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ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ERASMUS+ SUNRISE PROJECT: COORDINATION MEETING AND TRAINING WORKSHOP

There present the results of the first stage of the Erasmus+ project “SUNRISE – Supporting Ukraine’s Next Generation of Scholars: a Project for Raising University Capacity and Improving Doctoral Student Education.” Special attention is given to the second coordination meeting and the first training workshop, held on September 23–25, 2025, in San Benedetto del Tronto, Italy, at the University of Camerino. The event brought together representatives of universities from Ukraine and across Europe to discuss issues of sustainable post-crisis recovery, training of the third-cycle (doctoral) students, and the implementation of innovative approaches to developing a modern research culture. The article summarizes the content of lectures and discussions, highlights the experiences of international partners and the outcomes of Ukrainian universities’ activities, outlining future prospects for developing “living laboratories” at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. It also emphasizes the importance of coordination meetings as a platform for experience sharing and shaping joint strategies to support young researchers.

KEYWORDS: *Erasmus+, SUNRISE project, young scientists, lecture, training, living-lab, innovative approaches, discussion*

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In the context of global challenges and transformations within the higher education system, international projects aimed at supporting young researchers and strengthening the role of universities in shaping the academic environment have become increasingly significant. One such initiative is the Erasmus+ project “SUNRISE – Supporting Ukraine’s Next Generation of Scholars: a Project for Raising University Capacity and Improving Doctoral Student Education,” which seeks to create new opportunities for the development of research

culture and to facilitate Ukraine’s integration into the European Research Area.

The implementation of such projects is crucial for ensuring the sustainable development of scientific schools, updating approaches to doctoral training, as well as enhancing competitiveness of Ukrainian universities at the international level. These initiatives contribute not only to the professional growth of early-career researchers but also to strengthening partnerships between higher education institutions in Ukraine and the European Union. An important

component of the project's implementation is the organization of coordination meetings among the participating institutions. Such events enable the alignment of strategic objectives, exchange of best practices, identification of effective mechanisms for cooperation, as well as promotion of transparency in achieving the planned outcomes. Coordination meetings serve as a platform for open dialogue among partners, fostering a shared vision for the development of doctoral education and creating conditions for its further integration into the European educational and research space.

Equally important is the coordination of joint efforts and the regular holding of meetings, during which participants discuss progress achieved and outline future implementation stages—ensuring the project's effectiveness and continuity.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the progress of the first stage of the SUNRISE project, “Supporting Ukraine’s Next Generation

of Scholars: Raising University Capacity and Improving Doctoral Training,” highlighting the outcomes of the coordination meeting and training workshop.

Second coordination meeting. From September 23 to 25, 2025, the second coordination meeting and the first training workshop within the framework of the Erasmus+ project SUNRISE – Supporting Ukraine’s Next Generation of Scholars: a Project for Raising University Capacity and Improving Doctoral Student Education took place in San Benedetto del Tronto, Italy (Fig. 1). The event was hosted by the University of Camerino (UNICAM) at its URDIS Training and Educational Center and brought together partners from various universities across Europe and Ukraine.

Over the course of three days, participants took part in lectures, training sessions, discussions, and field study activities aimed at sharing experiences and developing joint approaches to advancing research and doctoral education.



Fig. 1-Agenda of the Second Project Meeting and the First Training under the SUNRISE Project

The first day was dedicated to the Training for Online Trainers. The event began with a welcome coffee, followed by an introduction to the training program presented

by Professors Massimo Sargolini and Flavio Stimilj from the University of Camerino.

A series of thematic lectures then followed. Massimo Sargolini and Luca Di

Lorenzo Latini (UNICAM) delivered a presentation on post-disaster recovery after the 2016 earthquakes in central Italy, focusing on spatial planning and European strategies for reducing risks in post-catastrophe regions.

The next lecture, conducted by Valentina Polci and Ludovica Simionato (UNICAM), addressed the challenges of fragile and conflict-affected territories and explored strategies for fostering resilient social development.

Particular interest was sparked by the presentation of Ana Sopina from the University

of Zagreb (UNIZG), who shared Croatia's experience in post-war and post-earthquake recovery, demonstrating how spatial planning is integrated into the rebuilding process (Fig. 2).

After the lunch break, participants attended a lecture by Kalev Sepp from the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), who shared insights into landscape reclamation practices in former oil shale mining areas. Continuing the theme of territorial recovery, Ruthi Veibriakim (EMU) presented the methodology for developing and implementing living



Fig. 2-Lectures by International Partners of the SUNRISE Project

Laboratories – an innovative approach that fosters close collaboration between science, local communities, and government authorities.

