

THE IMPACT OF EU CULTURAL VALUES ON YOUNGSTERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

Abstract. *This article analyzes the European Union cultural values, the established Polish cultural values and the way in which European and Polish values coexist in Poland. One of the main issues of the article is the degree of influence of the EU cultural values on the way young generations obtain professional knowledge and skills in Poland.*

Анотація. *У цій статті проаналізовано культурні цінності Європейського Союзу, встановлені польські культурні цінності та яким чином європейські та польські цінності співіснують між собою у Польщі. Одним з головних питань статті є ступінь впливу культурних цінностей ЄС на те, як молоді покоління отримують у Польщі професійні знання та навички.*

Key words: *the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, cultural values, professional development, Poland.*

Ключові слова: *Хартія ЄС про основні права, культурні цінності, професійний розвиток, Польща.*

Statement of the problem. Groups and societies have values that are shared by its members. As Poland is the member of the European Union, it should share the cultural values of the 28 EU members. To ease this process, the EU countries have established the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The main issues is to analyze the level how young generations in Poland are acknowledged with these rules and whether they are able to adhere to the established norms. As nowadays, even though boundaries between countries eliminate, the issue of maintaining cultural background of the country becomes an urgent need. Therefore, almost all countries have to find the golden balance to maintain own culture and to get used to the global values. Being an Erasmus student at Poznan University of Economics and Business, the author of this paper was able to conduct research on the exchange programs and their influence the further youngsters' professional development. Hereto some outcomes can be found.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The following publication under scrutiny: the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, materials of the EU Commission, materials of the EU Council on culture and cultural values.

Purpose of research. The purpose of this work is to find what the European culture values are, what the Polish established values are and the way they influence the professional development of young generations.

The key findings. In order to analyze the current situation in Poland, we need to look at the main documents of the European Union. One of such documents is the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights that was adopted in 2012. It has been updated in the light of changes in society, social progress and scientific and technological developments. The Charter of Fundamental Rights brings together all the personal, civic, political, economic and social rights enjoyed by people within the EU in a single text.

This document describes six main spheres of social life, which are dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice. *Freedom* provides young generation with the right for the education gives the opportunity to decide the sphere of occupation and afterwards are able to be engaged in work [1].

There are two key objectives of the EU on which the Treaty of Lisbon has put further emphasis. By enshrining the rights of children, the charter:

- recognizes that EU policies which directly or indirectly affect children must be designed, implemented and monitored taking into account the principle of the best interests of the child;
- guarantees the right to such protection and care as is necessary for the well-being of children;
- recognizes the need to protect children from abuse, neglect and violations of their rights, and situations, which endanger their well-being.

In line with the implementation of the Charter, the European Commission is promoting the fight against racism and xenophobia, homophobia and the protection of persons belonging to minorities.

The survey *Europeans, culture and cultural values* has found out the following important discoveries: the Europeans showed a broadly similar understanding of the notion of culture; education, traditions and lifestyle are concepts that are intrinsically linked to culture; participants link knowledge, civilization and leisure to culture, but to a lesser extent.

Culture is considered in a positive light and is valued very highly in the European Union. It is therefore a fundamental element in personal enrichment and development. Just as there are different ways of understanding culture, we can also draw a distinction between culture (in the singular) and cultures (in the plural), and between varying forms of cultural «consumption» or «production».

The study also analyses the perceptions of European culture and its components that make it specific and different from other cultures. In particular when considering the Western world (with which Europe has a natural relationship), participants express and affirm a feeling of belonging to a European culture in juxtaposition to the United States [3].

As we can see, the Europeans countries have their own perception of culture that makes all EU members feel unique in their way of building relationships between countries and inside them. Culture is frequently defined in terms of the arts and literature in the European cultures. The following diagram provides the needed information about the types of culture.

