



# COOPERATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION WITH THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*It is known that the development of education determines the future of any state. The focus on education is the reality today that investing in education is the best capital. This article analyzes the comprehensive reforms in the field of education in the Republic of Uzbekistan and their results, cooperation with the European Union in the field of education.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Education, European Union, Europe, Asia, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of the 2008 global financial crisis and the accompanying educational crisis, the EU has focused on reserving and empowering workers in jobs, as well as improving preparatory work for new jobs. In order to solve the difficulties of training personnel in new professions, in 2010 the European Commission introduced the project "New skills for new jobs". At the same time, the "Plan for learning new skills and job creation" was developed, and the beginning of the creation of the "Euro classifier of skills, competencies and professions", briefly called "ESCO"<sup>[1]</sup>.

In order to provide economic professionals for the developed members of the European Union in the post-crisis period, the project "Youth mobility" was introduced, "Proposals to promote the mobility of young people for their education" were developed, aimed at citizens from 16 to 35 years old. Measures were also taken to provide for students. Attention should be paid to the "Education for Sustainable Development" ("ESD") program, where an important place is given to the ecological and spiritual preparation of students so that they conserve natural resources not only in the process of carrying out professional activities, but also in everyday life.<sup>[2]</sup>

The European Union, having at its disposal unique technologies in the educational sphere, is able to fully provide itself with qualified personnel for all kinds of spheres of not only state, but also public activities.

The main principle of the educational sphere in Europe is to orientate education towards ensuring

the sustainability of the state, as well as achieving development objectives for decades to come, nurturing and developing democracy, effective governance of the country, observance of rights and the rule of law.

## II. DISCUSSION

To increase the productivity of higher education in Europe, a number of documents have been drawn up and put into effect, which were included in the "Bologna Process". These include:

- Sorbonne Declaration of 1998;
- The Bologna Declaration of 1999;
- Prague Communiqué of 2001

The listed documents consider mainly the structural restructuring of higher education in the Eurozone, as well as partnership and continuity of education, the priority of dialogue with students on the creation of the latest educational systems.

The EU, as part of the implementation of the plan for the Central Asian region, in collaboration with the countries of this region, is continuously implementing programs aimed at improving the systems of higher education.

As for Uzbekistan specifically, from 2007 to 2014, the program "Erasmus Mundis" was implemented, according to which an academic exchange was carried out. "Tempus" and "Erasmus +", designed for the same exchange, have gained particular importance in the entire educational sphere of the Central Asian region. In addition to the named projects, the so-called "Indicative Program" (2011-2013) was also in effect. It covered and touched on



partnerships that were focused on the field of education, science, as well as the relationship of an individual with society and vice versa - society with an individual.

The main task of Tempus (2007-2013) was to support transformations in the educational sphere of the countries of the East, Mediterranean, Asia, and the Balkans through the introduction of joint projects with the participation of leading European universities.

Cooperation between Europe and the Central Asian region is a particularly important element of the EU's non-state relations and the policy of international cooperation, which is aimed at strengthening all possible (economic, cultural, etc.) ties between Europe and Asia, with other potential partner countries.

Tempus is a program that started in the early 90s. XX century. in the countries of Europe, which years later formed a single European Union. For 4 years (from 1994 to 1997) several countries of the Central Asian region took an active part in Tempus under the auspices of another program - Tacis. The latter was part of a European initiative aimed at strengthening and developing social and economic transformations in the post-Soviet states. Among them, including the countries of the Central Asian region.

Thus, since the end of the 20th century, Tempus has been a particularly important program, the role of which in improving higher education systems can hardly be overestimated. Kazakhstan, together with Uzbekistan, took part in the program in 1994, Kyrgyzstan in 1995, and Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in 1997 and 2004. respectively.

All countries of the Central Asian region have been successfully involved in the Tempus programs (II, III, IV). During this time, the total budget of the five countries amounted to about 99 million euros. 17.7 of them stood out from 1994 to 1999. ("Tempus II"), 31.2 - from 2000 to 2007 ("Tempus III")<sup>[31]</sup>.

