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## THE ECOLOGISATION (GREENING) OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL AND LEGAL COURSES IN THE TRAINING OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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### **Abstract**

*The paper studies the concept of greening higher education and its critical importance in the current context of increasing global environmental challenges. The author substantiates that the integration of environmental knowledge and principles into the curricula of all specialties is an urgent need for the formation of an environmentally conscious society, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and Ukraine's European integration process.*

*Particular attention is paid to the role of environmental law disciplines, such as «Environmental Law», «Environmental Safety Law» etc. It is shown that the study of these disciplines is important and expedient not only for students of higher education in legal specialties, to whom it provides fundamental knowledge for law enforcement activities, but also for students of higher education in other, in particular technical and natural sciences specialties.*

*Scientific approaches to defining the concept of greening higher education and its relevance and expediency in the context of European integration are explored. It is emphasised that knowledge of the legal basis for regulating environmental relations allows future specialists in various fields to: make environmentally sound decisions in their professional activities; comply with national legislation and European environmental requirements, which are being actively implemented in national legislation; prevent environmental offences and understand the legal consequences of committing them; effectively promote sustainable development and the implementation of green technologies and practices.*

*The role of higher education institutions in training a new generation of specialists who combine in-depth professional knowledge with a strong environmental and legal awareness, which is a guarantee of environmental safety and sustainable development, is emphasised.*

**Keywords:** *greening (ecologisation) of higher education, environmental law disciplines, environmental law, sustainable development, European integration.*

The greening of higher education is a multifaceted and strategically important process in today's world. This concept goes beyond simply 'greening campuses' and involves the deep integration of sustainable development and environmental responsibility principles into all aspects of university

activities. It aims to educate environmentally responsible individuals who are capable of addressing complex environmental, social and economic challenges [1].

Universities are recognised as key agents of transformation and drivers of sustainable development, playing a crucial role in training professionals who are aware of and capable of implementing environmentally conscious nature management, thereby contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals proclaimed at the UN General Assembly. They contribute to this through their core functions: scientific research, educational activities and leadership in society.

The issue of greening education, including higher education, is quite relevant in the scientific community both nationally and internationally. Among domestic scientists, we can highlight T.A. Safranov, A.V. Chugai, Yu.Yu. Tunitsa, M.G. Adamovskyi, M.M. Boris, S.N. Kraevsky, I.P. Magazynshchikov and others. The problems of teaching environmental law disciplines in Ukraine have been addressed by such leading scientists in the field of environmental law as N.R. Kobetska, A.P. Getman, V.L. Bredikhina. The issues of greening higher technical education were studied in the works of O.O. Troitskaya, K.V. Belokon, E.A. Manidina, and others.

The purpose of the study is to substantiate the role and significance of studying environmental law disciplines in the process of greening higher education for the training of higher education seekers in various specialities.

There are many approaches to understanding the concept of 'greening education', including higher education, in scientific literature. Safranov T.A. defines the greening of higher education for 'non-ecological' higher education institutions as the formation of a system of knowledge and practical skills in future specialists in a wide range of specialities, which will allow them to navigate various environmental problems and ensure environmental safety. At the same time, he points out that greening education is one of the prerequisites for implementing the principles of sustainable development [2].

A broader approach interprets the concept of greening the education system as a process of forming ecological worldviews, a new philosophy of life, a type of thinking and relationships in the human-technosphere-biosphere system by introducing special environmental disciplines into the curricula of all educational institutions in Ukraine, as well as filling other disciplines with environmental content. At the same time, scientists agree that greening education is necessary and will ensure the greening of the traditional economy, bringing it into line with the laws of nature, and the preparation and education of a new person with a fundamentally new way of economic thinking [3].

Foreign scientific literature applies an even broader approach to understanding this concept (using terms such as greening higher education, sustainable higher education, and education for sustainable development), namely, as a comprehensive process of integrating environmental principles and practices into all aspects of university activities, including not only educational programmes and research, but also campus management, infrastructure, and community engagement [4].

The central goal of greening higher education is to foster an ecological culture and ecological competencies among higher education students. This involves developing ecological thinking, a responsible attitude towards the environment, and practical skills for identifying and solving environmental problems [5].

This paper will examine one of the elements of greening higher education, which consists in integrating environmental knowledge and principles into the curricula of various specialties. In this regard, the study will focus on the role of studying environmental law disciplines, since law is one of the main tools for regulating relations in the field of environmental protection and ensuring environmental safety.

