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THE MAIN DIRECTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF CUSTOMS

The research paper touches the issues of the international and European standards, including the WCO Professional Standards and EU Customs Competency Framework implementation in professional education of specialists in the field of Customs. As a result of the analysis having been made at the international, regional and national level, a straightforward process of updating curricula and accreditation of Customs training programs, adoption of innovative technologies and instruments in bachelor, master and expert programs, developing and testing e-learning platforms for vocational training, sharing experience between educators and professionals in Customs affairs worldwide has been identified. The author has also studied the level of implementation of these standards in the Ukrainian system of Customs education and highlighted the need for improving existing training programs as well as developing new training courses using the international and European innovative instruments and methods.

Key words: international professional standards for Customs staff, the WCO Professional Standards, the EU Customs Competency Framework, implementation, Customs professional training, specialists in the field of Customs.

Problem statement. Global processes of standardization of systems and forms of training, national systems of professional qualifications, focus on the unification of professional standards and qualification frameworks have concerned and influenced the sphere of vocational training in the field of Customs and led to the development of a theoretical and practical foundation of the concepts of professional standards for Customs staff as a tool of Customs qualification characteristics unification.

However, an urgent need for highly qualified specialists of Customs administrations able to operate in the conditions of global international trade and effectively solve professional tasks as well as practice economic, political and legal knowledge and use modern information technologies has encouraged educators and experts in field of Customs all over the world to find relevant forms, methods and means of training, revise the content of professionally-oriented disciplines, develop necessary prerequisites for making students capable of independent and creative professional activities. Thus, professional standards as an instrument to unify and standardize a particular set of knowledge, skills and behavior of Customs administrations' personnel required to effectively perform international trade regulation in order to meet national goals began to play a significant role in the modernization of training of professionals in the field of Customs.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. Foreign scientists and experts in Customs affairs [18; 19] launched a study on unification of professional standards within the Customs profession, in particular, analyzed the methods and technologies needed to enhance the professionalism of Customs officers [20], considered professional standards as tools for the implementation of strategic international instruments and conventions. To continue these researchers, the WCO experts in collaboration with the scholars from the International Network of Customs Universities under the PICARD program completed a set of standards for Customs officers' professional education [17, p. 3], advanced the idea of introducing professional standards in Customs training programs and strengthening links between academic institutions and regional / national training centers [22] as well as developed the EU Customs Competency Framework [14].

Ukrainian and Russian scientists, in their turn, studied theoretical background of educational and professional standards (V. Blinov [1], S. Klepko [3], V. Lyednov [2], O. Ovcharuk [6]; presented scientific ideas concerning professional development of specialists in the field of Customs (A. Krupchenko [4], V. Kukharenko [5], O. Pavlenko [8], A. Pankratov [9], L. Shornikov [11]); proposed the ways of the international professional standards implementation into the professional training of Ukrainian Customs officers (O. Pavlenko [8], O. Triakina [10]).

Purpose of the article. Under the conditions of greater demand for Customs professionals with comprehensive knowledge of economic, political, legal processes, technical innovations as well as necessary professional skills closely connected with increased flow of goods and trade liberalization, it is reasonable to research the main tendencies in professional education of specialists in the field of Customs as to the implementation of Customs professional standards being developed both at the international and European levels.

Main material. Professional standards as a tool to unify and standardize a particular set of knowledge, skills and behavior of Customs administrations staff required to effectively carry out the regulation of international trade in order to meet national goals began to play a significant role in the modernization of training of professionals in the field of Customs. As a result, specialized training programs were developed in some countries, but until recently there has been no coordination or standardization of these individual efforts.

Therefore, since 2005 under the auspices of the WCO the process of unification and harmonization of many individual interests and developments in the field of professional training of Customs officers began to create a set of common, internationally recognized standards for the professional development of executives of Customs administrations. As a consequence, in May 2008 the WCO under the program PICARD [16, p. 3] and in collaboration with the International Network of Customs Universities completed professional standards for Customs staff training. The idea of introducing professional standards in Customs training programs, strengthening links between academic institutions and regional / national training centers was approved in the strategic document PICARD 2020 [22] adopted at the sixth conference PICARD in Geneva in September 2011.

According to Ukrainian scientists [7] the WCO Professional Standards or international professional standards for Customs staff are education content standards, because they meet the criteria international and national educators consider necessary for the establishment, monitoring and implementation of educational standards [6, p. 5], namely: 1) they are presented in documents that describe the objectives, general and special education task; 2) the process of their implementation into the training of Customs officers within the strategy of solving problems of professional training is running; 3) these standards include certain methods of diagnosis and correction; 4) standards specify qualitative and quantitative measurement of learning outcomes; 5) standards provide for unification and comparability approaches; 6) standards identify mechanisms for their implementation.