Since the beginning of 2008, the participation of these countries in Tempus has been funded by the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation - Europe Aid. Since then, about 50 million have been allocated under the Tempus IV program to achieve educational goals. The fourth stage, Tempus IV, began operating in 2007. It ended in 2013.<sup>[41]</sup>

During this stage, the experience that was acquired in the process of implementing the previous stages of the program was actively used. When developing its concept, the results and results of their activities were taken into account, including multifaceted aspects of a national and regional nature in priority areas.

The most important area of activity of Tempus IV was the transformation of curricula in a variety of disciplines, including:

- Informational;
- Library;
- Electronic;
- Agricultural;
- Agricultural and other sciences.

A tremendous amount of work has been done to promote the provisions and principles of the Bologna Process.

Tempus is a program that started operating in 1994 on the territory of Uzbekistan. It is part of another, larger program called Tacis. For 2 decades, about 80 projects of inter-university cooperation were financed. Tempus has significantly influenced the most complex processes of internationalization of higher education in Uzbekistan, being at the same time a unique and one-of-a-kind program that represents the basis for many years of active cooperation between universities in different countries. This program has become a powerful and almost universal tool aimed at supporting educational transformations in the Republic. This is especially true for the period after 1997. Then a new law on education and a national program for personnel training (NPPK) were adopted. Tempus has gained particular relevance in recent years, since its projects have largely contributed to the adoption and implementation of government decisions for 2011-2012, which touched on the issues of modernizing the educational system, including higher education in Uzbekistan.

A special role was assigned to projects aimed at developing curricula on direct links with the implementation of the tasks of the NPPT, as well as with the introduction of a two-tier system of higher education.

For a certain time, a huge number of projects within the framework of the Tempus program were aimed at the development and creation of training programs, subject to the introduction of the latest specialties. Mostly - at the magistracy level in the fields: engineering, applied, pedagogical, social and other sciences.

The newest curriculum was matched to the current needs of local markets through the active work of local needy enterprises that worked in the energy, aviation, automotive, food and other areas, up to the textile and chemical sectors. Many ministries and chambers, enterprises and all kinds of state institutions, private companies expressed interest in personnel trained under the Tempus program projects.

A huge number of scientific laboratories, which were created during the operation of Tempus, had a great influence on the development of



professional skills and abilities of specialists in all directions, who are part of consortia in the role of partners in projects implemented in Uzbekistan. Tempus has largely influenced the development of higher educational institutions in almost all fields of science in the country, because, thanks to the projects of the program, Uzbek universities have not only built strong and long-term ties with most European universities, but also strengthened mutually oriented systems of interaction with educational institutions throughout the Republic.

Tempus and those who took part in it contributed to the decision to bring the principles of the Bologna Process closer to the current partnership situation. From this point of view, seminars on European experience in the creation and implementation of doctoral training programs that came into force in Tashkent in the second quarter of 2013 stand out.

It's hard not to recognize the productivity of Tempus. In particular, the European Commission decided to include in the educational program "Erasmus +" (2014-2020) the basic principles characteristic of "Tempus".

By 2014, the European Union launched the Erasmus + program in education, which provides opportunities for many students, doctors and university professors to take part in temporary, short-term study programs. So, they were able to study for a master's and doctoral studies, improve their professional skills to the required level at universities in Europe. This program also provides for and provides opportunities for bilateral academic exchange between universities in Europe and CA countries to participate in capacity development projects (Capacity Building in Higher Education).

Erasmus + is a program that empowers a multitude of students, doctors, educators and other higher education professionals. These opportunities relate to taking short courses of study or raising the level of skills and knowledge in most educational institutions in Europe. This is provided by the Credit Mobility and Joint Master Degrees programs. On the basis of partnership with European universities, the teams of Uzbekistan were able to take part in various projects to develop personal, intellectual and practical potential, providing assistance to the Ministry of Education in solving urgent problems of reforming higher education.