We should support V.L. Bredikhina, who, in her publication on the methodology of teaching environmental law disciplines, defines the greening of education as filling the curricula for training higher education students in all fields of knowledge and specialties with environmental requirements. At the same time, the researcher points out the importance of disseminating not only purely environmental knowledge, but also providing students of various educational institutions with environmental and legal information related to the study of environmental legislation, the basic principles of legal regulation of rational nature use and environmental protection [6].

Indeed, in the context of growing environmental problems, it is extremely important to shape the ecological worldview and understanding of legal mechanisms for environmental protection in future specialists, regardless of their specialisation. This is in line with the provisions of the Law of Ukraine 'On the Basic Principles (Strategy) of the State Environmental Policy of Ukraine for the Period until 2030,' according to which one of the tasks of state environmental policy is the implementation of education in the interests of balanced (sustainable) development, environmental education and upbringing, and educational activities [7]. One can support the position of scientists that environmental knowledge and knowledge of environmental and legal norms are elements of environmental culture as a set of various approaches to the development of nature from the point of view of its value at the spiritual (intellectual) and material (practical) levels, as well as elements of an environmental worldview [8].

The issue of teaching environmental law subjects includes two aspects: 1) teaching for law students; 2) teaching for students of other specialties.

For law students, studying environmental law is fundamental. It shapes their understanding of the legal foundations of environmental policy, the mechanisms of legal regulation of nature use and environmental protection, and liability for environmental offences. This allows for the training of qualified lawyers who are able to effectively apply environmental legal norms in their professional activities, promote compliance with environmental legislation, and protect the environmental rights of citizens. However, today, environmental law disciplines, primarily 'Environmental Law,' are included in educational programmes for bachelor's degrees in law on a residual basis. The higher education standard for the speciality 081 'Law' in the field of knowledge 08 "Law" for the first (bachelor's) level of higher education includes only the general competence of applicants, namely, 'the desire to preserve the environment.' Thus, the obligation to acquire competencies in the field of environmental law is only partially taken into account. This means that the question of whether or not to include the academic discipline 'Environmental Law' in the curriculum, its status, scope, and form of control remain at the discretion of specific universities [8].

For example, at the Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (hereinafter referred to as KPI), 'Environmental Law' is part of the general education component, for which only 2 credits are allocated. According to the educational programme 'Law' for bachelor's degree higher education in 2024, this educational component has been moved from the second to the first year of training, which violates the logical sequence of acquiring professional knowledge and skills by students (in particular, environmental law is based on knowledge of constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal law, which are mainly taught in the second year of study) [9]. At the same time, it should be understood that the formation of a conscious and humane attitude towards the natural environment and its individual elements in future lawyers will influence the corresponding practice of applying environmental legislation, as well as rule-making in our country.

For students of non-legal specialties, especially technical ones, environmental and legal knowledge is no less important. Engineers, technologists, specialists in the fields of construction, energy, biotechnology and other technical areas will directly encounter issues related to the impact of production processes on the environment in their future professional activities. Understanding

environmental requirements, standards, environmental impact assessment procedures, and the legal consequences of violating environmental legislation will enable them to make environmentally sound technical decisions, minimise negative impacts on the environment, and promote the implementation of environmentally friendly technologies.

Head of the Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection at Odessa State Environmental University T.A. Safranov, notes that in most higher education institutions, the curricula of 'non-ecological' specialties include the discipline "Ecology" or 'Fundamentals of Ecology,' which covers only the basic provisions of classical ecology without taking into account the future activities of the students. Under such conditions, it is only possible to speak indirectly about obtaining the necessary knowledge and practical skills regarding the environmental component of education for sustainable development [2]. In this regard, it should be noted that when training future specialists who will be involved in the production of goods that may have an impact on the environment and human health, both purely ecological disciplines (which will take into account the specifics of the speciality and study the possible negative impact on the natural environment and measures to prevent it) and ecological and legal disciplines aimed at studying the basic principles of legal regulation of rational nature use, environmental protection and ensuring environmental safety.

At the same time, it is important for applicants to understand both the basic legal institutions of environmental law (the right to use natural resources, property rights, liability for environmental offences, general principles of environmental safety, environmental rights and obligations of citizens) and the specifics of legal regulation of individual environmental relations that arise during the production of certain products, construction, reconstruction, development of facilities, etc. The study of the legal foundations of rational nature use and ensuring environmental safety is possible through the introduction of elective courses or separate modules into educational programmes of technical or other (non-legal) specialties, which can be included in normative disciplines.

