

# STATED OR ACTUAL CHANGE IN POLICY TERRAIN? REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE BOLOGNA PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN UKRAINE

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## **Abstract**

*The Bologna Process became embraced by the Ukrainian government as one of the mechanisms to achieve the goal of changing its system of education from the Soviet to the European model. However, research points to significant discrepancies between official reports and practices, as well as inconsistencies in the Bologna Process implementation in Ukraine. Of particular interest for gauging the impact of the Bologna Process on higher education policy frameworks in Ukraine amidst the declared transition to the democratic European system is the area of teacher education. Uniquely positioned at the crossroads between the higher education and primary and secondary education systems, teacher education is significantly affected by transformations and reforms pertaining to both areas. Through the systematic review of the extant literature and documents, this paper analyzes the history of Bologna Process implementation in Ukraine, reviews achievements and challenges of educational reforms in teacher education, problematizes the nature of educational transformations based on recommendations that ignore the significance of local needs, and posits that greater attention to the actual vs. stated outcomes of Bologna-initiated policies and reforms in teacher education is needed.*

**Key words:** *Ukraine, educational reform, Bologna Process, EU-Ukraine, teacher education*

The frameworks of globalization and internationalization have impacted academic programs, institutions, innovations, and practices around the world. The launch of the Bologna Process marked a new era in higher education reforms in Europe. The reorganization, that is sometimes called “the most profound revolution in European higher education” (McMurtrie, 2006, p. A39), is well underway with the commitment of 47 signatory countries across the European continent to create an integrated European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with the aim of harmonizing the higher educational systems in Europe. However, as there is no uniform pace for countries to implement the proposed changes, there exist Bologna leaders and laggards (Börzel 2003). Countries with the established systems of higher education, such as Italy, Spain, and Germany, are taking a longer time, while most of the former Eastern Bloc countries have enthusiastically embraced reforms (Charbonneau 2009).

Similarly to other Eastern European countries, the education system in Ukraine has been undergoing considerable transformation over the last two decades. Since the collapse of the former USSR, “the vector of changes [in the system of

education] focused on transition from the ‘Soviet school’ model to the democratic European one” (Ministry of Education of Ukraine, 1999, p. 3). Because of its strategic importance for the governmental aims, education was one of the first social spheres to witness frequent (and sometimes, chaotic) transformations after the country gained independence. Education, like the Ukrainian society in general, has experienced a focal shift from totalitarian Marxist-Leninist ideology to democracy and pluralism. The new societal realities required profound educational reforms, including the structural organization of secondary schools, universities, curricula, and teacher and educational administrator training programs at all levels (Koshmanova & Ravchyna 2008).

Since the announcement about Ukraine’s intention to sign the protocol to join the Bologna Declaration in 2005, both European and Ukrainian educators voiced concerns about the impact of the Bologna Process on the country’s higher education system and its integration with EHEA (Artyomenko 2005; Kotmalyova 2006). After Ukraine joined the EHEA, Bologna Process quickly became one of the mechanisms for the Ukrainian government to achieve its goal of reforming the system of higher education in line with European standards (Stepko 2004). As officially reported to the UNESCO European Center for Higher Education, the top priorities of education policy in Ukraine have become further development of the national education system, its adjustment to new economy, and its integration into the European and global community (Kremen & Nikolayenko 2006). These goals initiated a series of declarations and efforts toward implementation of reforms in the field of higher education in Ukraine. The government expressed commitment to an international effort to harmonize higher education by redesigning the curriculum, switching to a three-cycle degree structure, and submitting to cross-national mechanisms of quality assurance (Kremen & Nikolayenko 2006; Clement et al. 2004).

The picture that emanates from the Ukrainian government reports and policies and official Bologna Process documentation (e.g., Bologna National Report Ukraine 2009; Bologna Stocktaking Report 2009; Ministry of Education and Science 2010; Nikolayenko 2007) is that Ukraine has become, in Börzel’s (2003) terms, one of “leaders” in the implementation of Bologna Process provisions. However, researchers have pointed to the discrepancies between official reports and practices, as well as inconsistencies of Bologna Process implementation in Ukraine (Shaw 2013; Shaw et al. 2011a). Furthermore, despite the fact that there have been multiple studies problematizing the implementation of Bologna Process across the contextual mosaic, the recommendations issued by international organizations continue to obviate or ignore the local needs of signatory countries. Hence, implementation efforts within the post-Soviet context are further complicated. We envision these complications, discrepancies, and inconsistencies as indicative of a tension of stated vs. actual outcomes, a dilemma that virtually all policymakers grapple with in any policy development and implementation process.

Of particular interest for gauging the impact of the Bologna Accord on higher education policy frameworks in Ukraine amidst the declared transition to the democratic European system is the area of teacher education. Uniquely positioned at the crossroads between the higher education and primary and secondary education

systems, teacher education is significantly affected by transformations and reforms pertaining to both areas. Therefore, through the systematic review of the extant literature and documents, consisting of academic research, program evaluations, conceptual reviews, government policies and statutes, and official Bologna Process reports, this paper reviews the history of Bologna Process implementation in signatory countries and in Ukraine, analyzes achievements and challenges of educational reforms within the context of teacher education, problematizes the nature of educational transformations based on recommendations that ignore the significance of local needs, and posits that greater attention to the tension between actual and stated outcomes of Bologna-initiated policies and reforms in teacher education is needed. In line with the transitological call for exploring moments of educational metamorphosis and seeking to make distinctions between generic and unique factors in post-socialist contexts (Cowen 2000; Silova 2010; Tókés 2000), this article regards the effects of Bologna Process on government policies and practices in higher education institutions within their complex social, geographical, and institutional settings.

