



Report

on developing and delivering the module

**“Protection of Human Rights
within and across the European Union”**

under the project

**“Protection of Human Rights
within and across the European Union”**

(project number: 101047580; project acronym: ProEU)

within the ERASMUS+ Programme

**(call: ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH; topic:
ERASMUS-JMO-2021-MODULE)**

**at Penza State University
(Penza, Russian Federation)**



**Funded by
the European Union**

The **Work Package 1 (Teaching and Learning)** within the ProEU project aimed at promoting excellence in teaching on European Union law and European human rights system, spreading knowledge about the EU among different target groups. The WP1 included the Task 1.1 – developing and delivering the module “Protection of Human Rights within and across the European Union”. The module was focused on Bachelor law students of Penza State University.

Starting from early January, when the results of the Jean Monnet Actions call were announced and the Grant agreement was signed, the newly developed module was advertised to students during the **mentor classes** in the Institute of Law (Penza State University). The information about the module was placed in the university **digital learning environment** (<https://moodle.pnzgu.ru/>), on the **project websites** specifically created for the ProEU project (in Russian – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation_ims/projects_ims/proeu and in English – https://international.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation/international_projects/proeu), as well as via the **project social media accounts** (Facebook – <https://m.facebook.com/groups/1901973653306618/>, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/proeu_erasmus_psu/, Telegram – https://t.me/proeu_erasmus_psu), which were also created to raise awareness about the project and all project activities.

The Communication Plan developed within the ProEU project required the project team to design and publish the electronic dissemination materials in Russian and English, in particular leaflets on the module. These materials were designed in early February 2022 and posted on the project website (the module leaflet in Russian is available at https://ims.pnzgu.ru/files/ims.pnzgu.ru/pages/erasmus/proeu/broshyura_proeu_ru_modul.pdf; the module leaflet in English is available at https://international.pnzgu.ru/files/international/pages/erasmus/proeu/broshyura_proeu_en_modul.pdf).

Students were also informed during the **regular classes** and **university events** by teaching and administrative staff of the Institute of Law (Penza State University), in their turn they were informed by the ProEU project team at the meetings of the Institute of Law Council and departments meetings, as well as through the university internal communication system Directum and via the electronic leaflets sent to the e-mails of the departments at the Institute of Law (Penza State University). This activity resulted in the large number of applications (in total: 47 applications) submitted by students of the Institute of Law willing to study the new module.

47 Bachelor law students of the Institute of Law (Penza State University) were registered for the module (Rectors’ Order no. 0012/d dated 31 January 2022). The module “Protection of Human Rights within and across the European Union” (54 teaching hours) was launched at Penza State University on 1 February 2022. The period of study within the module was defined **from 1 February 2022 to 30 June 2022**.

As students took great interest in completing the module (in total 47 students were enrolled), the ProEU project team decided to form two subgroups (24 and 23 people, respectively). Students attended lectures together, while seminars were conducted for the subgroups. That contributed to improving academic performance of students and enhancing the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

For teaching the module, the ProEU project team designed the **syllabus** in Russian (71 pages) and translated it in English (64 pages). This activity was completed by mid-February 2022 (see Annex 1). When writing the syllabus, the project team took the personally designed training materials and the training materials from the open databases. The full list of these materials was given in the syllabus in the section “Essential readings”. The online versions of the syllabus in Russian and in English were published in the university digital learning environment (<https://moodle.pnzgu.ru/>) and on the project website (syllabus in Russian – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/files/ims.pnzgu.ru/pages/erasmus/proeu/umk_proeu_modul_ru.pdf; syllabus

in English –
https://ims.pnzgu.ru/files/ims.pnzgu.ru/pages/erasmus/proeu/umk_proeu_modul_en.pdf).

During the lectures and seminars, the engagement and interaction with students were ensured through the visual materials, namely new presentations designed specifically for the module and devoted to the topics within each submodule. The presentations were published on the ProEU project websites (in Russian – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation_ims/projects_ims/proeu/teaching_learning_materials; in English – https://international.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation/international_projects/proeu/teaching_learning_materials) and in social media. The project team created all presentations based on the single template using the visualization components (EU emblem, program name, project logo, etc.).

In addition to the syllabus and presentations, the ProEU project team designed the drafts for the presence lists (completed by early February), transcripts of records, satisfaction questionnaires and certificates (completed in March 2022). These materials were published using the visualisation components (EU emblem, programme name, project logo, etc.).

To disseminate the ProEU teaching and learning materials, students' projects and other relevant information, the Russian and English versions of the project website were created (in Russian – https://international.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation/international_projects/proeu and in English – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation_ims/projects_ims/proeu), along with the social media accounts in Facebook, Instagram and Telegram (Facebook – <https://m.facebook.com/groups/1901973653306618/>, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/proeu_erasmus_psu/, Telegram – https://t.me/proeu_erasmus_psu). The Facebook and Instagram accounts had technical challenges in the Russian Federation since March 2022.