KPI trains students in various technical, natural science and other specialties. For example, the educational programme 'Biotechnology' in the speciality 162 'Biotechnology and Bioengineering' [10] or the educational programme 'Non-traditional and Renewable Energy Sources' in the speciality 141 'Electrical Power Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Electromechanics' at the bachelor's level of higher education [11] contain such a normative educational component as 'Industrial Ecology', the purpose of which is to study the impact of industrial emissions on the environment and the possibility of reducing this impact by improving technologies and treatment facilities. The content of this academic discipline may include a module (several topics) devoted to the formation of knowledge about the system of environmental legislation and environmental requirements for a particular type of production, work, etc. It would also be advisable to offer applicants elective disciplines that will contribute to the deepening of knowledge in a particular field (for example, on the legal basis for ensuring chemical safety, waste management, food production safety, etc.).

In addition, the relevance and necessity of introducing environmental law disciplines into educational programmes for higher education students is emphasised by the fact that Ukraine has committed itself to implementing the EU *acquis Communautaire*, a significant part of which concerns environmental law. This means that every specialist, regardless of their field of activity, must be prepared to work in a legal environment that is constantly adapting to European requirements. Accordingly, the study of environmental law disciplines is becoming not only a matter of national environmental security, but also a strategic necessity for the training of higher education students in various specialties who, in their future professional activities, will be directly involved in the implementation and enforcement of European environmental standards.

Therefore, the greening of higher education is a key factor in ensuring the sustainable development of Ukraine, which aims to guarantee the economic growth necessary to meet the current

needs of society, as well as the needs of future generations, through the rational use of natural resources. The study of environmental and legal disciplines is a necessary element of modern higher education and plays an important role in the training of higher education students of all specialities, shaping their environmental awareness, understanding of legal mechanisms for environmental protection, and ability to make environmentally responsible decisions in their future professional activities. At the same time, higher education institutions have a decisive role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This role goes far beyond the traditional provision of knowledge. It consists of a systematic transformation of approaches to training specialists who are not only highly qualified professionals in their field, but also environmentally conscious citizens capable of integrating the principles of sustainable development into their professional and everyday activities.

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**ЕКОЛОГІЗАЦІЯ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ТА РОЛЬ ВИКЛАДАННЯ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ  
ДИСЦИПЛІН ЕКОЛОГО-ПРАВОВОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ У ПІДГОТОВЦІ  
ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ**

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**Анотація**

В роботі досліджується поняття екологізації вищої освіти та її критичне значення в сучасних умовах посилення глобальних екологічних викликів. Обґрунтовується, що інтеграція екологічних знань та принципів у навчальні програми всіх спеціальностей є нагальною потребою для формування екологічно свідомого суспільства, досягнення Цілей сталого розвитку, а також євроінтеграційного процесу України.

Особлива увага приділяється ролі дисциплін еколого-правового спрямування, таких як «Екологічне право», «Право екологічної безпеки» та ін. Показано, що вивчення цих дисциплін є важливим і доцільним не лише для здобувачів вищої освіти юридичних спеціальностей, яким це дає фундаментальні знання для правозастосовчої діяльності, а й для здобувачів вищої освіти інших, зокрема технічних, природничих спеціальностей.

Досліджуються наукові підходи до визначення поняття екологізації вищої освіти та обґрунтовується її актуальність і доцільність в умовах євроінтеграції України. Наголошується, що знання правових основ регулювання екологічних відносин дозволяє майбутнім фахівцям різних галузей: приймати екологічно обґрунтовані рішення у своїй професійній діяльності; дотримуватися національного законодавства та європейських екологічних вимог; запобігати екологічним правопорушенням, розуміти юридичні наслідки їх вчинення; ефективно сприяти сталому розвитку та впровадженню «зелених» технологій та практик.

Підкреслюється роль закладів вищої освіти у підготовці фахівців нового покоління, які поєднують глибокі професійні знання зі стійкою еколого-правовою свідомістю, що є запорукою екологічної безпеки та сталого розвитку.

**Ключові слова:** екологізація вищої освіти, навчальні дисципліни еколого-правового спрямування, екологічне право, сталий розвиток, євроінтеграція.