to Ukrainian students, academics and university staff. Emphasis should also be put on short-term mobilities for academics and students to continue their research and study and obtain access to resources and other necessary supports.*
- *Fellowships and scholarships should be embedded in inter-institutional research (joint research) and education collaboration (joint master's and doctorates/co-tutelles, study projects, internships and job placements).*
- *Full recognition should be ensured at institutional and national level.*
- *Governments should eliminate system-level barriers that might restrict the access of Ukrainians and the ability of hosting institutions to support them.*
- *The Ukrainian government should ensure the transparency of rules and regulations to enable male students and academics' study stays abroad.*
- *Donors, including national and European governments, must provide and enhance funding.*
- *All actors should consider how to continue to support displaced students and academics and enable their eventual return, in cooperation with their home institutions and communities.*

Suggestions for action

- Students require:
 - ♦ Placements for study and training, including internships and language learning, including for lifelong learners, enhancing their employment and social opportunities.
 - ♦ Proper recognition of their prior learning.

- ◆ Career guidance and consultation: not all students may be able to continue the same study programmes; some might welcome an opportunity to reorient their studies and/or change subjects, which should be allowed and supported.
- ◆ Access to similar support measures and benefits as for domestic students, and, generally, non-detrimental treatment.
- Academics and university staff require:
 - ◆ Employment and fellowships.
 - ◆ Opportunities to continue their research work, and, where possible, participate in research projects and project applications.
 - ◆ Opportunities for teaching, including, but not only, to Ukrainian students.
 - ◆ Participation in continued professional development and language learning.
 - ◆ Opportunities to engage in other professional and social initiatives.
- The support that higher education institutions provide to guest scholars and students often comes from their own funds, with limits in terms of scale and sustainability. In addition, or as an alternative to grants to individuals, allocation of grants to hosting institutions could enable fast and flexible measures to create and enhance placements in response to current demand, and from a combination of different funding sources. They could also contribute to inter-institutional collaboration, i.e. between host institutions and Ukrainian home institutions.
- The Ukrainian academic diaspora can play an important role in the development of Ukrainian higher education and research, through their active contribution to partnership and collaboration. This benefits the participating institutions, through education and research initiatives, but could also include measures with wider societal and economic benefits. Supporting exchange and cooperation between Ukrainian scholars and students abroad and their home institutions would also ease their eventual return to Ukraine.
- Ministries, donor organisations and host and home higher education institutions should consider the diaspora in a more strategic way; in funding schemes, cooperation programmes and partnerships.
- The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science should consider the development of an academic diaspora network. This could help to coordinate, inspire and support cooperation, beyond the activities launched by individuals.
- The Ukrainian government should also ensure that the rules and regulations for male academics and students are transparent and predictable. Currently, the decision is left to the border authorities, which might not consider the specific personal or academic value of the exchange and its benefit for Ukraine-Europe partnership and collaboration. This is likely to stimulate longer term, or even permanent, stays of those who manage to get abroad. The opacity of the present arrangement also leads to frustration among host institutions and donors, as well as unused funds being allocated to other countries and regions.

Rationale

The provision of placements, employment and fellowship opportunities abroad supports individuals, their careers, personal well-being and social mobility. It also enhances their capacity to help others and can bring benefits to Ukraine and its wider population. International students and academics can contribute to their host and home institutions and foster the development of inter-institutional partnerships. They can also provide support to their fellow citizens, whether abroad or in Ukraine. Academics and professionals educated abroad, with diverse language and intercultural skills and knowledge and extended professional and personal relationships are a strong asset for Ukraine, also for the period of reconstruction after the war.

The Ukrainian government and higher education institutions emphasise the urgency of keeping students and academics connected to their home county and institutions, in order to prevent permanent brain drain. This is understandable, but also bears risks that people leave Ukraine by other means and that those who are abroad might refrain from returning. It is important to enable more fluid exchanges.

Enhanced support for Ukrainian students and academics should be maintained and could even be prioritised in international exchanges. However, this should not be to the detriment of at-risk academics and students from other regions. Short-term mobilities in the framework of partnerships would benefit staff and students, but also their institutions.

UKRAINIAN STUDENTS & ACADEMICS IN EUROPE

The number of Ukrainian students studying abroad has increased significantly during the past decade, from 25,000 in 2007, to 50,000 in 2014, and 78,000 in 2019. About 60% study in the EU, which makes them the second biggest international student community. While more than 7 million Ukrainians are externally displaced due to the war, there are no reliable statistics on the number of higher education students and staff among them.

Next to humanitarian aid, offering placements for students and staff has been among the first actions undertaken by many universities. National authorities also increased the number of scholarships for Ukraine.

Under the Erasmus+ programme, Ukraine became eligible for mobility and collaboration programmes for Erasmus+ programme countries, including staff and student mobilities (KA103).

