

Five Years of Strategic Partnership between OMNIS Religio and West Ukrainian National University (2021–2026)

Building Bridges between Ukraine and Germany

International cooperation plays a crucial role in addressing contemporary global challenges, fostering intercultural understanding, and promoting sustainable development. Over the past five years, the partnership between **OMNIS Religio** and **West Ukrainian National University (WUNU)** has become an exemplary model of academic collaboration that combines research, education, civic engagement, and international dialogue.

Since its inception in 2021, this cooperation has brought together scholars, students, young researchers, and civil society representatives from Ukraine and Germany. Through joint projects, conferences, publications, and educational activities, the partnership has contributed to strengthening academic excellence and promoting European values of sustainability, openness, and international cooperation.

As the partnership marks its fifth anniversary in 2026, it is an opportune moment to reflect on its achievements and explore future directions for collaboration.

A Shared Vision of Sustainable Development

The foundation of cooperation between WUNU and OMNIS Religio was laid through a common commitment to sustainable development and responsible citizenship. Both institutions recognized the importance of engaging young people in discussions about environmental protection, climate change, energy security, and the long-term consequences of ecological disasters.

This shared vision materialized in the international project “**35th Anniversary of Chernobyl Disaster: Preconditions for Sustainable Development.**” The initiative was designed to encourage critical reflection on the lessons of the Chernobyl catastrophe and their relevance for contemporary society.

The project brought together students, educators, libraries, youth organizations, and local communities across Western Ukraine. It provided a platform for discussing sustainable development not merely as a theoretical concept, but as a practical framework for shaping future economic, environmental, and social policies.

By connecting historical experience with contemporary challenges, the project successfully promoted awareness of sustainability issues among younger generations.



35TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHORNOBYL DISASTER: preconditions for sustainable development

under cooperation with
Omnis Stiftung



Project rationale

- On April 26, 1986, during an experiment at the No. 4 nuclear reactor of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the explosions occurred.
- 203 people were hospitalized immediately, of whom 31 died (28 of them died from acute radiation exposure).
- 135,000 people were evacuated from the area.
- Long-term consequences of the disaster are controversial.