## **Implementation of the Bologna Process**

The aims of the Bologna Process are to expand access to higher education to more of the European population, to better prepare students for the labour market, to promote lifelong learning, to attract increasing numbers of non-European students, and to represent a fundamental underpinning to European democracy (Floud 2006). The breadth of higher education activity that the Bologna Process covers is considerable, spanning, amongst other things, the architecture of qualifications through to doctorate level (thus incorporating qualifications frameworks, credits and learning outcomes) as well as notions of institutional autonomy, student involvement, higher education as a public good, and lifelong learning (Birtwistle 2009).

Through the critical and deconstructive lenses on governmentality, a number of critics (Fejes 2006; Fejes 2008; Nóvoa & Lawn 2002; Nóvoa 2002; Simons & Masschelein 2006) argued that higher education restructuring is conducted in the form of fabrication or standardization of higher education and is governed discursively through the neo-liberal governmentality rather than legislation. Furthermore, they have claimed that signatory states have taken the narratives about harmonisation of higher education for granted by seeing the process as inevitable.

Various analyses documented educational reforms prompted by Bologna Process and the ways its principles have been adopted by and implemented in the various signatory countries (Curaj et al. 2012). The variability in implementation mainly exists due to the fact that the Bologna Process is not endowed with legal obligations. In other words, the signatory countries are not bound by any conditionalities or legal requirements and are encouraged to implement the Bologna policies through the benefits of cooperation and the future benefits of the expected EHEA outcome (Luchinskaya & Ovchynnikova 2011). Thus, the “colourful rainbow” (Zgaga 2009, p.

93) of varieties within European higher education systems constitutes segments, which can prove as barriers to faster and more efficient implementation of new higher education philosophy proposed by Bologna.

Lažetić (2010) argued that a voluntary nature of the Bologna Process leads to uneven implementation. Specifically, the Bologna Process seeks consensus about policy formation at the European level but leaves the implementation to nation states and institutions which are only indirectly involved in policy formation. He concluded that a key challenge of the Bologna Process is keeping up the political momentum and interest of political leadership and policy entrepreneurs for the reform process while preventing it from becoming overly bureaucratic. Scholars noted evidence of convergence of higher education policies, especially in terms of “architecture” of higher education systems (e.g., degree structures) and the use of specific policy instruments (e.g. national quality assurance and accreditation schemes) (Elken et al. 2010).

However, the Bologna Process independent assessment (Westerheijden et al. 2010), the Trends reports by the European University Association, Bologna stocktaking reports, and Eurydice reports indicate the persisting diversity in higher education systems (Elken et al. 2010). This diversity exists due to inherent contradictions of the Bologna Process with respect to convergence-diversity nexus and the differences in the national historical and cultural contexts, goal ambiguity and bottom-heaviness of higher education institutions (stemming from complex, multi-layered involvement of the professionals/actors with a large degree of autonomy) (Huisman 2009). The implementation process has mainly been uneven due to the different contexts, orientations, funding schemes, and demographics of each signatory nation (Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency 2012a). Discussing the impact of cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic factors on higher education systems and adoption of the Bologna Process, Heinzeand Knill (2008) concluded that the more dissimilar the cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic characteristics of countries the less convergence between them in adopting and implementing the Bologna Process. As implementation structures, approaches, accomplishments, and challenges tend to be context-specific for different signatory countries, we will now turn to the discussion of the impact of the Bologna process in Ukraine.

## **Bologna Process Policy Implementation in Ukraine**

According to the then-Minister of Education, Nikolayenko (2007), the implementation of Bologna underpinnings in Ukraine revolved around the following basic directions: Quality Assurance (QA); three cycle system of education; and qualifications framework (QF) in EHEA. The government reported on the significant steps in implementing the regulations of Bologna Process and preparing the Action Plan of their implementation up to 2010. The lists of key developments in Ukraine since 2005 have been detailed in the Bologna National Report (2009), Bologna Stocktaking Report (BSR) (2009), and 2010 European Neighbourhood Policy Implementation Report (European Commission 2011a).

Based on the examination of the national and stocktaking reports to trace the Bologna Process policy implementation in Ukraine, Luchinskaya and Ovchinnikova (2011) concluded that Ukraine had been active in some aspects of implementation and sluggish in others. For instance, the Bologna Stocktaking Reports rated Ukraine's progress in recognition of foreign degrees and implementing the ECTS as 'very good' and 'excellent' in 2007 and 2009. Ukraine was among the eight countries that have reached a high degree of implementation, with ECTS being applied in more than 75% of their programmes and higher education institutions, for the purpose of both credit transfer and accumulation and credit points based on both learning outcomes and student workload (Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency 2012b). As for the achievements in the adoption of the new degree system (two-cycle), the ratings for Ukraine, compared to other Bologna priorities, have been the highest in the 2007 and 2009 BSRs. The implementation of quality assurance had mixed ratings for Ukraine as only some HEIs produce a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality, have made arrangements for the internal approval of programmes and awards, and describe their programmes in terms of learning outcomes. No Ukrainian HEIs design student assessments of HEIs to measure the achievements of the learning outcomes, but all of them publish up-to-date information on the programmes they offer. Ukraine also received high ratings for student involvement in quality assurance (Bologna National Report Ukraine 2009).