The MSCA4Ukraine scheme, funded under the European Union's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, provides funding for 124 fellowships for researchers and doctoral candidates from Ukraine, for stays of 6-24 months in Horizon Europe countries, while maintaining their connections to academic communities in their home country.

4. Consider the higher education and research sector in immediate reconstruction measures and long-term rebuilding plans

- *Immediate measures to reconstruct Ukrainian higher education and research infrastructure should be conducted where possible.*
- *Reconstruction plans for Ukraine should include the higher education and research sector as a priority, with the goal of its European and international integration.*
- *Capacity building must include infrastructure and equipment, but also provisions for institutional and system-level reforms and human resources development.*

Suggestions for action

- Reconstruction will need a holistic approach, in consideration of Ukraine's needs and reform goals. To establish a framework that enables all actors to contribute, it is important that:
 - ◆ Donor platforms earmark funding for the reconstruction of higher education and research, also as an important means for social and economic recovery, including brain regain. Beyond physical infrastructure and equipment, this should also consider the sector's transformation and reform needs and related human resources development.
 - ◆ Reconstruction of infrastructure should commence in areas that are relatively safe, in order to ensure that higher education institutions can continue to provide education and research and contribute to local communities. This should also consider digital infrastructure.
 - ◆ The Ukrainian ministry's plans for reconstruction and transformation of the higher education sector may serve as a basis for the future reconstruction work. This should proactively involve the Ukrainian higher education and research sector in reform development and implementation – as experience shows that top-down-only approaches are bound to fail.

- The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the European Commission, could establish a platform for higher education reform to:
 - ◆ conduct consultations and establish working groups on major reform issues, involving Ukrainian and international experts;
 - ◆ develop collaboration initiatives involving the Ukrainian higher education sector and stakeholders and European and international partners;
 - ◆ conduct stocktaking, monitoring and evaluation of results, and enable follow-up.
- System-level and system-wide structures, such as Ukraine's [quality assurance agency](#), the [National Erasmus+ Office](#), and the [Higher Education Reform Experts Team](#) should play an important role. Initiatives to support them must be continued and enhanced.
- European and international knowledge should be considered and used in reform development and implementation, through a wider range of measures, as outlined in the previous sections. Ukraine's integration into the European Education Area, the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area should be part and parcel of this approach.
- Reconstruction funds, but also Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe funding should provide funding for agreed reform priorities such as capacity building projects involving Ukrainian universities and organisations and their European partners.
- EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme can support the strengthening of higher education institutions' governance, management and quality assurance systems, and also provide a basis for the system-level reform approach.

RECONSTRUCTION COSTS, NEEDS & MEASURES

The total reconstruction costs for Ukraine are estimated to add up to \$500 billion. Rebuilding work completed so far has been paid for out of Ukraine's cash reserves, and from an initial [€600 million payment](#) from the European Investment Bank (second package of [€1.59 billion](#) in July 2022).

Source: [The Guardian \(7 April 2023\)](#)

In February 2023, Ukrainian Prime Minister Shmyhal estimated the country's immediate reconstruction [needs to amount to \\$17 billion](#) ("rapid restoration").

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine invites [donations for reconstruction and restoration](#). There are concrete measures for the reconstruction of pre-schools and schools. The Ministry launched, with Swiss support, an [information resource](#). UNICEF contributes to the rebuilding of schools, including bomb shelters, also with EU funding.

In May 2022, the European Commission presented initial plans for support to Ukraine, which included longer-term rebuilding. On 25 October 2022, the European Commission and Germany, as the chair of the G7, co-hosted the [International Expert Conference on the Recovery, Reconstruction and Modernisation of Ukraine in Berlin](#).

In December 2022, the World Bank announced a [Ukraine Relief, Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Trust Fund \(URTF\)](#).

A [Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform](#) to support Ukraine's repair, recovery and reconstruction process was launched on 26 January 2023, bringing together officials from Ukraine, the EU and the G7.

Rationale

Higher education and research are indispensable for any country's development. Medium to long-term reconstruction plans should be seen as an investment in Ukraine's capacity building, to strengthen the country's resilience and further economic and social development.

Therefore, higher education and research must be central to Ukraine's reconstruction. Some measures will need to wait until the war ends. Others can and must take place now, to ensure the survival and sustainability of the Ukrainian higher education and research system. The school sector receives some international support for reconstruction, but this is not yet the case for higher education.

In addition, the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science foresees measures for the enhancement of the sector, in terms of restructuring and reorganisation, training and staff development, scheduled to take place on an ongoing basis. International and European support can make an important contribution here. Before the war, several measures had already begun. These need to be reactivated, in consideration of the changed modalities.