The ProEU project team regularly released the news articles about the module implementation and posted them on the project websites in Russian and English (in Russian – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation_ims/projects_ims/proeu/proeu_news, in English https://international.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation/international_projects/proeu/proeu_news) and in the Telegram account.

The module “Protection of Human Rights within and across the European Union” was delivered in the **blended format**: before 1 March 2022 – online on the Zoom platform, after 1 March 2022 – offline in the classrooms of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Erasmus+ and Institute of Law (Penza State University).

Within the module, the ProEU project team delivered **54 teaching hours**:

- Gleb Sintsov, Doctor in Legal Sciences, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Professor of the Department of Private and Public Law, taught 18 teaching hours;
- Danil Feoktistov, PhD in Legal Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Private and Public Law, taught 12 teaching hours;
- Evgenii Bitiutskii, PhD in Legal Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Law Enforcement, taught 24 teaching hours.

Since the seminars were held in two subgroups, the ProEU project team additionally delivered 36 teaching hours (from the university budget).

When studying the module, the students explored the following aspects:

- **Submodule 1.** Human rights in international and European legal practice (6 hours): Human rights around the world: background, concept, mechanisms. Scope and nature of

fundamental freedoms. Core international and European human rights instruments. Human rights in the EU: institutions, mechanisms, policies, initiatives. Developments in human rights.

– **Submodule 2.** Human rights within advocacy and law enforcement in the EU (12 hours): Criminal justice system in the EU. Law enforcement agencies: structures, types, objectives. Human rights-based law enforcement: role, features. Legal profession: areas, characteristics. Role of advocacy in civil society. Legal basis for right to legal aid in the EU. Challenges in enforcing right to legal aid. Guiding principles for quality legal aid.

– **Submodule 3.** Legal basis of referendum in the EU (6 hours): Referendum: concept, objects, types. Historical developments and present status. Role and impact of referendum. Legal basis of referenda in the EU. Right to referendum: concept, guarantees. Legal status of referendum participants. Referendum process in the EU member states. Voting rights of persons with disabilities in the EU.

– **Submodule 4.** National features of referendum in the EU (12 hours): Referendum in constitutional law. European and national reasons for calling referenda. National features of referenda in the EU. Constitutional and legal concepts of direct democracy. Constitutions and right to referendum in the EU federal states. Legal practice and features of holding referenda. Interconnection between referendum model and federal relations features.

– **Submodule 5.** Insight into federalism with regard to human rights (12 hours): Scope of federalism doctrines in the EU. Federalism in the RF. Understanding federalism in terms of human rights protection. Interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights and federal relations. Human rights subsidiarity in practice. Governance practices for human rights protection in the EU federal states. Role of the Constitutional Courts and ordinary courts in protecting human rights in federal states.

– **Submodule 6.** Fundamental principles of the effective Ombudsperson (6 hours): Ombudsperson: concept, functions, guidelines. Ombudsperson and state. Legal frameworks. Working procedure. Subsidiarity of decisions. Effectiveness of the Ombudsperson. Role of the Ombudsperson in protecting human rights.

Within the module the ProEU project team implemented **student-centred teaching and learning**. The innovative methods were integrated to engage students in learning and foster the transferability of skills (critical thinking, brainstorming, project-based learning, role playing, problem-solving, etc.). The formative and summative assessment enabled measuring the academic performance of students highlighting knowledge and skill gaps, thus making students learning experience more authentic (projects, self-evaluations, etc.).

The module contained a comprehensive set of assignments for students to complete while studying each submodule, in particular developing the projects for the submodules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Students reported on the assignments in the form of presentations. Some student presentations were published on the project websites (in Russian – https://ims.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation_ims/projects_ims/proeu/teaching_learning_materials; in English – https://international.pnzgu.ru/international_cooperation/international_projects/proeu/teaching_learning_materials). All student presentations created within the ProEU project are available in the university digital learning environment (<https://moodle.pnzgu.ru/>).

Within the module, students prepared the joint projects in the field of European Union law together with law students from the partner universities of Penza State University (Russian State University of Justice, Ogarev Mordovia State University and Kutafin Moscow State Law University). Students delivered these projects in the form of presentations during seminars within the module and meetings of the research team created under the ProEU project.

The oral and written assignments showed that on successful completion of the module “Protection of Human Rights within and across the European Union” students were able to (**learning outcomes**):

- recognise law enforcement and advocacy role in monitoring and protecting human rights;
- consider the need to humanise law enforcement and to focus on human rights;
- recognise federalism as a balance between state interests and citizens interests;
- review the constitutional status of referendum in the EU member states;
- interpret the general norms and principles applied to referendum in European Union law;
- assess European Union law and its enforcement practice in terms of human rights;
- rate referendum as a tool of direct democracy and instrument of change in federal states;
- justify the right to referendum as part of right to vote regardless of race, origin, class, religion, gender, health or other status;
- ensure relevance of the Ombudspersons to RF citizens by combating poor governance;
- convert the principles of good governance into initiatives and policies promoting human rights;
- operate the dimensions of the Ombudsperson role in promoting human rights in the EU;
- apply international and European mechanisms for promoting and protecting human rights.