Kwiek (2004) noted that it may be relatively easy to change laws on higher education, especially if the arguments of catching up with the West are used for promotional purposes, but changing laws is not enough to reach the objectives of the Bologna Process, although it may be understood in this way by many government officials. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ukraine has faced significant challenges with regard to the implementation of the Bologna Process (Zaspa 2008). Major challenges for Ukraine, as outlined in the 2009 BSR included: development of a NQF compatible with the EHEA overarching framework; introduction of the innovative institutional structure, three-cycle system and joint degrees; establishing programmes for foreign students; aligning university programmes with Bologna structure; development of the national qualifications framework for lifelong learning; creating mechanisms for recognition of prior learning; implementation of the Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO format; creation of the national quality assurance agency in compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) with aim of European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) membership and inclusion into the EQAR; increasing outward and inward mobility; assuring portability of student grants and loans; provision of equal access to higher education; adapting curricula to labour market needs; promotion of cultural values and democratic ideals. Stemming from this long list of challenges, two questions that beg our attention are whether there is a lip service to the reform implementation and whether the reform rhetoric moves faster than its implementation? (Marga 1997; Shaw et al. 2011a)

Therefore, given the different tradition in higher education and the political and cultural context, the process of introducing the new model of tertiary

education promoted by the EU partners remains challenging in the Eastern Partnership countries (European Commission 2011b). The main factors affecting the implementation were the transition period and difference in the organization and structure of higher education from Western and many Eastern European countries (Zgaga 2009). The system of higher education was centrally planned and administered under the Soviet system, had strong links with the labour market and an emphasis on science and technology, and underwent substantial reform during the post-Soviet transition (Luchinskaya & Ovchynnikova 2011). As recent studies have shown, the results remain patchy, and implementation efforts have been complicated by significant differences in the organizational path dependence of Ukrainian universities as compared to their Western counterparts (Shaw et al. 2011b; Shaw et al. 2011a).

Drawing from different studies on the implementation of the Bologna process in Ukraine, Shaw (2013) provided two hypothesis of its failure. Her first hypothesis is associated with a flawed implementation of the reform caused by a number of factors such as a top-down, rushed, unsystematic, and disorganized process of curriculum redesign; a lack of training and support which would provide faculty and university administration with an understanding of the reform and its mechanisms; façade rather than substantive implementation of the reform; and, finally a low remuneration of faculty. Her second hypothesis stems from an idea of “a fundamental mismatch between the existing logic of university governance rooted in a Soviet model of higher education and the logic presumed in the European reforms” (p. 7). Shaw argued that a flawed implementation of the reform can be caused by the fact that the “Soviet” model of higher education governance in Ukraine was not accommodated to the needs of the Bologna process. In other words, the Ministry of Education introduced fundamental ideas of the Bologna process in the environment not susceptible to it and has not taken any measures yet to reform it. As a result, an implementation of the policy rhetoric aimed to catch up with Europe has had a quasi-character in the context of Ukraine.

Other analyses on Ukraine’s adoption of the Bologna Process have addressed specific challenges with regard to the implementation process, and have focused on both positive and negative outcomes. In his discussion of the higher education reform under the Bologna Process, Nikolayenko (2007) noted that the adoption of the Bologna Process has led to increased training, creation of more scholarships, improvement in accessibility, and increased interuniversity mobility within Ukraine. However, a number of problems still existed, including the need to create a system of quality assurance, the lack of provision of international mobility by students and staff, and the lack of communication between universities and employers and public associations. Similarly, weighing the pros and cons of the Bologna Process for the system of higher education in Ukraine, Goodman (2010) pointed out that participation in the Bologna Process had the potential to strengthen Ukraine’s standing in Europe, promote linguistic diversity, and facilitate goals of European integration. As for the potential negative consequences of the process, Goodman focused specifically on the dominance of English under the Bologna process and the negative effects this may have on the Ukrainian language. Zaspá (2008) reported

issues surrounding the funding of higher education institutions to implement the Bologna Process, the influence of markets and privatization on the quality of professional education, and the impacts on the amount and quality of research produced by universities that are undergoing the transformation process.

In a recent case study on the perceptions of education practitioners and administrators of the implementation of the Bologna Process at a selected higher education institution, Kovtun and Stick (2009) highlighted the implementation shortcomings and disadvantages. These included excessive centralization of the administration, insufficient training and resources, participants' attachment to the old system, decreased quality of education and loss of tradition. They concluded that the Bologna Process appeared to benefit the students more than the professors through the increased mobility and employability for students and the development of autonomous learners. Lytvyn (2009), on the other hand, emphasized the negative consequences of the Bologna Process on the students. In particular, she discussed how many students felt that the way Ukraine was implementing the Bologna Process was disruptive to their education. Lytvyn suggested that rather than adapting the Bologna Process to fit Ukrainian standards, Ukraine should adopt the European standards outlined in the Process. Furthermore, institutions of higher education should focus on the tools of the Bologna Process instead of using existing structures to achieve the goals. She concluded that these recommendations would solve problems such as inconsistency in grading, degree recognition, and course requirements.

In the study of Ukrainian professors' perceptions of the Bologna Process, Telpukhovska (2006) found that, while many reforms were welcomed as useful and necessary, their implementation was complicated by the current economic and social conditions of the country. Studying the impact of the Bologna Process on academic staff, Shaw et al. found that public statements regarding the reform process differ from actual organizational practice, that the shift from a traditional teacher-oriented institution to a research institution has not been efficiently supported by instructional and structural redesign, that the academic staff have become overburdened with teaching and research duties, and that the reform process has been underfunded (Shaw et al. 2011b). In their analysis of the transformation process that Ukraine was undertaking to adhere to the Bologna Process, Makogon and Orekhova (2007) argued that the adoption of the Bologna Process was an example of the corporatization of international education that was ultimately resulting in the commodification of education in Ukraine. They concluded that the fact that academic institutes have been transformed into 'businesses' would have a profound effect on individual states, globalization, and the internationalization of education. This negative outlook complements Goodman's (2010) conclusion that the Bologna Process is a mechanism of bureaucratic control over the education system of its members and a form of political hegemony over members who are not in the EU.