According to experts, "Erasmus +" is a program developed in the European Union aimed at the development of the educational sphere, vocational training of adolescents and youth, professional staff for 2014-2020<sup>[51]</sup>.

It is noteworthy that Erasmus + includes the experience and results obtained in the implementation of other programs in the field of

international cooperation in educational sectors (Tempus, Erasmus-Mundus, etc.). According to the results of the fourth Erasmus + competition, summed up in 2018, there is a great interest of Uzbek universities in participating in the program.

The benchmark designated by the EU in the Central Asian region - the "European Education Initiative (EEI)" - was formed for primary, secondary and higher education programs. EON allowed teachers and students to travel on exchange programs, it is in demand and popular to this day. It should be noted, however, that within the framework of the EU's policy of partnership and relations with the Asian region, the program has a number of nuances.

At the very beginning, it was chaired by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture. Over the years, all the main topics related to educational processes and the development of educational programs were transferred to the subordination of the European Commission's foreign aid and partnership guidelines. Despite this, the Council of Europe and the members of the Union retain the possibility of assistance in the field of education.

Guideline for the further development of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 became a fulcrum for the subsequent direction of efforts to improve the system of training professionals with a high level of qualifications: teachers, students, doctors and other scientific personnel. All this is based on international standards and requirements of the introduced foreign educational programs.

Today, active work is being carried out to develop the internationalization process by expanding the network of branches of the most prestigious EU universities through the creation of joint optional programs. It is noteworthy that an increasing number of disciplines are taught in English. International cooperation plays a huge role in the productivity and scale of resolving all the existing tasks facing the government in improving the educational sector of Uzbekistan, in particular, its main direction is work with EU universities within the framework of the Erasmus + program.

It is thanks to the development of all possible areas of partnership and ties, wide opportunities for taking part in international grants competitions, that Erasmus + retains its primary function - the role of an instrument of cooperation between higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan and the EU.

Given the growth in the number of universities, Erasmus + must certainly expand its coverage and take under the tutelage of those for whom such cooperation will become an opportunity to establish close ties and partnerships for many years



to come. In addition, the program is able to provide opportunities for strengthening partnerships between higher educational institutions of the Central Asian region, the CIS countries and other parts of the world. Projects for the transformation of the material and technical base of universities are of great importance, since about a third of the budgetary funds of the projects are spent on the purchase of specialized equipment for equipping laboratories, as well as on the purchase of programs of the most modern literary and educational materials.

It was thanks to the mutual exchange of students and teachers that it was possible to achieve the development of relations with the leading higher educational institutions of the European Union within the framework of the credit mobility program, which is represented by the opportunity to undergo internship at universities both in the EU and Uzbekistan.

### III. CONCLUSION

It is worth noting that the flexibility of projects and their ability to respond in a timely and constructive manner to government policies for the subsequent improvement of the educational sphere is at the required level. It is also worth mentioning the role of project teams and heads of higher educational institutions, participating in and contributing to the productive use of the grant, making reasonable amendments to the budget and plans based on the urgent, urgent tasks that universities face.

Thus, cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of education has a positive effect on the process of implementing reforms in this area. This influence also contributes to the effective implementation of tasks for the development of international cooperation between domestic higher education institutions and universities of the European Union countries.

Meanwhile, as research results show, EU social programs, in particular, educational projects, have an impact on a limited contingent of Uzbek society, consisting of representatives of scientific and academic circles. Despite the efforts made, a significant part of the universities, due to the lack of the necessary scientific and academic potential, will not be able to take an active part in the projects proposed by the European side.

Along with this, it should be noted that within the framework of cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the social sphere, in particular, in the field of education, the process of "brain drain" is not monitored, the issues of preserving the national identity of the state in the context of the globalization of academic processes and scientific research.

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