As our research has revealed, the WCO Professional Standards consisting of 17 requirements for the general and professional knowledge level, 19 requirements for professional skills and 6 requirements for professional conduct of strategic managers (heads of regional Customs administrations and chairmen of State Customs Services, chiefs of strategic departments, senior managers of public services) as well as 16 requirements for the general and professional knowledge level, 20 requirements for professional skills and 5 requirements for professional conduct of operational managers (heads of Customs departments, divisions and Customs check-points, middle managers of public agencies) [17, p. 9–29] include: 1) a general description of functions

and common tasks of strategic and operational management; 2) possible positions in the Customs administration system; 3) professional qualification characteristics (requirements for professional knowledge and skills); 4) requirements for other professionally significant personal qualities (high level of integrity and dignity, client-oriented approach etc.). They are, on the one hand, describes the competencies (knowledge, skills and personal qualities) to be the result of professional training of graduates from educational establishments and its quality criteria and, on the other hand, define qualifying characteristics of managerial positions of Customs administrations.

Thus, the development and definition of the contents of Customs professional standards took place and now the process of their implementation and testing at the international, regional and national levels is under way. In particular, at the international level: 1) under PICARD program the International Network of Customs Universities (INCU) has been established and the WCO Professional Standards are being implemented into their curricula; 2) Memorandum of Understanding between the WCO and 7 pilot universities has been signed, which envisages cooperation towards professional training of Customs officers in compliance with the international professional standards, capacity building and research. In particular, the University of Münster (Germany), the University of Canberra (Australia), the University of Costa Rica, Riga Technical University (Latvia), the International Institute of Business and Law (Russia), Zayed University (United Arab Emirates), the University of Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Economics (Skopje, the Republic of Macedonia), the University of Le Havre (France), Leeds Metropolitan University (UK) offer the WCO certified bachelor and master programs and academic courses for vocational training of heads of Customs administrations [18, p. 32]; 3) on the basis of the international professional standards a distance-learning education program has been established and implemented in the educational process of the University of Canberra [21. p. 30]; 4) a new e-learning platform CLiKC (the Customs Learning and Knowledge Community) has been developed and implemented in the process of self-education of Customs staff all over the world in order to exchange knowledge and experiences between the participants and provide continuous improvement of professionalism in different Customs issues such as risk assessment, post-audit, harmonization of Customs rules and procedures etc. [12, p. 25]; 5) the International Customs Journal, Customs Scientific Journal are periodically issued publishing the latest scientific achievements and advanced experience in the field of Customs, ideas for methods and means to improve the professional competence of Customs officers.

Under the policy of regionalization at *the regional level* in 2014 in order to harmonize standards for Customs activities performance the EU and WCO public and private experts proposed the EU Customs Competency Framework for public and commercial sectors [15, p. 25]. It included four levels – key values of Customs activity; professional competencies (professional skills and personal qualities that contribute to a better performance of professional duties); operational competencies (knowledge of specific areas of Customs activities and skills to competently and efficiently operate in these areas); managerial competencies (knowledge of the principles, processes and methods of human resources, finance, project management, required skills and professionally significant personal qualities necessary for the successful implementation of this knowledge in practice). Having analyzed the EU Customs Competency Framework, we found out that it provides a mechanism for the further improvement of Customs administrations and allows determining the range of competencies to be developed, define training needs, evaluate employees based on established standards, improve performance standards and enhance operational and staffing levels.

This framework assisted in designing two European Training Curricula for Customs staff both for the public and private sectors, which included the study topics and learning outcomes to build training courses aimed at vocational training of Customs professionals of the European Union; creating a set of Reference Training Programs to be used by educators to compare or upgrade their own training structures and materials; accrediting Customs Training programs (Masters, Bachelors, Expert modules or vocational training courses) [14].

Furthermore, we should emphasize that since 2009 the process of developing practical mechanisms to implement the international professional standards for Customs personnel at *the national level* has been running, including, above all, the accreditation procedure of Customs universities recognizing their curricula to be in compliance with the WCO requirements for quality training

of Customs professionals. In addition, the process of implementing the international professional standards into Customs training programs of individual countries is under way (table 1).