RECONSTRUCTION & REFORM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Education and Science Working Group of Ukraine's National Council for the "Recovery from the Consequences of the War" is developing a Ukraine Recovery Plan, with a first draft produced in July 2022. For higher education, beyond reconstruction of infrastructure, it emphasises reforms to reorganise the sector, in order to enhance quality, transparency, inclusion and efficiency, as well as global connectivity and European integration.

At the request of the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science and the higher education sector, with the support of the World Bank, EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is to perform a coordinated evaluation of the Ukrainian higher education system, based on audits of individual institutions. Due to the war, this has been put on hold.

Several organisations at European level, among them EUA, contribute as international peers to the development of Ukraine's quality assurance system. This initiative is maintained, despite the war.

The European Commission supports the Ukrainian National Erasmus Office, and also a team of Ukrainian Higher Education Reform Experts. Both have remained active throughout the war.

5. Enhance information sharing, cooperation and coordination among major actors and stakeholders

- *All actors should share their initiatives, and where possible, seize opportunities to coordinate or collaborate.*
- *Ukrainian and European universities should consider lessons learnt from existing initiatives, and, where possible, join them, rather than establishing new ones.*
- *The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, together with the Union of Rectors of Higher Education Institutions of Ukraine, should provide information and analysis on ongoing collaboration and support measures, related best practice and demands, also in view of its reform development plans.*
- *The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the European Commission and EU member states should provide a six-monthly overview or update of ongoing and planned initiatives.*
- *Donors should enable exchanges of information and experience among projects and stakeholders.*

Suggestions for action

- Sharing experiences and lessons learnt from support initiatives at different levels can enable mutual learning, save time, create opportunities for synergies - such as pooling of resources, and collaboration for shared or complementary goals. Such initiatives can achieve more capacity, visibility and impact.
 - ♦ The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the higher education sector, should share information on the state of play within the sector and its reform plans, as well as provide an overview on needs and opportunities for support and collaboration.
 - ♦ The European Commission and other donors should publish and exchange information on initiatives they support, in real time, and not only when these measures are concluded.
- ♦ Donors, university associations and networks should share information and organise events for practice sharing among different initiatives.
- ♦ Online meetings among different actors, including Ukrainian stakeholders, could better define priorities and needs and ensure optimal use of resources and cooperation.
- ♦ When starting a cooperation measure, European and Ukrainian institutions should agree on some key needs and goals, to avoid misunderstandings. They should also inform each other of already existing measures and initiatives with other partners, to avoid duplication and enable synergies.
- Information could also be shared via:
 - ♦ Reports describing and assessing cooperation initiatives, for example on the organisation of mobility schemes, the use of digital infrastructure etc. would be very useful, as it could save time and resources and enable more collaboration.
 - ♦ Guidance documents on hosting students and [academics at risk](#) are already available, but may need adjustment to the specific situation of Ukraine. Similar publications on collaboration with “universities at risk” could be developed.
 - ♦ Surveys on ongoing and planned measures could be conducted by the European Commission (twice a year) among ministries and national agencies, and results published. A similar approach was taken during the Covid-19 crisis.
 - ♦ A mapping exercise, based on an online [questionnaire](#) launched by EUA. The results will be published and when necessary, also updated.

- The European Commission and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science should consider the launch of a structural project, which could enable and facilitate information exchange and peer learning among different initiatives. Such projects have previously been conducted in other countries and regions (e.g. to facilitate and support EU-Latin America and Caribbean and EU-Asia higher education collaboration).

Rationale

The need for support will continue, and probably increase. More information exchange would help to better analyse the situation and define priorities for action, optimise the use of resources, enable learning from successes and failures, and foster better coordination and cooperation among the different actors. This can help to avoid overlaps, duplication, and competition, and provide opportunities for synergies and cooperation. This is even more important for initiatives that could benefit larger numbers of institutions, for example schemes that provide access to research publications, or would benefit from agreement on certain standards, enabling for example interoperability in the case of digital solutions.

It is not easy to find information on ongoing support for initiatives concerning Ukraine, and to get an overview. Many individual institutions and donor organisations, including EU member states, conduct a wider range of highly pertinent initiatives, with limited to no visibility. Other initiatives are well known but fail to provide more detailed information. The contribution of the Erasmus+ programme for both centralised and decentralised measures benefiting Ukraine is difficult to ascertain in real time. The Erasmus+ beneficiary portal has no function to search for projects involving Ukrainian institutions. Figures on how many students and staff participate in Erasmus+ mobility are only available with a delay of 1-2 years.

Projects and other initiatives should be announced at an early stage and information should be shared about ongoing activities and outcomes, including evaluation and impact assessment.

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the voice of European universities is heard wherever decisions are being taken that will impact their activities.

The Association provides unique expertise in higher education and research as well as a forum for exchange of ideas and good practice among universities. The results of EUA's work are made available to members and stakeholders through conferences, seminars, websites and publications.

www.eua.eu

