

## CURRENT EUROPEAN TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

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### Kovalenko T. V. Current European Trends in the Development of Lifelong Learning

The article is aimed at identifying the current tendencies of the lifelong learning in the EU countries and studying the peculiarities of formation of the key competencies of European employees. It is defined that in the European countries' policy on vocational education and lifelong learning a promising trend is the approximation of vocational education to the labor market. The main changes in the definition of essence of the key competences for lifelong learning in the normative documents of the European Union are researched. On the basis of an analysis of legislative acts, the continuity of Ukraine's policy and loyalty to the European principles regarding the improvement of educational activities are substantiated. The main problems of gaining of key competencies by European workers and positive tendencies of spread of lifelong learning as well as the main indicators of its development are identified. The quantitative and qualitative characteristics of introduction of lifelong learning in the EU countries are determined. The modern innovative programs and measures for the financing of continuous vocational training of staff in the European countries are covered. The necessity of using European experience and the possibility of spread of life-long learning in Ukraine is substantiated.

**Keywords:** lifelong learning, competency, education, development, tendency.

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### Коваленко Т. В. Сучасні європейські тенденції розвитку навчання протягом життя

Метою статті є виявлення сучасних тенденцій навчання протягом життя в країнах ЄС і дослідження особливостей формування ключових компетентностей європейських працівників. Визначено, що в політиці європейських країн щодо професійної освіти та навчання протягом життя перспективною тенденцією є наближення професійної освіти до ринку праці. Досліджено основні зміни визначення сутності ключових компетентностей для навчання протягом життя в нормативних документах Європейського Союзу. На основі аналізу законодавчих актів обґрунтовано наступність політики України та вірність європейським принципам щодо вдосконалення освітньої діяльності. Виявлено основні проблеми набуття європейськими працівниками ключових компетентностей і позитивні тенденції поширення навчання протягом життя, а також основні показники його розвитку. Встановлено кількісні та якісні характеристики впровадження навчання протягом життя в країнах ЄС. Висвітлено сучасні інноваційні програми та заходи щодо фінансування безперервного професійного навчання персоналу в європейських країнах. Обґрунтовано необхідність використання європейського досвіду та можливості поширення навчання протягом життя в Україні.

**Ключові слова:** навчання протягом життя, компетентність, освіта, розвиток, тенденція.

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### Коваленко Т. В. Современные европейские тенденции развития обучения в течение жизни

Целью статьи является выявление современных тенденций обучения на протяжении жизни в странах ЕС и исследование особенностей формирования ключевых компетенций европейских работников. Определено, что в политике европейских стран в профессиональном образовании и обучении на протяжении жизни перспективной тенденцией является приближение профессионального образования к рынку труда. Исследованы основные изменения определения сущности ключевых компетентностей для обучения в течение жизни в нормативных документах Европейского Союза. На основе анализа законодательных актов обоснована преемственность политики Украины и верность европейским принципам по совершенствованию образовательной деятельности. Выявлены основные проблемы освоения европейскими работниками ключевых компетентностей и положительные тенденции распространения обучения в течение жизни, а также основные показатели его развития. Установлены количественные и качественные характеристики обучения в течение жизни в странах ЕС. Освещены современные инновационные программы и мероприятия по финансированию непрерывного профессионального обучения персонала в европейских странах. Обоснована необходимость использования европейского опыта и возможности распространения обучения в течение жизни в Украине.

**Ключевые слова:** обучение в течение жизни, компетентность, образование, развитие, тенденция.

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The determining factor for the renewal of all educational systems in the modern era is the continuous education, i.e., the creation of appropriate conditions for self-improvement and self-affirmation of every individual throughout their life, acquisition of relevant and necessary competences. The development of the system of lifelong learning is one of important areas of innovative educational activity which involves the continuity of processes in the systems of primary, secondary, higher, postgraduate and additional vocational education. The possibility and efficiency of carrying out educational activity are determined by direct and reverse system linkages between different stages of the innovation cycle, producers and consumers of services, firms, the market, the government and other social partners, including foreign ones.