## Education Reforms and Teacher Education in Ukraine

Ukraine has a complex history regarding teacher education and related reforms. Because teacher education is located at the crossroads between the higher education and primary and secondary education systems, transformations and reforms in both of these areas need to be considered in order to understand its current state. As the country made a transition from a totalitarian Marxist Leninist ideology to democracy and pluralism, changes that occurred at the societal level greatly affected education (Zhulynsky 1997). The declaration of Ukraine's intention to transform into a democratic state with the regulated market economy gave birth to the strategic plans to reform education as part of a nation-wide transformation. Due to the capacity and potential of education to articulate and instil new norms of social and cultural behavior in the newly formed country, the system of education was one of the first spheres to be subjected to the reforming process (Wanner 1998). Similarly, reform of the teacher education sector was stated as the main goal of the state policy in the sphere of education (Ministry of Education of Ukraine 1992). This policy encompassed the formation and strengthening of the potential of primary and secondary school teachers and comprehensive financial and material support for pedagogical cadres and their social protection. However, significant economic, political, and social factors negatively affected the implementation of those policy guidelines (Kutsyuruba 2011a). As reported by the World Bank, the economic collapse of the 1990s had substantial long-term adverse effects on Ukraine's education system, which, together with the implications of the economic reforms had created new challenges to reform the education sector (World Bank 2011). Furthermore, the nature of educational reforms in Ukraine was fragmentary and yielded only a partial transition to the new paradigm of education set by the Ministry of Education policies.

Three major directions of initial education reforms in Ukraine were identified by Fimyar (2008): a) change of the language of instruction in schools from mostly Russian to Ukrainian; b) adjusting secondary education to a 12-year basic education cycle in line with European standards; and c) assessment policy reform. According to the 2010 European Neighbourhood Policy Implementation report (European Commission 2011a), particular attention in recent years was given to all levels of education, with new reform plans to accelerate convergence with the developments in the EU. Reform objectives included strengthening educational governance, improving quality and accessibility, and ensuring the continuity of education levels and financing. The government identified pre-school education as a new reform priority and adopted a concept for a state programme of pre-school education development to 2017, with objectives and benchmarks closely aligned with those of the EU's Education and Training 2020 targets. The ministry of education and science initiated secondary curriculum reform with the adoption of two state programmes 2010-15 to improve ICT, science and mathematics education and to enhance teaching skills. Furthermore, secondary education was reduced from 12 to 11 years in 2010, thus reversing the reform of 2001. Subsequently, these reforms were instrumental in changing the policy terrain guiding the country's teacher education programs.

## Teacher Education System: Contextual Information

Teacher education system of Ukraine consists of pre-service and in-service training. Pedagogical universities, pedagogical colleges, and classic universities provide pre-service training while a statewide network of in-service teacher training institutes organizes a professional development of in-service teachers (European Commission 2011b; Ministry of Education and Science 2010; Oliynik & Danylenko 2005; Shchudlo 2012).<sup>1</sup> Both pedagogical institutions and classic universities work toward preparing teachers, but they differ in their focuses and the amount of pedagogical knowledge and experience with which they provide their students. Pedagogical colleges specialize in training pre-school and primary school teachers. In addition to educating pre-school and primary school teachers, pedagogical universities in comparison to pedagogical colleges also prepare secondary school teachers. This overlap in teacher preparation between pedagogical colleges and universities was inherited from the Soviet system and has not undergone any changes yet.<sup>2</sup> The main difference between pedagogical and classical universities in preparing teachers is an amount of pedagogical studies and student teaching experience to which they expose students. In classic universities, this amount is much smaller in comparison to pedagogical colleges and universities. Classic universities which see its main role in training academic cadres, not pre-school or school teachers, offer its students an opportunity to mainly work in a system of secondary education by offering some pedagogical courses and student teaching opportunities. Some classic universities can have pedagogical institutes as a part of their structure. As a rest of higher education institutions, pedagogical colleges and pedagogical universities are a part of a centralized higher education system controlled by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES 2010).

The Ministry of Education requires in-service teachers to undergo professional development training every five years at a regional in-service teacher-training institute (MoES 2010). In addition to the required professional development, many in-service teachers have begun to participate in training sessions and programs organized by domestic and international non-governmental organizations sponsored by aid agencies. They in turn represent a new venue of professional development of teachers, especially in the context of limited and outdated curriculum and financial resources of in-service teacher training institutes, whose curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education and whose work is financed by local budgets (European Commission 2011b; MoES 2010).