The day concluded with a presentation by Flavio Stimilj (UNICAM), who discussed the experience of responding to the devastating

flood of 2022 in central Italy, focusing on issues of population relocation and spatial planning strategies aimed at mitigating future risks. Each lecture was followed by discussions and Q&A sessions, ensuring active engagement and exchange of ideas among participants (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 – Training on “Living Laboratories”

Summarizing the results of the lecture sessions, it is worth noting that all presentations were united by a common goal—seeking effective ways to overcome the consequences of crises and to develop approaches to sustainable territorial recovery. The experience of landscape reclamation presented by Professor Kalev Sepp demonstrated the potential for ecosystem restoration in industrially transformed regions. Ruthi Veibriakim’s presentation on the living laboratories methodology outlined an innovative model of interaction between academic institutions, local communities, and governmental bodies – one that enables the practical implementation of environmental and social solutions in post-crisis settings.

Flavio Stimilj’s lecture on managing the aftermath of the large-scale flood in central Italy emphasized the importance of integrated planning solutions aimed at reducing future risks and ensuring population safety.

For young Ukrainian researchers, such examples are particularly valuable, as the post-war recovery of Ukraine will require systematic approaches combining land reclamation, infra-

structure reconstruction, public safety, and innovative forms of cooperation. Thus, the international experience presented during the training serves as a theoretical and methodological foundation for developing new practical solutions that will contribute to the formation of strategies for sustainable development and post-war recovery in Ukraine.

The second day focused primarily on the project’s coordination activities. Representatives from UNICAM opened the meeting with a welcome address, outlining the current status of the initiative. Ukrainian partners presented the results of their activities in 2025.

The Karazin University team was represented by the national coordinator, Director of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Ecology, Green Energy, and Sustainable Development, Ganna Titenko (Fig. 4). In her presentation, she discussed the activities and achievements of the National and International Doctoral School in Environmental and Climate Policy, Management, and Technoecology – INTENSE (NDS) [1].



Fig. 4 – Speech by representatives of Karazin University on the implementation of the project

While developing the INTENSE School, partners from the following higher education institutions were involved: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Uman National University of Horticulture (now Uman National University), Volodymyr Hnatyuk Ternopil National Pedagogical University, Vinnytsia Academy of Continuing Education, Kherson National University, and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

Within the Kharkiv branch of the NDS, six doctoral candidates successfully defended their degrees: two Candidates of Geographical Sciences – Anastasiia Kleshch and Alla Shumilova (Karazin University), and four PhD holders in Earth Sciences – Svitlana Burchenko, Vladyslav Voronin, Alina Hrechko (Karazin University), and Yana Zalizniak (Uman National University). All members of the INTENSE Doctoral School actively participated in project activities, including academic mobility, lectures by Ukrainian and European professors, and more.

Professors from partner Ukrainian institutions also took part in the doctoral defenses. For example, Liubomyr Tsaryk (Volodymyr Hnatyuk Ternopil National Pedagogical University) acted as an opponent for Svitlana Burchenko and Alina Hrechko, Oleksandr Mudrak (Vinnytsia Academy of Continuing Education) for Vladyslav Voronin,

Nadiia Maksymenko (Karazin University) for Anastasiia Serkiz (Ternopil National Pedagogical University), and Mariia Teslovych (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv), among others.

The presentation also summarized the first stage of the Open Lecture Series of the International and National Doctoral School INTENSE, during which five open lectures were delivered: Landscape-Ecological Planning of Territories with Different Functional Designations by Nadiia Maksymenko, Coordinator of the Doctoral School, Karazin University [2]; Dendrochronological Principles for Assessing Forests in Ukraine by Iryna Koval, Academician of the Academy of Forestry Sciences of Ukraine, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences, Senior researcher at H. M. Vysotsky Ukrainian Research Institute of Forestry and Agroforestry [3]; The Concept of Noospheric Ecosystems as a Pathway to Sustainable Development by Serhii Sonko, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, Professor, Uman National University [4]; Landscape Polystructurality of Territories in the Context of Constructive-Geographical Studies: Theoretical, Methodological, and Practical Aspects by Viktoriia Udovychenko, Doctor of Geographical Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of Physical Geography and Geoecology, Taras Shevchenko National

University of Kyiv [5]; Ecosystem Services: Problems of Definition, Classification, Utilization, and Monetization by Tamerlan Safranov, Doctor of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, Professor, I. I. Mechnikov Odesa National University [6]. The presentation also highlighted future plans for the end of 2025.

Additionally, the results of a survey conducted among 55 doctoral students who participated in the open lecture series were presented. Participants represented various Ukrainian higher education institutions, including Karazin University, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ternopil National Pedagogical University, Odesa National University, Vinnytsia Academy of Continuing Education, Uman National University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and the Carpathian Institute of Ecology of the NAS of Ukraine. The respondents agreed on the importance of such lectures, noting that they provide an open platform for acquiring new knowledge and engaging in discussions, and they expressed anticipation for the continuation of the doctoral lecture series.

