Appendix F.

from 15 May 2025

Kyiv School of Economics

Interview with Iryna Sydorenko, Manager of International Partnerships

(Translated from Ukrainian)

Form of data collection: Google Form

Strategic impact and institutional priorities

Q: How has Russia's full-scale invasion affected your university's international priorities and strategies?

A: The university has strengthened partnerships with leading Western institutions, focused on attracting international support for educational and research projects, expanded participation in global academic initiatives, and intensified its role as a think tank shaping international discourse on Ukraine's recovery.

Q: Has the role of internationalization at your university fundamentally changed since the beginning of the war?

A: Since the beginning of the full-scale war, the role of internationalization at KSE has acquired strategic importance. It has become a tool not only for academic development but also for mobilizing international support and integrating Ukraine into the global scientific and educational community. The university has intensified cooperation with foreign partners, expanded participation in international projects, and uses internationalization as a means to amplify Ukraine's global voice. Significant research grant projects have been implemented, including grants from the EU's Horizon Europe Program, Erasmus+, the Swedish Institute, and others.

Alternative pathways and adaptation

Q: What alternative forms of international activity (virtual mobility, online collaboration, twinning projects, international research) have been implemented at your university? How effective have they been?

A: After 2022, KSE actively began using the COIL model in its educational process. This approach allows students and teachers to interact with international partners via online platforms,

implementing joint projects, research, and academic initiatives without the need for physical travel. Faculty from the Computer Science and Social Sciences departments actively implement COIL-based virtual mobility in collaboration with partner universities from the U.S. and the EU.

Resilience and psychological support

Q: How has internationalization contributed to the psychological resilience of students and staff (through support networks, symbolic or material solidarity, mental health)?

A: Internationalization has become an important factor in the psychological resilience of KSE students and staff during the war. International partnerships provided access to educational resources, internships, scholarships, and study abroad. Solidarity from foreign universities, professors, and students – through public support, joint projects, and charitable initiatives – contributed to a sense of belonging to the global community.

Q: Can you share an example of flexibility or resilience shown by your team or students in supporting international activity during the war?

A: Since 2022, the KSE team has demonstrated high resilience and flexibility, managing not only to preserve but significantly expand international activity despite the war. Thanks to coordinated work, quick response to new challenges, and a proactive partnership approach, the number of grant projects and academic mobility programs has significantly increased.

International solidarity and partnerships

Q: What support has your university received from international partners or global educational networks during the war (resources, advocacy, technical assistance)?

A: Partner universities offered a range of additional international academic mobility opportunities for KSE students and faculty. For example, a joint master's program with the University of Toronto was launched, in which the host university provides financial support to participants. This initiative aims to train a new generation of professionals who will contribute to Ukraine's post-war recovery.

Q: How has participation in consortia (e.g., the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities) contributed to international cooperation and collective response to the challenges of war?

A: After the full-scale invasion, KSE joined the CIVICA alliance of European universities, which includes ten leading institutions in the fields of social sciences, business, and public policy. Since 2022, CIVICA has offered students and staff opportunities to participate in Alliance events – EuroWeeks, short-term internships, conferences, etc.

Q: How have international partnerships supported physical or infrastructural resilience (humanitarian aid, equipment, campus support)?

A: International partnerships played a critical role in enabling KSE to ensure the continuity of the educational process and adapt the learning environment to wartime conditions. Such support became a symbol of solidarity and trust in KSE's mission during difficult times for Ukraine.

Educational and cultural diplomacy

Q: How has your university implemented cultural and educational diplomacy strategies through internationalization during the war (promotion of Ukrainian culture, international events, media participation)?

A: KSE actively uses internationalization as a tool for cultural and educational diplomacy. The university organizes and participates in numerous international events, conferences, and public lectures, presenting not only analytical work on the war but also Ukrainian culture, history, and values. Faculty and experts regularly speak in international media, shaping the image of Ukraine as democratic, intellectually strong, and open to the world.