Current system of teacher education has been surrounded by many issues that either specifically pertain to it or to the rest of higher education in Ukraine. One of its relatively recent issues has been an academic quality of students who enter its programs. Their academic quality is often much lower in comparison to students who become admitted to prestigious programs in economics, law, foreign relations, informational science and other ones in classic universities. This, in turn, is associated with a decline of social status and prestige of teaching profession after the collapse of the Soviet Union and a low compensation in Ukraine, trends that are also common in other post-Soviet countries (Gorshenin Institute 2011; Shchudlo 2012; Silova 2009), and further decreases the quality of students entering

pre-services teacher education programs and graduates of these institutions entering schools. Another issue stems from an inability of many teacher educators to practically adapt to new educational demands such student-centered learning, utilization of interactive teaching approaches, and formation of critical thinking and inquiry skills among teacher candidates (Koshmanova & Ravchyna 2008). They keep focusing on content rather than practice-based instruction utilizing traditional transmissive methods of teaching impeding formation of knowledge and skills crucial to democratic education. Other issues that affect teacher education programs along with the rest of higher education system are underfunding (which impedes upgrading of facilities and technological resources, updating of teaching resources, improving faculty's professional development, and increasing their salaries), bureaucracy (which influences a quality of faculty's preparation for courses and deprives of time for academic work), corruption, and the inconsistent implementation of the articulated educational reforms (Fimyar 2010; Osipian 2009; Shaw 2013). Despite the above issues, content and practices of teacher education programs are changing but not as fast as one might want to or as policy documents declare. They are in the process of transition impeded by faculty's beliefs and by a lack of leadership, vision, knowledge, skills, and resources necessary for the implementation of the declared educational reforms.

According to a comprehensive study on teacher education in the Eastern Partnership countries initiated by European Commission (European Commission 2011b), the major teacher education reforms achieved to date in Ukraine were: introduction of specialised education in secondary school; competence-based approach to learning; the content of national education; and, implementation of programs and projects at national and regional level related to modern technology of education. As for the problematic areas, highlighted were difficulties of education sector's collaboration with the private sector to develop innovations in schools. Other limitations included: stereotypical thinking about teaching among teachers; the fear of publicly violating the state standards for educational training for teachers; reluctance of some teachers and school managers to innovate; insufficient financial support for schools; low quality teaching practice; and an overall difficult social and economic situation of the country.

## **Bologna Process and Teacher Education**

The results of the European Commission study indicated that some of the Bologna targets have already been executed to varying degrees in the area of teacher education. These included progress in adjusting the multi-level degree system to meet the European three-level system of academic degrees, as well as approving the qualification levels in regards to curriculum at the Bachelor of Education level and working towards establishing a permanent system for Master of Education programs. In addition, Ukraine was complimented for undertaking a complex system of quality assurance of teachers and providing professional development, whereas Ukrainian teachers are mandated by law to advance their qualification at least once every five years in the post-graduate teacher training institutes.

Of high significance were also support systems, known as banks, which have been put in place to disseminate innovations in information and communication technologies to aid in teaching strategies among teachers. Finally, the report noted the importance of the draft law on higher education for the prospects in the field of teacher education. In addition to successes and achievements in implementation of Bologna process, this report highlighted struggling areas, such as upgrading the threshold of qualifications to enter the teaching profession; increasing teachers' salaries; updating the curriculum; improving classroom practice; modernizing in-service teacher education to respond to teachers preferences and demand of the labour market; creating incentives for teachers to remain in the profession; and developing a continuous support system throughout the professional lives of teachers.

In summary, the European Commission report concluded that in terms of ensuring convergence with EU standards and implementation of the Bologna Process principles, the needs for developments in the area of teacher education closely aligned with the overall directions of higher education reform in Ukraine. Some of the recommendations as to how the Ukrainian teacher education system can continue to modernize and meet the goals of the Bologna Process included: increasing the use of modern teaching strategies in regards to information and telecommunication technologies; ensuring that the content of teacher education is in line with the demands of schools; encouraging collaboration between schools and university teachers; implementing education monitoring by research groups and organizations; increasing popularity of professional development programs; and adopting valid regulations governing innovative educational activities.

Several studies assessed the impact of Bologna Process on teacher education. The prevalent belief among scholars is that educational reforms in Ukraine had thus far resulted only in the superficial transformations of the teacher education curriculum and the introduction of some innovative teaching methods courses; whereas more changes are needed to ensure the successful implementation of the Bologna Process to the system of teacher education (Koshmanova & Ravchyna 2008). Pukhovska and Sacilotto-Vasylenko (2010) claimed that while the Ukrainian government has adopted programs that support the integration of Ukrainian higher education into the Bologna Process, this has not been achieved in regards to teacher training programs. They attributed this to such external factors as insufficient funding and issues surrounding implementation, such as a limited capacity to plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate these programs. As a result, they argued, teacher educators have not been prepared to assimilate the methods and approaches which adhere to the Bologna Process; these principles are based on Western pedagogical theories and many teachers had difficulties finding ways to incorporate them into their practice. Along the external factors there are also teacher educators' stereotypes formed within a Soviet educational system which impede an implementation of the declared change (Koshmanova & Ravchyna 2008).

The calls to further reform teacher education have come from a number of scholars. Writing around the time Ukraine was preparing to sign Bologna Accord, Shestavina (2004) argued for the need to modernize Ukrainian education system

and expressed hope that adherence to the Bologna Process would facilitate this. She gave special mention to the teacher training programs utilized by various institutions of higher education in Ukraine and the necessity to get these programs up to European standards. Scholars emphasized that the traditional pedagogic models used to train teachers, established under the Soviet system, were no longer suitable for students in the context of educational democratization, since they were aimed at the transmission and reproduction of learning material and thus did not contribute to the formation of critical thinking skills, were characterized by teacher-centered and content-based pedagogies, and were often formal and distant from societal realities. In the context of democratization, attempts to integrate in the European educational space and global market economy, Ukraine needed to search for effective ways to adapt the national traditions of teacher training to meet the demands made by these processes (Baynazarova 2005; Marchenko 2010). Furthermore, arguing that Ukraine should considerably reform its education system, Koshmanova found that tolerant attitudes and behaviours were not fully accepted by Ukrainian educators and that most educational policies and practices were still monocultural and ethnocentric (Koshmanova 2006; Koshmanova 2007). Koshmanova and Ravchyna (2008) posited that, successfully managing and implementing such a large change aside, many educators believe that the main difficulty of the Bologna educational reforms in Ukraine had been found in the authoritarian style of relationships teachers have with students. These beliefs were grounded in 'banking education' models and behaviourist educational psychology and served to contribute to the problem of perpetuating authoritarianism in classrooms. They concluded that these beliefs may generate obstacles for Ukraine's integration with Europe.