The main issues of the functioning and development of educational systems under conditions of globalization were considered by such scientists as V. Andrushchenko, H. Vasianovych, B. Gershunsky, V. Kremen, A. Liferov, Yu. Rubin, P. Shchedrovitsky. Theoretical and practical aspects of lifelong vocational learning were studied in works of such foreign and Ukrainian scientists as E. Gelpi, R. H. Dave, P. Jarvis, J. Dewey, L. Ojala, M. Tight, O. Krushelnytska, V. Savchenko, N. Synenko, H. Shchokin. At the same time, in order to ensure balanced development and productive use of Ukraine's labor potential, a systems scientific analysis of the lifelong learning experience of European countries is needed in order to create and improve relevant competences.

The *purpose* of article is identifying current lifelong learning trends in EU countries and studying peculiarities in the formation of the key competences of European employees.

The main trend in the current social development is Europeanization, which focuses on the understanding of education as a European response to challenges of globalization and internationalization. Europeanization of education is understood as "the integration of national education systems into a single European educational space built upon the self-reflection of a national system of education, which, being based on national identity and originality, includes as a component European self-consciousness. Europeanization, as a process of social and cultural modernization of education, is a source of ideas, meanings, concepts, initiatives, projects for national educational systems" [1].

In the policy of European countries for vocational education and training, a promising trend is the approximation to the labor market, in particular through forecasting the demand for vocational skills / competences of employees and applying such methods and tools as: forecasting occupational profiles and vocational skills in different types and levels of vocational activity; creating information systems for the labor market and analytics of employment service; analyzing efficiency of activity of educational institutions engaged in vocational training;

retrospective analysis of the career of their graduates; social partnership, etc. [5, p. 67].

The urgent tasks of lifelong learning were reflected in the Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning" adopted in December 2006 by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. Recommendations were created for the purpose of promoting the development of high-quality, modernized education, which should provide the necessary vocational training of youth in accordance with the requirements and demands of the modern world.

As stated in the document, the main goals of forming the main competences are: establishing and defining the basic competences necessary for the realization of their own abilities, active citizenship, social unity, and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge through employment; supporting efforts of EU countries to provide a basic education for the young generation, which will be the basis for further education and improvement of the acquired competences; developing a European reference level for employers, public figures, providers of educational services and students [4].

At the same time, globalization continues to pose new challenges to the European Union, each citizen should be ready for flexible adaptation of a wide range of the key competences for rapid changes and, in particular, the interdependent world. Education, in its social and economic essence, plays a key role in providing citizens of Europe with the necessary key competences, with a view to their flexible adaptation to the transformations of the modern labor market.

In June 2016, the European Parliament, the Commission, and the Council launched initiated a review of the 2006 Recommendations on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in order to update the Recommendations and further support the development of key competences in Europe. On 17 January 2018, the European Parliament, the Commission, and the Council approved the Reference Framework for the updated Key Competences for Lifelong Learning [8].

The Recommendation (2018/0008 (NLE)) contain the following documents:

1. Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.
2. Commission Staff Working Document on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.
3. Factsheet on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning [9].

The aim of the implementation of these documents is ensuring equal rights of people and democratization of society, comprehensive sustainable development, social cohesion, and the further development of democratic culture.

At the same time, it is advisable to analyze the list of and the names for the competences adopted in 2018 in comparison with the previous version issued in 2006 (*Tbl. 1*).

Comparative analysis of key competences for lifelong learning in EU countries in 2006 and 2018

2006	2018
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication in the mother tongue.</li> <li>2. Communication in foreign languages.</li> <li>3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology.</li> <li>4. Digital competence.</li> <li>5. Learning to learn.</li> <li>6. Social and civic competences.</li> <li>7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.</li> <li>8. Cultural awareness and expression</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Literacy competence.</li> <li>2. Languages competence.</li> <li>3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering.</li> <li>4. Digital competence.</li> <li>5. Personal, social and learning competence.</li> <li>6. Civic competence.</li> <li>7. Entrepreneurship competence.</li> <li>8. Cultural awareness and expression competence</li> </ol>

The carried out comparison of the key competences defined by the EU and the Law of Ukraine “On Education” (2017), confirms loyalty of Ukraine to the European principles concerning the construction of the national educational system as well as the coherence of the national policy for improving educational activities. The transformation of the EU experience in Ukrainian realities is marked by a certain specification of concepts and a set of features peculiar for modern society [6].

