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Main Vectors of International Integration of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine under Martial Law

Objective. The article examines the main vectors of integration of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine (VNLU) into the international library space during 2022–2025 under wartime conditions. **Methods.** The study applies a systemic and structural-functional approach, employing general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization. A case study method was applied to trace how the library adapted its international activities during the specified period. **Results.** The findings indicate that, under conditions of geopolitical instability and national threats, the international dimension of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine's activities became strategically significant for strengthening the institution's resilience and positioning as a robust institution within the international library community. The European and transatlantic vectors were identified as dominant in the library's integration processes, fostering intercultural dialogue, international collaboration, professional partnerships, and the preservation of cultural heritage. **Conclusions.** The integration processes of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine are defined by the dominance of the European and transatlantic vectors, which reinforce the library's institutional capacity and its international agency in the global information space.

Keywords: international activity; V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine; integration; international agency; transatlantic vector; European vector; international library space

Introduction

The relevance of this research lies in the growing role of libraries as strategically important institutions that exert systemic influence on the processes of cultural and scientific integration, as well as on strengthening Ukraine's agency within the global information space. Under current conditions marked by transformational challenges of globalization, rapid digitalization, socio-economic shifts, and the realities of martial law, it is crucial to examine the integration vectors shaping the development of Ukraine's modern library and information sphere. Academician O. Onyshchenko emphasizes that "integration is an essential feature of libraries, which historically and functionally constitute an integrative sociocultural phenomenon both in national and international practice" (Onyshchenko, 2024, p. 22). Integration trends define the scope of international activity at V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine (VNLU), promoting professional communication within the global library community and facilitating the exchange of cultural, scientific, and informational achievements. In this context, library science research into the key integration vectors of VNLU, Ukraine's largest state library with national status, a leading academic and sociocultural institution and a research center of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, serves as a foundation for the development of strategic approaches to effective global engagement. Notably, VNLU, with its unique collection of 17.7 million items, draws considerable attention from international partners not only in terms of collection management and harmonization of resources across various media but also in preserving cultural heritage during the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war.

The importance of library integration, particularly its international dimension, is highlighted by Ukrainian scholars and professionals, including L. Demianiuk, L. Dubrovina, V. Medvedieva, O. Onyshchenko, O. Serbin, O. Shendryk, O. Vasylenko, and others. As an illustration, Academician O. Onyshchenko underscores that integration constitutes a fundamental

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feature of libraries, supported by well-established mechanisms at both national and international levels, characterizing them as inherently integrative sociocultural institutions (Onyshchenko, 2024).

Dubrovina (2025) emphasizes that the fostering of the integration vector in the strategic development of the international library space is of particular importance for Ukraine's library and information field, since the national library system constitutes an organic part of the global information resource... The opportunities for free exchange and use of social information represent a common interest of all states, and integration trends have long been inherent in the activities of many Ukrainian libraries, which for decades have functioned as integral components of the networked society.

Vasylenko (2023) points out the importance of drawing on advanced foreign experience and engaging Ukrainian libraries in international projects, emphasizing that such practices accelerate the transformation of scientific communication and ensure the competitiveness of national library institutions.

Medvedieva and Shendryk (2020) underline in their monographic study that libraries are entrusted with an essential role in modern international information exchange, which is aimed at facilitating communication and the circulation of information across borders. This role guarantees the right of access to information, equitable participation in global information flows, the use of international infrastructures in the national interest, and the consolidation of intellectual resources from different countries to foster the progressive development of civilization.

Symonenko, Harahulia, and Konoval (2024) examine the potential of library information resources and services for international integration, emphasizing that innovative practices and participation in global knowledge networks substantially expand the role of Ukrainian libraries in the international arena. Complementing this perspective, Zagorodny et al. (2025) in a collective study on the "Implementation of European principles of Open Science in the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine" demonstrate that Open Science serves as a strategic integration mechanism, aligning Ukrainian research and library practices with European standards and promoting broader participation in global knowledge infrastructures.

According to Serbin (2025), key factors contributing to the deepening of international cooperation between the Ukrainian library community and foreign partners include institutional membership in international professional organizations, dissemination of global policy documents, engagement in the working groups of international bodies, expansion of joint projects, collaborative research, and the growing leadership of Ukrainian national libraries and professional associations in international structures.

Demianiuk, Matviychuk, and Horieva (2024) examine the scientific and sociocultural activities of VNU, highlighting how the library has redefined its international communication strategies under crisis conditions. Their findings emphasize the institution's resilience and its active engagement in global scholarly and cultural exchanges.