Studies examining teacher education reform in Ukraine have also taken a comparative approach, using other European nations as models that Ukraine can look towards. Sacilotto-Vasylenko (2008) used the goal of lifelong learning to analyze the evolution of teacher training under the context of the Bologna Process in France and Ukraine. In regards to Ukraine, the examples of recent educational changes that could be interpreted as lifelong learning strategies included short teacher training modules called 'thematic courses', school-based training and consultancy, external professional development programs and projects, and distance in-service training. Despite these developments, the author criticized the teacher training policies as they do not integrate the idea of teacher empowerment, which she considered to be the main condition for positive educational change, and concluded that the educational system in both countries remain rigid and bureaucratic, where teacher professional development depends mostly on administrative decisions. Rolyak and Ohiyenko's (2008) study also explored lifelong learning as a key goal that teacher training institutes in Ukraine should work towards. Comparing the Ukrainian teacher education system with those of Scandinavian countries, they claimed that their successes and progress may help with addressing the challenges in the teacher training system in Ukraine, particularly in the areas of candidate selection into teacher education programs and the low status teacher education has in universities. Other scholars were more specific in that they held teacher education programs in Finland (Khustochka 2009) and Germany (Folvarochnyi 2011) as

models for Ukraine to emulate in order to ensure successful implementation of the Bologna Process.

### **Problematizing the Nature of Teacher Education Reforms**

Yet it is important not only to study the processes that facilitate and hinder a multidimensional process of educational reform aimed at the harmonization of higher education and its alignment with the European educational standards, but also to problematize the nature of this educational transformation. While this problematization can be taken in multiple directions ranging from bureaucratic and haphazard character of the reform to the lack of expertise and insufficient financial provisions, we only focus on the recommendations issued by international organizations such as the European Commission (EC) and posit that these recommendations often ignore the local needs of the post-Soviet society.

The EC report on teacher education in the countries of the Eastern Partnership (European Commission 2011b) approached the process of educational transformation or democratization in teacher education in terms of structural changes (e.g., decentralization); modernization of educational content and teaching approaches; establishment of educational standards and benchmarking; upgrade of the assessment and monitoring systems; integration of information and communication technologies; development of a continuous support system throughout the professional lives of teachers; and the creation of incentives for teachers to remain in the profession. According to this report, the former socialist countries need to establish close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and business sector and to better respond to the demands of modern school, labour market, and constantly changing world. Such framework of educational democratization is common across post-socialist countries (Holik 2010; Mincu, 2010; Psifidou 2010). It also points to the global governance of a certain educational system from a distance, whereas education becomes a global rather than a national development (Robertson 2012). Moreover, the emphasis on the alignment of teacher education with the demands of the labour market suggests the potential establishment of market-oriented teacher education programs and the reduction of educational democratization to a mere satisfaction of the needs of the knowledge-based economy.

For example, a newly adopted national educational program for preparing elementary school teachers (Ministry of Education Science Youth and Sports 2012b) contains such new courses as foundations of computer science with the elements of coding/programming and information technologies, as well as expands the allotment for such course as foreign language learning. These changes in teacher education programs are provoked by the changes implemented in the elementary school curriculum which in turn points at the attempt to prepare a competent individual able to meet the needs of the technologically advanced global society. These changes were also reflected in a draft of the concept paper on the development of continuous teacher education program (Ministry of Education Science Youth and Sports 2012a). The draft states that all teacher education

programs should prepare teacher candidates to freely use information technologies in the educational process. It also emphasises the need to prepare elementary school teachers to teach foundations of computer science and foreign language. Another sign of a market-oriented approach to teacher education or at least a sign of the presence of market ideology in teacher education can be a course on professional competitiveness offered by some teacher education institutions. For example, a leading teacher education university in Ukraine offers such a course to the elementary teacher candidates in order to inform them about possible career pathways in the field of education (e.g., public school teacher, private school teacher, tutor, or nanny), what expectations for each career pathway are (e.g., in addition to the subject matter knowledge, a teacher at the private school should also be proficient in one foreign language), and what their income could be depending upon the career pathway that they decide to pursue (Personal Communication, March 4, 2012). These examples show how market ideas and needs are starting to penetrate teacher education programs in Ukraine. The emphasis on the needs of the knowledge-based economy and desire to align the national higher education system to a European model run a risk of overlooking other important local needs.

In times when Ukraine's democracy is struggling to emerge amidst the rise and decline of civil liberties and media freedom, weak adherence to the rule of law, and unstable civil engagement (Freedom House 2012; Freedom House 2011a; Freedom House 2011b), there is a great need to strengthen its democratic polity. Teacher education can play an important role in this process by preparing new generations of teachers who could institutionalize new curriculum, develop democratic structures in schools, form more actively engaged citizens and, by extension, contribute to the transformation of a post-authoritarian society. The prominence of this role for teacher education programs lies in the context of underdeveloped citizenship attitudes and weak understandings of civil society among teacher candidates and teachers in Ukraine.