Despite the fact that digital competence is almost the only one which name was not changed, its content was radically updated, in accordance with the current state and trends in its development. “Digital competence involves confident, critical, responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), and problem solving” [8].

It should be noted that the Concept for the Development of the Digital Economy and Society of Ukraine for 2018–2020, which was set up to realize the priority objectives of the Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth “Europe 2020”, identifies the human capital as the driving force of the digital economy. In this regard, the formation of digital competence (information and communication competence – the Law of Ukraine “On Education”) in citizens becomes of particular importance. Thanks to the use of on-line and other technologies, people can more effectively acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities in many other areas (e.g., studying languages or academic subjects, mastering a profession) [3].

At the same time, it is expedient to monitor the trends in the development of European lifelong learning indicators. The results of the study are based on the most recent quantitative and qualitative indicators of each EU member state (Tbl. 2) [10].

The experience of European countries shows the spread of a lifelong learning system in recent years. When analyzing the level of graduates’ employment, it should be noted that there is a positive trend in this indicator in practically all EU member states (see Tbl. 2). The highest

level of these indicators is observed in Germany, Austria, Malta, and the UK, which testifies that the national education systems ensure competitiveness of young employees. At the same time, the lowest employment rates are observed in Italy, Greece, and Romania.

In 2017, the percentage of people aged 25–64 involved in various forms of lifelong learning was 10.9% in the EU. In the same year the highest percentage of citizens involved in various forms of lifelong learning, from 14% to 27%, was observed in Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Finland. The worst figures, from 1% to 2%, were in Bulgaria and Romania.

The percentage of all businesses that provide training for their employees ranges from 21% in Greece to 90% in the UK [7]. In most countries that have joined the EU in recent years, positive trends are observed.

It is expedient to study the European experience and results of practical activity related to solving urgent issues of facilitating the mastery of key competences by employees in the context of lifelong learning both at the national level and at the level of individual enterprises and organizations.

“According to the Continuing Vocational Training Survey, 90.6% of Czech companies (well above the EU average of 72.6%) provided vocational training to their employees in 2017, and 83.7% of employees participated (the highest rate in the EU). The majority of Czech businesses indicated that the main skills they need in order to develop are customer handling skills and technical, practical and job-specific skills.... A key development in adult learning took place under the national “Digital literacy strategy for 2015–2020” [10, p. 67].

“The majority of German enterprises indicated that the main skills needed to develop the enterprise are team working and customer handling skills. Skills shortages increasingly hamper economic development. Economic simulations suggest that the lack of about 440 000 skilled workers is slowing down economic growth by about 0.9 %. ...to help low-skilled adults get a recognized vocational qualification the Federal Ministry of Education has provided EUR1 500 000 to fund “VALIKOM”, a three-year pilot initiative to coordinate the validation of job-related

Table 2

## Indicators of lifelong learning for EU countries, %

EU country	Employment rate of recent graduates (age 20–34)		Adult participation in learning (age 25–64)	
	2014	2017	2014	2017
EU average	76.0	80.2	10.8	10.9
Austria	87.2	89.4	14.3	15.8
Belgium	79.0	81.9	7.4	8.5
Bulgaria	65.4	77.7	2.1	2.3
Croatia	62.0	65.9	2.8	2.3
Cyprus	68.7	71.5	7.1	6.9
Czech Republic	81.3	89.9	9.6	9.8
Denmark	83.7	82.9	31.9	26.8
Estonia	80.9	81.5	11.6	17.2
Finland	77.0	77.0	25.1	27.4
France	75.2	74.4	18.4	18.7
Germany	90.0	90.9	8.0	8.4
Greece	44.3	52.0	3.2	4.5
Hungary	78.5	84.7	3.3	6.2
Ireland	75.7	83.6	6.8	8.9
Italy	45.0	55.2	8.1	7.9
Latvia	77.0	78.0	5.6	7.5
Lithuania	80.7	83.9	5.1	5.9
Luxembourg	83.8	88.5	13.5	17.8
Malta	93.0	94.5	7.4	10.1
Netherlands	86.2	90.4	18.3	19.1
Poland	75.6	82.1	4.0	4.0 %
Portugal	69.4	80.7	9.6	9.8 %
Romania	66.2	76.0	1.5	1.1
Slovakia	72.7	81.5	3.1	3.4
Slovenia	70.1	81.6	12.1	12.0
Spain	65.1	71.9	10.1	9.9
Sweden	80.5	88.3	29.2	30.4
United Kingdom	83.2	86.6	16.3	14.3