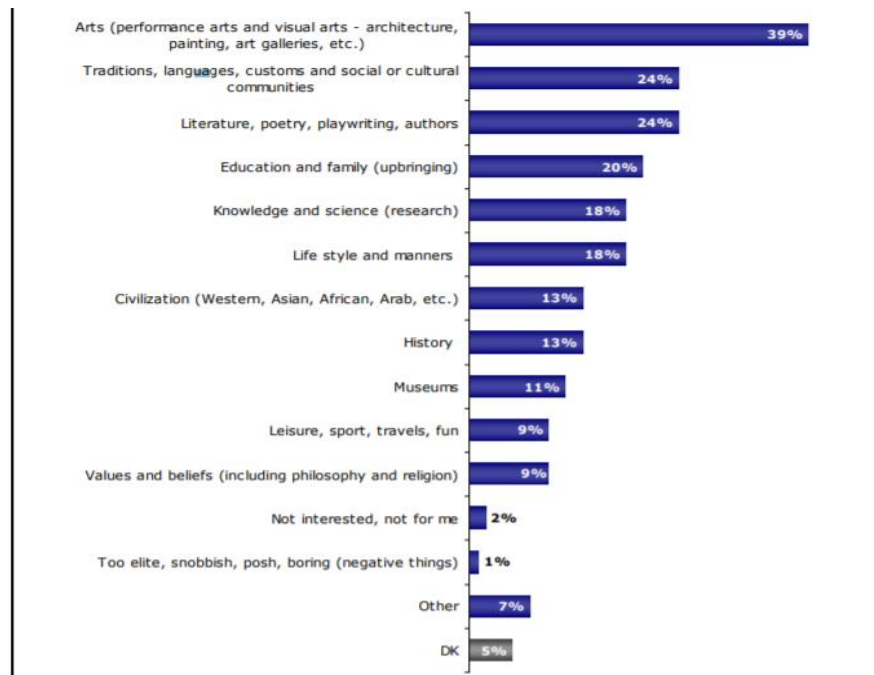


Fig. 1. Associations with the word «Culture» [4]

One of the main components of achieving professional development in Poland is for students to take part in exchange programs. Why is this issue so important? In order to be competitive in modern societies, students from all the EU countries have to spend at least one semester as an Erasmus student in order to practice English and to enrich cultural background while building relationships with the students from other countries. Cultural exchange is seen as fostering greater tolerance, learning and understanding, in both European countries and the world. As it can be concluded from the chart below, respectively, 89%, 88% and 84% of the participants agree with the statement that cultural exchange is highly needed in modern society.



Fig. 2. Agreement with statements on cultural Exchange — % EU27 [4]

Poland is a very progressive country by providing cultural exchange for students. The Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland, MONSUN and AIESEC organizations are in charge of providing cultural exchange for students.

The Students' Parliament of the Republic of Poland aims to develop a student society in every sphere of their life. The core of its activity is to guard students' rights granted by law. It is considered a national representative body for all-Student Self-Governments. The Students' Parliament of RP represents close to a 2 million group of citizens and serves as the «student union». The students' parliament works for students through:

- inspiring and organizing international students exchange;
- assisting in obtaining funds for the needs of local students' self-governments and other university organizations;
- supporting initiatives aiming at increasing the number of students, university additional investments, raising the level of education, reforming the program and the course of study;
- representing the student community in the national arena while dealing with government bodies;
- providing opinions on legal acts relating to the students.

MONSUN is Inter universities' National Independent Students Association of Non-State-funded Universities. It focuses primarily on representing the interests of non-state University students on the national arena. Since its inception, MONSUN has actively participated in the work of the central bodies of student self-governance, collaborating in projects and issuing opinions on legislation relating to higher education.

AIESEC is an independent, international student organization bringing together students and university graduates from over 90 countries around the world. In Poland, it has been operating since 1971. Its primary objective is to enable young people to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to support the development of their own environment. For this purpose, each year AIESEC organizes 5,000 international practices, more than 4,000 different projects and trainings, and approx. 350 conferences. In addition, AIESEC is an excellent opportunity to travel, gain international friendships, as well as the opportunity to discover and develop own potential.

The importance of cultural exchange within the EU is shown on Figure 3 below. According to it, a particularly high proportion of Cypriots «totally» agree (71%) that these can help citizens to learn from each other and feel more European. This is over twice as high as the corresponding figure for Austria (30%), where over half give the more moderate «tend to agree» answer. 56–65% of Poles find the cultural exchange within the EU helpful.