Educational Activities and Student Engagement

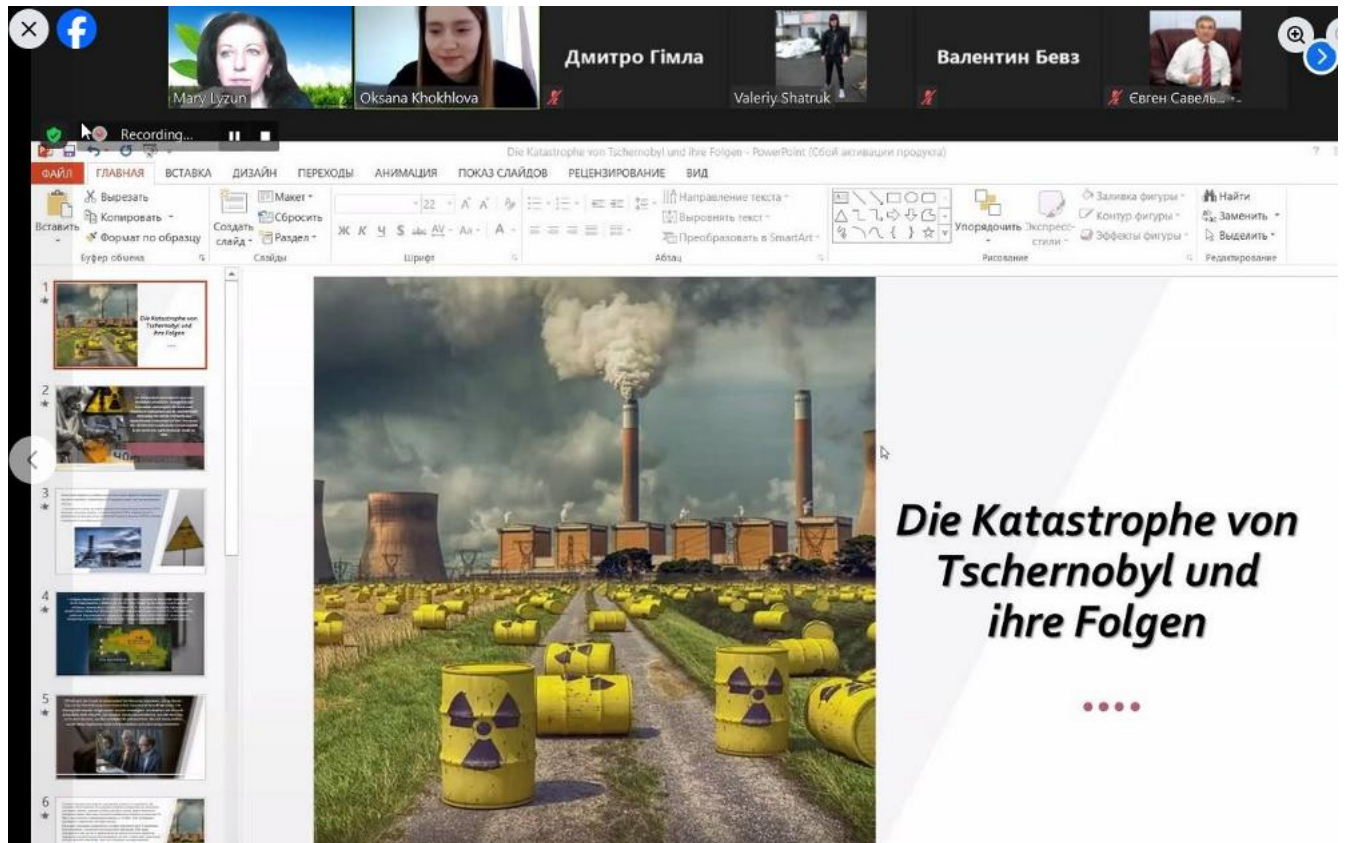
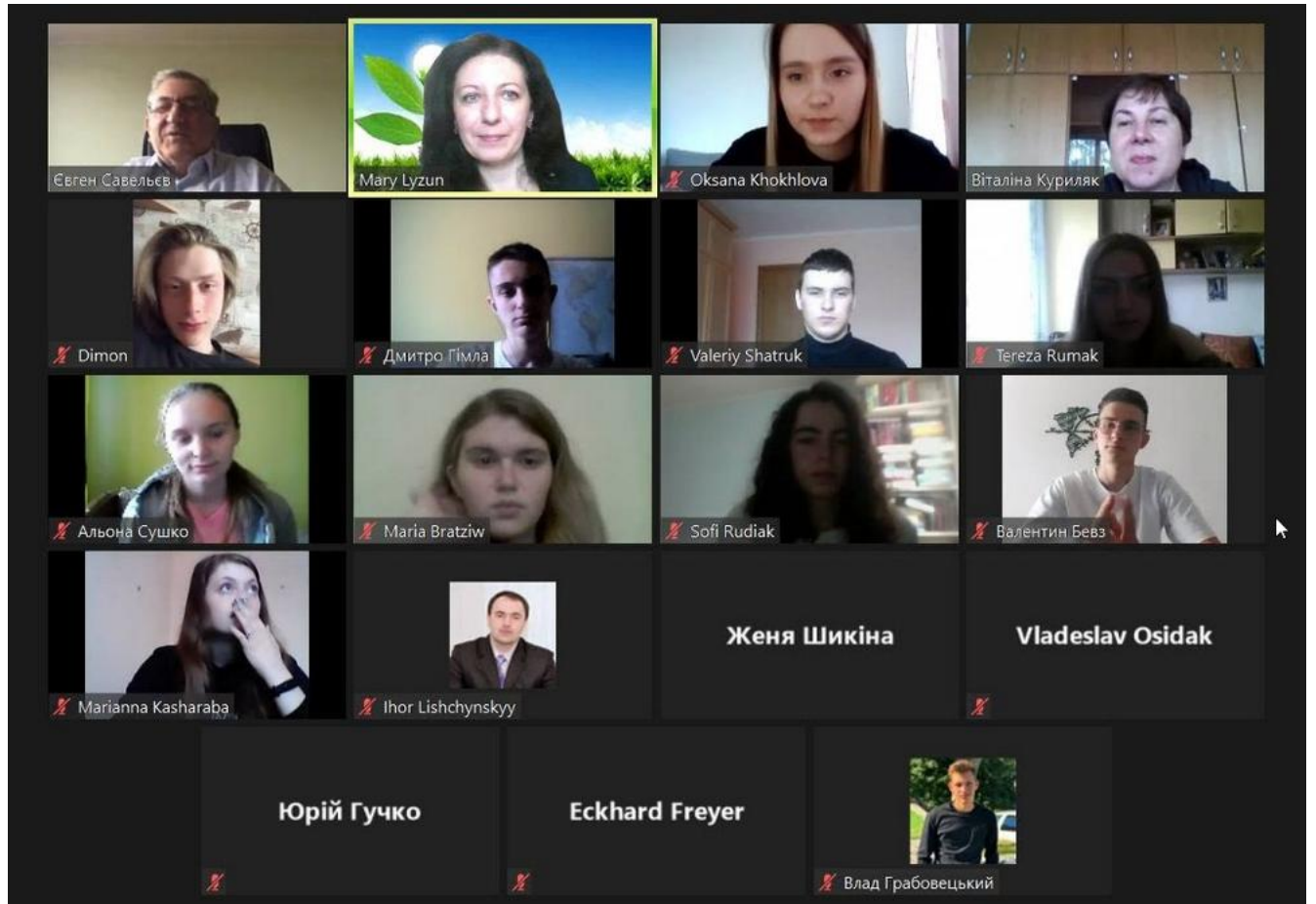
One of the most valuable aspects of the partnership has been its direct engagement with students.