Reports were also presented on roundtables organized by Karazin University [7] and Odesa National University [8], which continued discussions on the activities of the Erasmus+ SUNRISE project.

The discussion then focused on plans for the implementation of living labs. Karazin University was represented by Alina Hrechko, Associate Professor of the Department of Ecological Monitoring and Nature Reserve Management, Educational and Scientific Institute of Ecology, Green Energy, and Sustainable Development (Fig. 4). The chosen theme for the

living laboratories is urban landscape issues. During the presentation, researchers identified key challenges, including the reduction of green spaces due to intensive urbanization, high levels of air and soil pollution, inefficient waste management, ecosystem fragmentation, soil degradation in suburban areas, and insufficient integration of ecological approaches into urban planning.

These challenges have been further exacerbated by the war: shelling destroys green spaces, damaged infrastructure leads to unauthorized landfills, and pollution risks increase.

The initiative brings together partners including Kharkivzelenbud, the State Environmental Inspectorate of Kharkiv Region, the Department of Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management, the O. N. Sokolovsky Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences, the Ukrainian Research Institute of Environmental Problems, and local municipal authorities.

Doctoral students will be actively involved, conducting dissertation research, applying innovative methods, and carrying out field studies. The main focus of the living laboratories is the restoration of green areas destroyed by the war and strengthening the ecological resilience of Kharkiv.

In an interactive format, the living labs methodology was presented by Anton Shkaruba and Ruthi Veibriakim (EMU), who proposed practical cases and exercises for hands-on training. In the second half of the day, the University of Zagreb team presented the results of a survey conducted within Work Package WP4, which allowed for the identification of preliminary findings and recommendations to



Fig. 5 – Study trip to the towns of Norcia and Castelluccio di Norcia

improve doctoral training. Following this, Anton Shkaruba (EMU) discussed strategies for disseminating project results and introduced new opportunities for developing the official project website. The day concluded with an open discussion, during which partners reviewed the next steps in project implementation and agreed on upcoming tasks.

The final, third day was practical in nature and took the form of a field study visit to the towns of Norcia and Castelluccio di Norcia (Fig. 5).

Participants explored examples of spatial planning and post-earthquake recovery measures, discussed issues of relocation, cultural heritage preservation, and integration of natural landscapes into the reconstruction process. The visit provided participants with an opportunity to observe real-world examples of the interaction between science and practice and to discuss how these approaches could be applied in the context of Ukraine.

Thus, the second coordination meeting and the first training workshop within the SUNRISE project marked an important milestone in its implementation. They brought together researchers from different countries, created opportunities for in-depth experience exchange, helped align completed steps, and defined future stages of the project.

The coordination of efforts and the shared vision of the participants are key to the success of this initiative, which aims to support a new generation of Ukrainian scholars and enhance university capacity in doctoral education.

In conclusion, the first stage of the project's implementation can be considered successful. Detailed information about the project's activities is available on the website: <https://ecology.karazin.ua/mizhnarodna-dijalnist/sunrise/>

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. Furthermore, the authors have fully adhered to ethical norms, including avoiding plagiarism, data falsification, and duplicate publication.

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ПРО ХІД РЕАЛІЗАЦІЇ ПРОЄКТУ ERASMUS+ SUNRISE: КООРДИНАЦІЙНА ЗУСТРІЧ ТА НАВЧАЛЬНИЙ ТРЕНІНГ

Представлено результати реалізації першого етапу проєкту Erasmus+ «SUNRISE – Supporting Ukraine’s Next generation of scholars: a project for Raising university capacity and Improving doctoral Student Education». Особливу увагу приділено другій координаційній зустрічі та першому навчальному тренінгу, що відбулися 23–25 вересня 2025 року в Сан-Бенедетто-дель-Тронто (Італія) на базі Університету Камеріно. Захід зібрав представників університетів України та Європи, які обговорили питання сталого відновлення територій після кризових явищ, підготовки здобувачів третього рівня вищої освіти та впровадження інноваційних підходів до формування наукової культури. Узагальнено зміст лекцій і дискусій, представлено досвід міжнародних партнерів, результати діяльності українських університетів, а також перспективи розвитку «живих лабораторій» на базі Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна. Підкреслюється значення координаційних зустрічей як платформи для обміну досвідом і формування спільних стратегій підтримки молодих науковців.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: Erasmus+, SUNRISE проєкт, молоді науковці, лекція, тренінг, living-lab, інноваційні підходи, дискусія

Конфлікт інтересів

Автори заявляють, що конфлікту інтересів щодо публікації цього рукопису немає. Крім того, автори повністю дотримувались етичних норм, включаючи плагіат, фальсифікацію даних та подвійну публікацію.

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