For instance, the vast majority (70%) of teacher candidates (n=300) at one pedagogical institute in Koshmanova's (2006) study held a conventional view of learning, and had little knowledge about civil society or of what role they could play in building it. Many of them believed that their responsibility was to develop students' patriotic feelings about Ukrainian history and culture, perceiving democratic values in terms of patriotism. Some of these teacher candidates also believed that citizenship education should not be connected with school teaching and learning, but instead should be organized around extra-curricular activities. Seventy percent of the young teachers (n=4,000) surveyed in Zhadan's (2000) national study had not been involved in any civic actions. Less than 55% of them took part in the elections. Only 15% of the surveyed believed that it was important to uphold human rights. This research shows that many teacher candidates and teachers have a conservative rather than change-oriented political role. Much needed cultivation of "civic professionalism" among teacher candidates and teachers – which "extends beyond the private world of the classroom to the public sphere" and "focuses on contributing to the sustainability of democracy in a unique way through the education of future citizens" (Kennedy 2005, p. 3) – under

the aforementioned recommendations might be reduced to the technical role of satisfying the demands of a competitive global market.

The reduction of civic professionalism of teachers to a technical role in the educational process can be illustrated through the introduction of the national standardized external testing in Ukraine in 2008 – an instrument to standardize an admission to higher education institutions and to combat a rampant corruption in the admissions process ensuring fair access to higher education (Kovalchuk & Koroliuk 2012). The recent study about the goals and outcomes of the educational process conducted among secondary school teachers and students (n=300) by the Center for Educational Monitoring (Center for Educational Monitoring 2012) showed that the preparation of students for the standardized external testing is the first main educational goal among teachers. Other goals constituted improving the students' ability to plan out their personal lives, consolidating knowledge for successful completion of year-final tests, and developing skills to translate and use the acquired knowledge in practice.

Despite the need for further comprehensive research on the impact of the standardized external testing on teaching profession and teacher education programs, preliminary findings from the Center for Educational Monitoring study already point to the reduction of teacher professionalism to a mere test preparation. In its study report on Ukraine, the EC acknowledges the importance of special training for teachers in educational measurement, “aimed at successful implementation of the independent evaluation of students' learning outcomes” (European Commission 2011b, p. 78). While it is further acknowledged in the report that “apart from international experience, the search for solutions should take into account: social needs, the developmental level of the economy and the heritage of science, culture and education” (p. 96) the process of integration into the European educational area and issued recommendations do not address local needs produced by a socio-historical context of the society.

### **Conclusion: Stated vs. Actual Outcomes of Teacher Education Reforms**

Summing up the discussions in this paper is the sentiment that “there is no ‘one size fits all’” answer to the question on the role of the Bologna Process for the so-called transition countries (Zgaga 2009, p. 94); local national realities and circumstances always need to be taken into account to understand the implementation of this process in individual countries of EHEA. Or, in the words of Kvit (2012), “to understand the way things work in Ukraine, one must remember that it is a post-Soviet state with its own features that cannot be compared to any other system in the world.” Designed to meet the needs of a centrally planned economy, the Soviet Ukraine's education system had been characterized by high funding for education, high literacy levels, a majority of graduates with solid basic knowledge, a large core of skilled workers available for the industrial sector, and cultural and scientific achievements. However, the post-Soviet systemic problems remained, characterized by declining quality of education and low efficiency (World

Bank 2011).

Today, Ukrainian educational system, including teacher education, is undergoing a reform informed by a new policy rhetoric which is in turn an “ emergent hybrid [of] communist-neoliberal rationality” built on the ideas of national identity and consciousness, “catch[ing] up with a developed Europe,” and market economy (Fimyar 2010, p. 85). In her analysis of Ukrainian educational policy documents, Fimyar showed how policy rationalities – which underlie discourses that inform educational reforms – point to the departure from the old ‘Soviet’ educational system and its realignment to catch up with Europe. The implementation of the Bologna Process can be viewed as one of the strategies to align and harmonize a Ukrainian higher education system closer with European standards and thereby modernize educational structure and content, educational governance and quality monitoring system of higher education. The state has taken the rhetoric of restructuring of European higher education for granted and presented it as an inevitable process (Fejes 2008; Nóvoa 2002) for the educational reforms in Ukraine. Yet, as we discussed above, despite the new policy rhetoric, its implementation or practice has been rudimentary and inconsistent.

Teacher education in Ukraine is uniquely positioned at the intersection between the higher education and primary and secondary education systems, and thus is significantly affected by reforms pertaining to both areas. As for the Bologna Process impact, official government reports and Bologna reports indicated a number of positive changes in the system of higher education in Ukraine. For example, the Bologna National Report and Bologna Stocktaking highlighted significant steps at the national policy level to accelerate convergence with the developments in the EU. Similarly, the report by European Commission on primary and secondary education in Eastern Partnership countries noted the progress Ukraine has made in terms of aligning its teacher education programs to the standards set out by the Bologna Process. However, as posited by Kovtun and Stick (2009), though some accomplishments are notable, certain Bologna provisions might still be ‘on paper’ alone, thus emphasizing the presence of a number of implementation challenges in Ukraine.

The implementation of Bologna Process in Ukraine in general, and in teacher education in particular, has not been a smooth undertaking and some reforms have not taken root in the education system due to a number of reasons. First, although the Bologna Process was indeed an external push to strengthen national reform process, the nature of educational reforms during the transitional period has been characterized by the struggle between forces of progress towards innovation and forces of a reactionary past (Kononenko & Holowinsky 2001). Therefore, reform endeavors were more bureaucratic than substantive (Nikitin 2008) and lacked the unity of direction and solid foundation (Kutsyuruba 2008).