In May 2021, WUNU hosted an international seminar dedicated to the 35th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Students from the International Economics programme actively participated in discussions concerning the relationship between energy production, economic efficiency, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

A distinctive feature of the seminar was its multilingual format. Student presentations and discussions were conducted in Ukrainian, English, and German, creating an international learning environment and encouraging participants to develop both professional and intercultural communication skills.

The event demonstrated how academic learning can be effectively connected with real-world challenges. Students were encouraged to critically assess the opportunities and risks associated with different energy development models while considering broader environmental and societal implications.

The seminar also highlighted the importance of international dialogue in addressing complex global issues that transcend national borders.



Promoting Environmental Awareness through Public Outreach

The cooperation between WUNU and OMNIS Religio has extended far beyond university classrooms.

In November 2021, together with the Ternopil Youth Centre, the partners organized the discussion platform “**ECOenergy.**” The event served as a forum for young people interested in environmental protection, sustainable lifestyles, and responsible resource management.

Participants attended training sessions on the **Zero Waste** concept and explored practical ways of reducing environmental impact in everyday life. The programme also included expert presentations on ecological risks associated with hydropower development in Western Ukraine, encouraging participants to evaluate environmental policies from multiple perspectives.

Such activities exemplify the broader societal dimension of the partnership. By engaging local communities and youth organizations, WUNU and OMNIS Religio have contributed to increasing environmental literacy and fostering civic responsibility among young people.

The success of these initiatives demonstrates the importance of combining academic expertise with public engagement to achieve meaningful social impact.



Advancing Academic Research and Scientific Publications

Research cooperation has become another important pillar of the partnership.

Over the past five years, scholars from WUNU and OMNIS Religio have collaborated on research addressing key economic and sustainability challenges facing Ukraine and Europe. Their joint publications have contributed to scholarly debates on economic development, international cooperation, and energy transformation.

Among the notable outcomes of this cooperation are research articles published in the *Journal of European Economy*. These publications include studies examining:

- the impact of international aid and foreign direct investment on Ukraine's economic growth;
- the experience of renewable energy development in Eastern Germany and its relevance for Ukraine's energy transition;
- broader issues related to sustainable development and international economic cooperation.