Table 1

Implementation of the international professional standards into the professional education of Customs professionals at the national level

Countries	Stage of implementation
1. Australia (University of Canberra); Costa Rica (University of Costa Rica); Germany (University of Münster); Latvia (Riga Technical University); Russia (St. Petersburg Institute of Business and Law)	
2. Ukraine (University of Customs and Finance)	 study of theoretical and methodological foundations of introduction of unified international professional standards in the national system of professional training of specialists in the field of Customs [8]; analysis of existing training programs for personnel of the Customs Service of Ukraine in terms of matching their content with the requirements of the international professional standards [13]; preparation of legal documents in order to receive the WCO accreditation certifying compliance with the standards of professional training of Customs officials; developing / updating of curricula, programs, materials and courses within the professional disciplines based on the introduction of the international standards for Customs officials to improve professional competences; introduction with innovative technologies of vocational training offered by the WCO and EU scientists, including the WCO e-learning platform CLiKC and EU electronic training modules

As data in the abovementioned table show, the theoretical foundations of building a national system of professional training in the field of Customs based on the international professional standards for Customs officials have been developed and it has helped to start the process of modernization in line with existing international practices. However, in our opinion, a thorough analysis of the existing system of training of professionals in the field of Customs in Ukraine in terms of implementation of the international professional standards into Customs training programs and, as a result, updating of existing training programs as well as developing of new training courses using the international and European innovative instruments and mechanisms has not yet been made.

Conclusions and further researches directions. In conclusion we should point out that modern Customs administrations face the same problems in their work. Therefore, the way to solve them may naturally look like some universal model, which through globalization and rapid growth of trade requires clarification and formulation of new priorities. Their implementation provides for closer international cooperation, more coherent and modernized procedures, actions and processes, standardized requirements for the level of professionalism in the field of Customs, which is reflected in the WCO Professional Standards and EU Customs Competency Framework. As a consequence, the process of implementation the international and European standards into the professional education of the specialists in the field of Customs at the international, regional and national levels is directed towards updating curricular and accreditation of training programs, adoption of innovative technologies and instruments into bachelor, master and expert programs, developing and testing e-learning platforms for vocational training, sharing experience between educators worldwide.

Further research in this field could be devoted to greater usage of the EU Customs Competency Framework as a basis for revising the content of bachelor and master programs in Customs affairs within the Ukrainian system of Customs education and determination of results of professional training of the Ukrainian Customs Service staff.

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У статті розглянуто питання впровадження міжнародних і європейських стандартів, у тому числі Професійних стандартів Всесвітньої митної організації і Рамки компетенцій Європейського Союзу для митної професії, у професійну підготовку фахівців у галузі митної справи. У результаті аналізу, зробленого на міжнародному, регіональному та національному рівнях, виявлено цілеспрямований процес оновлення навчальних планів і акредитації програм підготовки митників, впровадження інноваційних технологій та інструментів у навчальні програми бакалаврату, магістратури та підвищення кваліфікації, розробки і тестування платформ електронного навчання, обміну досвідом між педагогами та фахівцями в галузі митної справи усього світу. Автор також вивчив рівень впровадження цих стандартів в українську систему підготовки фахівців в галузі митної справи і наголосив на необхідності вдосконалення існуючих навчальних програм, а також розробки нових навчальних курсів з використанням міжнародних і європейських інноваційних інструментів і методів.

Ключові слова: міжнародні професійні стандарти митників, Професійні стандарти Всесвітньої митної організації, Рамка компетенцій Європейського Союзу для митної професії, впровадження, професійна підготовка в галузі митної справи, фахівці в галузі митної справи.

В статье рассмотрены вопросы внедрения международных и европейских стандартов, в том числе Профессиональных стандартов Всемирной таможенной организации и Рамки компетенций Европейского Союза для таможенной профессии, в профессиональную подготовку специалистов в области таможенного дела. В результате анализа, сделанного на международном, региональном и национальном уровнях, выявлен целенаправленный процесс обновления учебных планов и аккредитации программ подготовки таможенников, внедрения инновационных технологий и инструментов в учебные программы бакалаврата, магистратуры и повышения квалификации, разработки и тестирования платформ электронного обучения, обмена опытом между педагогами и специалистами в области таможенного дела всего мира. Автор также изучил уровень внедрения этих стандартов в украинскую систему подготовки специалистов в области таможенного дела и отметил необходимость совершенствования существующих учебных программ, а также разработки новых учебных курсов с использованием международных и европейских инновационных инструментов и методов.

Ключевые слова: международные профессиональные стандарты таможенников, Профессиональные стандарты Всемирной таможенной организации, Рамка компетенций Европейского Союза для таможенной профессии, внедрение, профессиональная подготовка в области таможенного дела, специалисты в области таможенного дела.

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