

Appeal of Ukraine's National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance to the global academic community

The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) thanks all educators, scientists and researchers, all colleagues and friends throughout the civilized world for their expressions of solidarity with the Ukrainian people in this tragic time of war. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine represents an unprecedented violation of basic human rights, an attack on life, on democracy, on freedom of thought and opinion, and is driven by nothing less than hatred of Ukraine.

We the NAQA team, are witnessing daily attacks by Russian rockets and tanks against residential areas in our capital Kyiv, in Kharkiv, in Sumy, in Zhytomyr, and in many other Ukrainian cities, towns and villages. Last night a Russian rocket hit the largest Ukrainian childrens' hospital Okhmatdyt killing several child patients. Throughout the country, schools, hospitals, universities and other social infrastructure is being destroyed. This is war of occupation - a **Crime Against Humanity**, a brutal violation of human rights, national sovereignty and basic human dignity and the right to life.

We are witnessing the genocide of the Ukrainian people: the intentional destruction of our cultural heritage.

The international isolation of the Russian Federation is increasing, with representative of different industries and professions throughout the world refusing to cooperate with Russia in all areas. The higher education and research sectors cannot stand aside.

The Council of Europe has defined one of the four primary aims of higher education as "preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies." The International Association of Universities (IAU) also emphasizes preparation for democracy as a recognized and effective purpose of higher education. The Council of Europe in partnership with IAU launched RFCDC - Reference Framework of Competencies for Democratic Culture (Council of Europe, 2018) which defines 20 competencies in four clusters (values, attitudes, skills and knowledge, critical understanding). "Valuing human dignity and human rights" and "openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices" are defined as keys competencies to be ensured by higher education. Today, we see Ukrainians being destroyed simply because of their national and cultural identities; because they are citizens of their own country.

During the past week it has become brutally obvious to the entire world that the Russian higher education system has failed to live up to these aims.

We call upon educators and researchers in all countries:

- to stop all collaboration with any and all representatives of the putin regime
- to stop all cooperation with Russia's higher education and research institutions, and all relevant representative associations
- to suspend Russia's participation in the European Higher Education Area;
- to suspend the membership of Russian institutions in the EUA and the EURASHE;
- to suspend the membership of Russian agencies and institutions in ENQA and EQAR;
- to suspend Russia's membership in all global and international higher education organizations, networks and associations
- to ensure Russia's full isolation from the civilized democratic world

Ukraine is peaceful nation of 45 million people and a proud history of 1000+ years. We are now fighting for our existence, but simultaneously we are fighting to protect the whole civilized world from the evil embodied in the putin regime. We strongly believe Ukraine will prevail.

Putin's war crimes, and Russia's crimes against humanity, will be punished but only when the Russian people realize their complicity. For this to occur, the Russian educational sector must realize its failure to realize its primary function, its mission: to develop a humanist worldview.

As this destructive war continues, we call upon you not to stand aside, and we ask our international partners and friends to support what is right. We demand action. We have the right to demand it given the countless deaths and massive destruction that our cities have experienced, including the burning of homes and universities. ,In our hour of need we call upon you to isolate Russia from all aspects of the civilized world, particularly in the educational sector, and thereby to help bring an end to this brutal, unjust, and and evil war.

Appeal adopted unanimously by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA) in its full complement (voting through video-conference link due to security reasons) on 1 March 2022.