The interest in studying the module was reflected in the student attendance of the lectures and seminars (see Annex 2 for the **presence lists** designed within the ProEU project).

The ProEU project team prepared the **satisfaction questionnaire** for students in order to evaluate the quality of the delivered module according to the following categories: module content, module structure, learning and teaching practices, overall impression and assessment. Students were invited to fill in the questionnaires on a no-name basis during one of the final classes.

In total, students submitted 45 completed satisfaction questionnaires (see Annex 3). They were asked to rate the answers according to the scale “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”.

Under the **first part** of the satisfaction questionnaire, students assessed the following aspects of the module content:

- The aim and objectives of the module were clear beforehand;
- The content of the module was well structured;
- The module workload and requirements were appropriate for my degree programme;
- The duration of the module was sufficient;
- The lectures and seminars complemented each other;
- The module materials (presentations, handouts, etc.) were helpful and informative;
- The recommended reading lists were valuable;
- There was enough time for discussion.

Following the analysis of this part, the ProEU project team found out that students were satisfied with the module content. The obtained results indicated the following averages: 76% of the students answered as “strongly agree”, 21% as “agree” and 2% as “neither agree nor disagree”. Only 1% of students selected the item “disagree”, but did not give any comments.

The **second part** of the satisfaction questionnaire focused on the structure of the module and allocated the answers within to the following aspects:

- The module was organised in a manner that helped me understand the underlying concepts;
- The module increased my interest in this study field;
- The module gave me confidence to do more advanced work in the study field;
- The reading lists were appropriate to the aim and objectives of the module;
- The module assignments (case tasks, projects, etc.) facilitated my learning;
- My learning was fairly assessed;
- The grading practices were clear and fair;
- The module environment felt like a welcoming place to express my ideas.

Students positively evaluated the structure of the module. According to the filled-in questionnaires, they especially recognised the fair assessment of their knowledge and the grading practices. On average, 73% of the students “strongly agreed” and 23% “agreed” with the questionnaire items. Only 4% of the students avoided deciding (“neither agree nor disagree”).

In the **third part** of the satisfaction questionnaire, the students assessed the learning and teaching practices. They rated the following items:

- The teachers were well prepared for classes and were available for communication;
- The teachers used class time effectively and encouraged my engagement in discussion;
- The teachers were easy to understand;
- The teachers effectively organised and facilitated learning activities;
- The teaching methods aided my learning and stimulated my interest in the study field;
- The teachers provided helpful feedback;
- The teachers cared about my academic progress and successful completion of the module;
- The teachers created a welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

The analysis highlighted that students praised the learning and teaching practices of the ProEU project team. The questionnaire demonstrated that 80% of students marked the answers as “strongly agree”, 18% as “agree” and only 2% as “neither agree nor disagree”.

The **fourth part** of the questionnaire was devoted to the general impression about the module. Students were asked to decide on the following statements:

- I would recommend this module to other students;
- This module met my expectations for the quality of the Jean Monnet Module;
- The module has high educational and scientific impact;
- The module is useful in progress toward my degree.

Having analysed the questionnaires, the ProEU project team saw that the overall impression and assessment were favourable for the module. In general, the viewpoints averaged 71% for “strongly agree”, 26% – for “agree” and 3% – for “neither agree nor disagree”.

The analysis of the satisfaction questionnaires showed the students’ demand for more time to discuss and express ideas. The ProEU project team planned to take these aspects into account when implementing the module.

The **transcripts of records** were developed based on the module content and awarded by the project team to all students, who studied the module. In total, 47 transcripts of records were issued (see Annex 4). The grades and scores were assigned depending on the student’s participation in discussions, preparation of the projects, implementation of the comparative legal analysis, etc.

In total, **40 students successfully completed the module**, including 23 students with the “excellent” grade, 10 students with the “good” grade and 7 students with the “satisfactory” grade (information about the grading scale is provided in the transcript of records). Seven students, who attended the classes, but did not complete the module assignments, got the transcripts with the “unsatisfactory (failed)” grade.

The ProEU project team also issued the two-language **certificates** on successful completion of the module “Protection of Human Rights within and across the European Union”. Based on the transcripts of records, 40 certificates of the established form (in Russian and English) were awarded to students (see Annex 5).

The report on the module delivery was presented at the meeting of the University Council and approved by its members on 1 July 2022 (record no. 20).

ProEU project manager



Prof. Dr. Gleb Sintsov