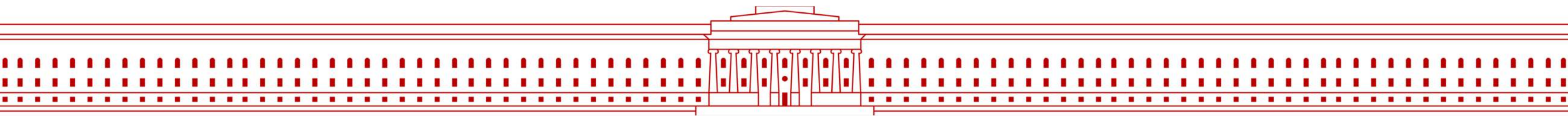


**RECTOR'S ADDRESS TO THE EUA BOARD
AND THE UNION OF RECTORS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE**



Ukrainian Higher Education under Extreme Conditions (Jan 2026)

Dual Crisis:

Full-scale war + systemic energy collapse threaten universities as critical infrastructure

Energy as a Weapon:

Prolonged blackouts and heating failures disrupt teaching, research, and digital continuity

Destroyed Infrastructure:

Loss of campuses, labs, libraries, and dormitories undermines safe and inclusive education

Brain Drain:

Approximately 20% of academic staff remain abroad, creating capacity and leadership gaps







Psychological Burnout

Chronic stress and trauma reduce academic performance and talent retention

Case in Point – Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University:

After multiple relocations and January 2026 damage in Kyiv, the university continues operating despite freezing conditions - a clear example of humanitarian resilience.

REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER WARTIME CONDITIONS (UKRAINE)

-  **Reforms under extreme pressure:** Ambitious HE reforms aligned with European integration are implemented amid full-scale war, energy instability, and humanitarian strain.
-  **Financing risks:** New funding models lack transparency, predictability, and impact assessment, increasing institutional vulnerability, inequality, and loss of academic capacity.
-  **Governance uncertainty:** Experimental changes to rector appointments and supervisory boards raise concerns over autonomy, accountability, and academic freedom.
-  **Over-centralized admissions:** Standardized external exams for Master's/PhD risk weakening universities' academic role and excluding war-affected talent.
-  **Systematic risk:** Reform pace and limited consultation undermine strategic planning, staff retention, and institutional resilience.
-  **Call to European partners:** Joint expert engagement needed to ensure crisis-resilient funding, autonomy-based governance, sustained dialogue, and protection of academic freedom.

URGENT AND SHORT-TERM ACADEMIC OPTIONS

- **Access to digital resources:** Academic databases, repositories, online training.
- **Short-term mobility:** Student and faculty exchange programmes.
- **Virtual visiting professorships & short-term visits:** Maintain teaching & research continuity.
- **Targeted mini-grants:** Support professors and staff in Ukraine.
- **Joint supervision & graduate programmes:** Kottutelles & collaborative tutorship.
- **Flexible learning formats:** COIL & Blended Intensive Programmes for international engagement.

MEDIUM- & LONG-TERM ACTIONS:

- **Joint programmes & degrees** to safeguard Ukrainian diplomas and enable foreign accreditation
- **Quality assurance support** to maintain academic standards during and after the crisis
- **Strategic alliances** between Ukrainian and partner universities for system recovery and capacity building
- **Capacity building & expert support** for Associate Partner status in Erasmus+ → towards a National Erasmus Agency
- **University Restoration Fund** for post-war rebuilding and technical support
- **Targeted investments** in research infrastructure, laboratories, and digital capacity

CORE MESSAGE:

Ukrainian universities defend knowledge, academic freedom, and hope - inviting European partners to co-create resilient, autonomous, and high-quality higher education.