Post-war recovery planning

Q: Does your university plan for post-war recovery in the context of internationalization? What strategies are being developed to restore international partnerships and projects?

A: KSE plans active post-war recovery through internationalization, including expanding international partnerships and projects. The university is working to broaden double degree programs with universities in Europe and the U.S., which will enable Ukrainian students to gain international experience. KSE is also an international center of expertise and annually hosts about 30 visiting professors from the U.S., Canada, UK, Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany.

Lessons and recommendations

Q: What key lessons has your university learned about supporting internationalization in times of crisis?

A: KSE has learned several key lessons. The most important were flexibility and adaptability, especially through digitalization and hybrid formats. The university also recognized the importance of supporting international alliances through online formats and joint research projects. Cultural diplomacy, including the promotion of Ukrainian culture at international events and in the media, played a special role.

Q: What recommendations would you give to other educational institutions affected by war or crisis?

A: It is important to be prepared for rapid change by adapting learning and international strategies according to circumstances, and to maintain open dialogue with students and partners.

Forms of internationalization

Q: How has the war affected the physical mobility of students and staff?

A: Since 2022, international academic mobility indicators at KSE have grown significantly due to expanded partnerships and increased support for mobility programs. However, one key challenge was the travel restriction on male students abroad due to martial law, which complicated equal access to programs.

Q: What types of virtual mobility were implemented (COIL, virtual Erasmus programs)? How effective were they compared to physical mobility?

A: KSE actively integrates virtual mobility programs using COIL technologies in the educational process. This format enables joint academic work without the need for physical mobility. Virtual mobility through COIL is actively implemented at KSE in collaboration with partner universities from the USA and EU countries.

Q: How have academic programs been adapted to preserve or strengthen the international component (new English-taught programs, joint/double degrees)?

A: English is the language of instruction for 80% of KSE's academic programs. New double degree programs were introduced (with universities in the U.S. and Canada), as well as joint initiatives such as engineering programs with ETH Zürich.

Q: Has your university implemented elements of "Internationalization at Home" during the full-scale invasion? How exactly?

A: Yes. KSE actively implements "Internationalization at Home" by involving more than 30 foreign professors in teaching and holding international lectures, events, and meetings with business professionals and Nobel Prize laureates.

Q: Have international research projects been preserved or expanded? Has the war affected their topic or format?

A: KSE's international research projects have not only been preserved but significantly expanded since the start of the war, adapting their focus to address new challenges. Key areas of research now include economic recovery, war damage assessment, security, energy resilience, and European integration. In response to the crisis, KSE has strengthened its international partnerships and actively attracted grants through EU programs such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.

Q: Which form of internationalization proved to be the most resilient at your university during the war? Which was the least resilient? Please rank the forms of internationalization in your institution from most resilient (5) to most vulnerable (1) and explain your choice.

A:

Institutional partnerships – 5

This form has proven to be the most resilient due to already established relationships of trust with partners who increased their support during the war. Many partner universities initiated additional opportunities for KSE students and faculty – academic mobility, grant initiatives, joint applications, and more.

Internationalization at home – 5

KSE actively involves foreign lecturers and experts in the educational process and invites guest speakers for international public lectures.

International research – 4

Despite the challenges caused by the war, the university's research activity has continued, particularly within grant-funded projects such as Horizon Europe (as of 2024, KSE is the coordinator of a Horizon Europe project), Erasmus+, DAAD, and others.

Internationalization of the curriculum – 4

New academic programs have been launched since 2022, with instruction conducted in English. Additionally, new double-degree initiatives have been introduced.

Physical mobility – 4

The physical mobility of KSE students and staff has continued but faced certain challenges, particularly for male students due to restrictions on leaving the country.

Virtual mobility – 4

Programs of virtual mobility using COIL technologies were initiated at KSE after 2022 in cooperation with partner universities from the USA and EU countries. However, as of 2025, these programs are implemented only within selected academic programs at KSE.