Secondly, one of the most destabilizing factors in Ukraine during its independence period has been a frequent change of governments (Lunyachek 2011). Accordingly, the change of ministers of education, whose personality influenced the development of education, and shifts in political orientations of office-holders, had a dramatic

impact on reforms in Ukraine. A vivid example was introducing in 2001 and reversing in 2010 of the 12-year secondary education reform, which undoubtedly exerted uncertainty and turmoil in teacher education programs. Frequent changes of governments led to chaotic administration of the policy process, based on a 'fire-fighting' approach, with the focus of government on immediate problems rather than sustained policy-making (Fimyar 2008; Krawchenko 1997).

Related to the above, the third reason was the need for more time to implement innovations offered by reforms in the educational sphere. Many of the reforms were perceived to be introduced haphazardly and without proper preparation, attempting to destroy and discard the existing base without a clear idea of how to create the foundation for future development (Kutsyuruba 2011a). Implementation difficulties encountered in Ukrainian education and teacher training system can be attributed to the gap between the political decisions and the local realities; in other words, the reforms occurred more quickly than the abilities of educators to accommodate themselves to the new demands (Pukhovska & Sacilotto-Vasylenko 2010). Moreover, the changes pushed by the state policy directives were often not straightforward and reflected the complexities, contradictions and ambivalences of the post-Communist era (Wanner 1998).

Fourthly, the formal structural aspects of Soviet education were easier to reform than the practices instilled by the values of the Soviet system (Wanner 1998). Dyczok (2000) argued that the pace of change and reforms in Ukraine was affected by the fact that many educators and administrators were products of the previous education system and not familiar with alternative models. Practices and institutional cultures of post-Communism in education remained fairly unchanged since the Soviet times, thus creating greater disparity between education policy declarations and actual practical changes (Wolczuk 2004).

Fifthly, economic uncertainty of the post-Soviet era characterized by significant cuts in educational budgets and lack of resources for educators negatively affected the progress of reforms. Analyzing the post-Soviet transition of Ukraine in regards to its educational system, Holowinsky stressed the inadequate funding for educational reform (Holowinsky 1995). Similarly, the European Commission report on teacher education in Ukraine outlined difficult social and economic situation of the country as one of the main limitations for innovations in teacher education. Consequently, the status of teaching profession has degraded, leading to the departure of skilled teachers from schools in search of more lucrative careers (Kutsyuruba 2011b) and increased intake of low-performing students into pre-service teacher education institutions.

One of the main problems of higher education in Ukraine is its quality, as indicated by the fact that country's most prestigious higher education institutions have low indices in the world university ratings (Lunyachek 2011). Lunyachek argued that the reason is not only imperfect licensing and accreditation, but also lack of impartial external assessment of students' knowledge by independent institutions, low academic motivation of students, an outdated resource base of the absolute majority of higher education institutions, corruption and bribery, and insufficient

individualization of education. As a result, graduates of Ukrainian higher education institutions may be unable to take full advantage of the benefits provided by the Bologna Process.

Lastly, the introduction of the Bologna Process and recommendations associated with it and not only, as we have shown, often ignored the local needs of Ukrainian society. Reform recommendations provided by international organizations and adopted by local actors (European Commission 2011b; Silova & Steiner-Khamsi 2008; UNICEF 2011) usually aim to align a national educational system with the global educational trends and the needs of global market economy. As a result, local needs begin to compete with the global agendas and might be moved to the margins in the educational reform process. Perhaps, as Bargesian (2000) noted, the incomplete reform implementation resulted from the Westerners' assumptions that transition in socialist countries is characterized by development toward a market society and that many important, even structural, features of post-socialist societies will only be temporary.

Helpful in understanding the changing policy terrain and teacher education reforms in Ukraine is the distinction between policy as stated and policy in use (Sergiovanni et al. 2009). As opposed to policy that is created and mandated by policymakers, policy in use refers to policy that is created as guidelines are interpreted, mandated characteristics are weighed, differential priorities are assigned, action theories are applied, and ideas come to life in the form of implementing decisions and professional practice. The discrepancies in Bologna Process policy implementation progress as stated in official reports (macro level) and actual outcomes of the policy in use in higher education institutions and primary and secondary schools (meso and micro levels), vividly describe how policy statements are interpreted and felt by stakeholders that are directly affected by them. Moreover, the policy effect tends to lose its strength as policy guidelines move deeper into the institutional structures. Thus, institutional factors, contextualized by local national realities and circumstances, have the ability to not only hinder coherent implementation of reforms but also contribute to the purely formal or bureaucratic implementation of reforms. Therefore, greater attention to the actual vs stated outcomes of Bologna-initiated policies and reforms in teacher education is needed through the detailed analyses of how specific policies affect institutional adherence to and implementation of the Bologna Process. Further problematization and comprehensive research into the implementation accomplishments and challenges at the level of higher education institutions charged with preparation of future teachers and subsequent effects of new teacher force on schools level would be illuminating of the actual outcomes of the changing policy terrain in teacher education in Ukraine.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> As of the beginning of 2011/2012 school year, teacher training in Ukraine was offered by 68 higher education institutions: 26 universities [including some solely pedagogical universities], 6 pedagogical institutes, 22 colleges, and 14 pedagogical schools [currently, most pedagogical schools have been reorganized into pedagogical colleges] (Shchudlo 2012). No current statistics is available.

<sup>2</sup> Curriculum of pedagogical institutions usually consists of four main components: academic studies (courses that are relevant to student's major. For example, history, mathematics or chemistry), pedagogical or educational studies (courses that provided students with knowledge about teaching techniques and mastership, child's psychological development, and educational theories), general studies (courses that are aimed at a general intellectual development of students. For example, philosophy, sociology or political science), and student teaching or school practicum.

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