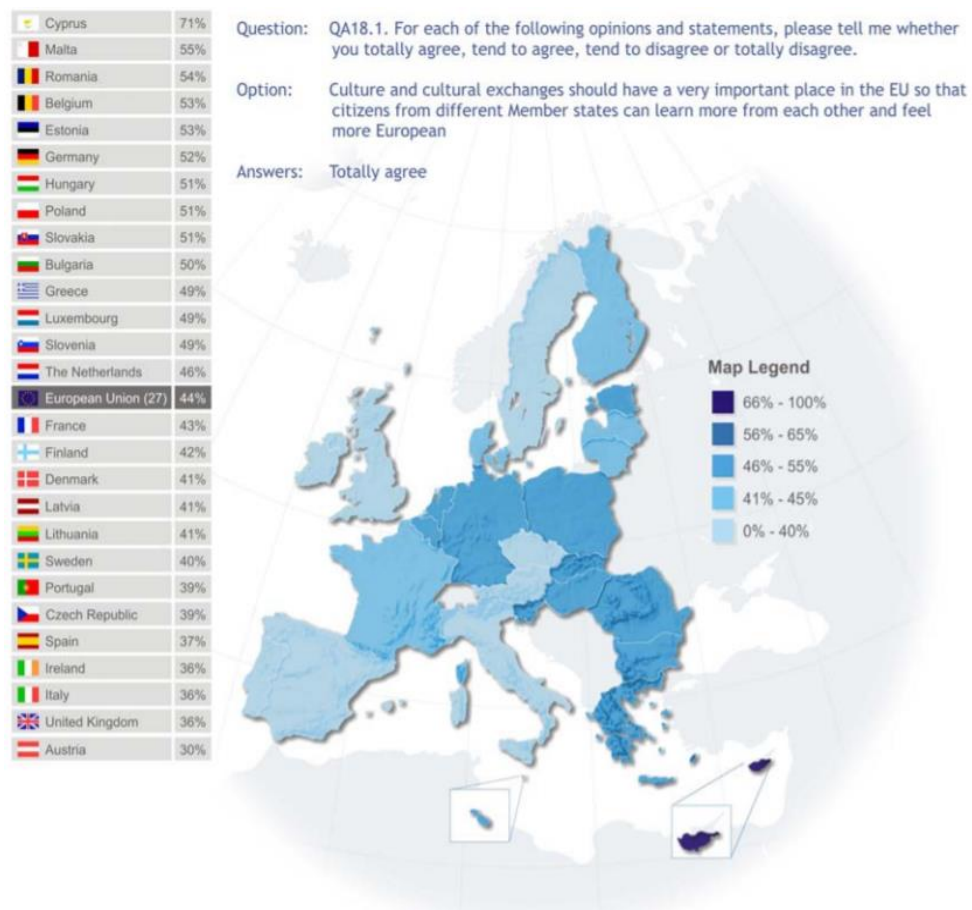


Fig. 3. The importance of culture and cultural exchange [4]

Though common amongst all socio-demographic groups, these views on the value of cultural exchange are most prevalent amongst those educated for the longest period. The difference in figures between those agreeing with the statements between this group and those studying only until 15 are of the same magnitude for each statement — i.e. 10 or 11 percentage points higher.

| | Culture and cultural exchanges should have important place in EU | Can contribute to greater understanding and tolerance | Europe well placed to contribute to greater tolerance |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| EU27 | 89% | 88% | 84% |
| Education (End of) | | | |
| 15 | 83% | 81% | 78% |
| 16-19 | 90% | 88% | 85% |
| 20+ | 93% | 92% | 89% |
| Still Studying | 92% | 91% | 83% |
| Personal importance of culture | | | |
| Very/ fairly | 92% | 91% | 87% |
| Not very/not at all | 78% | 78% | 74% |

Fig. 4. Benefits of cultural exchange: Analysis by education and importance of culture [4]

Therefore, Poland as the member of the European Union tries to adhere to the established rules. Polish students are provided with a number of possibilities of visiting other countries in order to learn more about the cultural values of other countries.

As Poland joined the EU in 2004, the main issues were whether it would be able to get used to established cultural norms of the European Union. Nowadays, Poland prefers to accept students for studying. This describes Poland as a very tolerant country, as students come not only from the European countries, but also from the overseas countries.

Still the question of regionalism and multiculturalism, namely in the post-Soviet countries which have now become on the path of democratic reforms, appears extremely important. In European society, it is very important to be self-creative and innovative in order to be competitive in modern society. As we all know, each university has its own student's organizations, where everyone can develop in the sphere that is interesting for them.

Conclusion. Overall, Poland is one of the most progressive countries in the European Union in terms of students' academic mobility. Poland is considered the cheapest country and thus more attractive for the exchange programs not only by European students but also by Ukrainian students. According the Perspektywy Education Foundation, during the 2017/18 academic year 37,829 Ukrainian students studied at Polish universities, representing more than 50% of the country's international students [5]. Together with the Polish students Ukrainians enjoy communicating with the students from other countries. These practices help them to be more sociable, innovative and creative. Therefore, they are definitely worth introducing into the Ukrainian system of higher education.

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