These collaborative publications have strengthened academic links between Ukrainian and German researchers while contributing to the international visibility of research conducted at WUNU.

The partnership demonstrates how international cooperation can facilitate knowledge exchange and generate innovative perspectives on contemporary economic and environmental challenges.

European Economic Integration

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**THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL AID
AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
ON ECONOMIC GROWTH IN UKRAINE**

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DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY: THE EXPERIENCE OF EAST GERMANY FOR UKRAINE

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International Conferences as Platforms for Knowledge Exchange

Scientific conferences have played a central role in strengthening cooperation between the two institutions.

In April 2022, the Department of International Economics at WUNU organized the International Scientific and Practical Conference of Students and Young Researchers entitled **“International Economics under Climate Change: Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Period.”**

The conference attracted approximately one hundred research submissions and provided an interdisciplinary platform for discussing sustainable development, climate change, international trade, and economic resilience.

Professor **Eckhard Freyer**, Deputy Director of OMNIS Religio, addressed participants and emphasized the importance of international cooperation in responding to global environmental and economic challenges.

Building on this success, the second edition of the conference was held in April 2023. The event presented the outcomes of the Chernobyl-related project and highlighted connections with broader European integration processes. Particular attention was devoted to regional development, sustainability, and the challenges associated with global fragmentation.

These conferences have become important venues for young researchers to present their work, exchange ideas, and engage with international experts.



Західноукраїнський національний університет
м. Тернопіль

11 квітня 2022 року



Західноукраїнський національний університет
м. Тернопіль

27 квітня 2023 року

Energy Security and International Dialogue

Another significant area of cooperation has been the discussion of energy security issues.

In September 2021, representatives of OMNIS Religio participated in the Third International Week organized by WUNU. The event provided an opportunity to discuss current challenges in Ukraine's energy sector and explore international experiences in strengthening energy resilience.

The contributions of Professor Eckhard Freyer, Dr. Reinhard Kirste, and their colleagues enriched discussions on energy policy, sustainable development, and European cooperation.

These exchanges became particularly valuable in the context of increasing geopolitical uncertainty and growing awareness of the strategic importance of energy security for both Ukraine and Europe.

Through such dialogue, the partnership has helped connect academic analysis with practical policy considerations.



Supporting Academic Excellence and Scholarly Publishing

The impact of cooperation has also been evident in academic publishing.

Professor Eckhard Freyer has actively contributed to the editorial and reviewing processes of the *Journal of European Economy*, one of WUNU's leading academic publications.

Such involvement has facilitated the exchange of international academic standards and best practices, contributing to the quality and visibility of scholarly research produced at the university.

Academic journals serve as important instruments for disseminating knowledge and fostering international scholarly dialogue. The support provided by OMNIS Religio has therefore had a lasting impact on the development of WUNU's research environment.

Looking Ahead: New Opportunities for Cooperation

As WUNU and OMNIS Religio celebrate five years of successful cooperation, both institutions look forward to further expanding their partnership.

Future collaboration may include new research projects, joint educational initiatives, international mobility programmes, sustainability-focused activities, and interdisciplinary studies addressing contemporary global challenges.

The experience gained during the past five years provides a strong foundation for developing innovative projects that contribute to regional development, European integration, environmental sustainability, and academic excellence.

The partnership has shown that meaningful international cooperation is built not only on institutional agreements but also on shared values, mutual trust, and a commitment to creating positive societal change.

Five Years of Partnership and Impact

The cooperation between OMNIS Religio and West Ukrainian National University demonstrates how international academic partnerships can generate lasting value for universities, students, researchers, and society as a whole.

From sustainability projects and environmental education to scientific publications and international conferences, the partnership has created numerous opportunities for learning, research, and intercultural exchange.

As both institutions enter a new phase of cooperation, they remain united by a common goal: contributing to a more sustainable, resilient, and interconnected future for Ukraine, Europe, and the global community.

Five years of cooperation have produced meaningful results. The years ahead promise even greater opportunities for joint achievements and continued academic excellence.