competences, targeting people aged 25+ irrespective of their employment status and any previous qualifications” [10, p. 120].

In 2017, in Ireland, only 48% of the population possessed at least basic digital skills, as compared with the EU average of 57%. Ireland has started a government project aimed at prioritizing the upskilling of the adult working-age population, with a focus on digital skills. The project involves implementing the Strategy for Further Education and Training; improving the program of vocational training and specialized training of skills to ensure that the qualification of employees meet the requirements of the modern labor market.

To encourage employers to invest in lifelong learning of employees in Italy, in December 2017, “a tax credit

system was introduced for companies that invest in training. This amounts to 40% of the cost of employees for the period in which they are involved in training activities” [10, p. 164].

From this point of view, it is useful to study the experience of Luxembourg, including an amendment to the Labor Law adopted in July 2017, which “re-organizes the state’s co-financing provision for training provided by companies and creates incentives for them to do so” [10, p. 195].

In accordance with the urgent requirements of the European Commission, in 2018, the Polish government initiated the creation of a Program Council on Competences, which is financed from the state budget and



aimed to enhance cooperation between educational institutions and the labor market, so the competences possessed by employees meet employers' needs [10, p. 225].

"The Program Council on Competences consists of experts who represent different ministries responsible for labor market, primary and vocational education, higher education, economy, employers and employees. It is a platform for dialog, cooperation and exchange of knowledge and its aim is to engage more employers in the system of identification and forecasting needed competences and supporting changes in the area of science, formal and non-formal education" [10, p. 225].

In 2017, the Spanish National Public Employment Service "started the process of implementing nationwide training programs to improve vocational skills in line with technological changes and digital transformation, thereby improving the performance and employability of adults. The call covers digital skills identified by Joint Sectoral Commissions. One of the pillars of the forthcoming national digital strategy ("Estrategia para una España inteligente") is likely to be entitled "Citizenship, Education and Digital Employment" and would focus on the need to improve the digital skills, competences and ICT training of individuals in general and of people in the workforce" [10, p. 226].

"In terms of basic digital skills, the UK performs well above average in the EU: 71% of the population had at least basic digital skills in 2017 as compared to the EU average of 57%" [10, p. 296]. Despite the rather high rates the government of England has initiated a Flexible Learning Fund and a National Retraining Scheme. The GBP10 million Flexible Learning Fund provides funding for activities aimed at encouraging lifelong learning.

"Austria is pursuing intensive efforts to make the dual vocational pathway more attractive for both companies and young employees by better aligning it with the evolving needs of the economy, notably digitalization. The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber has announced a program of "Digitalization of apprenticeship training" (2018), financed by the Ministry of Digital and Economic Affairs" [10, p. 14].

## CONCLUSIONS

The educational process at all stages of functioning should be directed at the development and improvement of key competences of an individual and contribute to the formation of the ability to independently solve vocational problems of varying complexity on the basis of the knowledge gained and their own experience throughout life. As a result of the analysis of lifelong learning indicators, it has been established that the percentage of people aged 25–64 involved in various forms of learning in EU countries is increasing. The percentage of enterprises that provided training to their employees is on average 60% in the EU. Solving lifelong learning issues directly depends on participants in this complex process:

the state, managers and owners of enterprises, employees, educational institutions, and other participants. In Ukraine, the development of the effectiveness of lifelong learning is largely depends on the general economic situation and has its own specifics. The analysis of studies on the development of lifelong learning makes it possible to outline the contours of a new strategy concerning this sphere in Ukraine, taking into account the best ideas and experience of EU countries. ■

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