While Ukrainian scholarship has often centred on the European dimension of integration, this article extends the analysis to encompass both European and transatlantic integration directions, using the case of VNU to explore strategic pathways of global engagement.

The objective of the article is to explore the international integration of V. I. Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine during 2022–2025, emphasizing how the institution adapted its strategies and forms of international cooperation in response to globalization challenges, digital transformation, and the conditions of martial law in Ukraine.

Methods

The study applies a systemic and structural-functional approach, which made it possible to examine VNU's international integration as a complex process and to reveal its main components. General scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization were used to identify the key integration vectors and summarize their influence on the library's development. A qualitative case study of VNU's international activities during 2022–2025 was conducted on the basis of institutional documents, annual reports, international agreements, and relevant scholarly works, which enabled an in-depth understanding of how the Library adapted its international cooperation strategies under martial law.

Results and Discussion

International library cooperation in all its directions, forms, and aspects constitutes an essential component of Ukraine's public diplomacy. In the context of current global challenges caused by geopolitical instability and technological transformations, the importance of international engagement in the library and information sphere has significantly increased. The intensification of integration processes, which have become a dominant trend in global societal development, exerts a considerable impact on Ukraine's library and information sector. This is reflected in the strengthening of international ties between Ukrainian libraries and cultural, educational, and research institutions in various countries and continents. As Shemaieva (2024, p. 220) observes, "international interaction is a key mechanism that unites knowledge and efforts, creating a shared basis for generating new ideas for the development of the library and information field".

International library cooperation has acquired particular significance and a new substantive dimension in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It functions not only as a tool of professional communication but also as a factor ensuring the resilience of library and information institutions and consolidating the global professional community in protecting and preserving Ukraine's cultural heritage, which faces direct threats of destruction. The ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war has significantly altered the priorities of VNU, shifting its focus toward security and the safeguarding of documentary heritage, yet this shift has not undermined the library's strategic commitment to international cooperation and professional engagement. According to VNU experts, the institution has prioritized such essential tasks as "the preservation of collections and electronic resources, the digitization of the most valuable parts of the holdings, ensuring information accessibility during emergencies, as well as the archiving and proper conservation of the library's resources" (Dubrovina, Kovtaniuk, Lobuzina, & Demianiuk, 2024, p. 641).

Despite the challenges imposed by the war, this period has served as a catalyst for expanding VNU's partnerships and securing support from the international library community, thereby reinforcing its resilience. As Ukraine's Consul General in Toronto O. Nikolenko emphasized, "the war, although it has brought immense suffering, has also created opportunities for deeper integration into the international library space, for actively studying the best Western practices, and for raising national standards" (Vasylenko & Demianiuk, 2024, p. 43).

The period from 2022 to 2025 represents a particularly challenging stage for VNU, as the institution has continued to operate in difficult wartime conditions. In such circumstances, the Library has pursued new strategies for institutional sustainability while safeguarding its documentary heritage and maintaining scientific communication (Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, n.d.). A key priority has been the intensification of international engagement, which has

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defined the direction of its subsequent initiatives. The Library has focused its efforts on strengthening and expanding partnerships, reinforcing professional communication with leading international organizations, foreign library and information institutions, and the diplomatic corps. As Director General Lyubov Dubrovina stated, “an urgent task of librarianship and library science is to enhance integration processes into the global research environment across all areas of library and information activity, and to foster permanent professional communication in the global scientific and cultural space. This will ensure the unrestricted exchange of information, cultural, and scientific achievements on the international level” (Dubrovina, 2025, p. 23).

Importantly, VNLU has strengthened its participation in major international library organizations, with its staff involved in selected working groups. These include the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL), the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL), the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL), the Union Académique Internationale (UAI), the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM), the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), the UN Depository Library Programme, UNESCO, and the Fulbright Academic Exchange Programme. Engagement in these platforms has expanded inter-institutional cooperation, enriched VNLU’s library and information activities, provided access to advanced practices, and fostered professional exchange and communication within the global library community.

It is worth noting that in the period 2022–2025, VNLU significantly expanded its network of international partnerships by concluding cooperation agreements and memoranda with institutions from Azerbaijan, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Moldova, Poland, and the United States. An analysis of the contractual and legal framework of international cooperation in this period reveals two dominant geopolitical vectors in its external relations strategy, namely the European and the transatlantic. These instruments reflect the Library’s commitment to fostering scientific cooperation and cultural diplomacy along both vectors, underscoring its orientation toward deeper integration into the global scientific and information landscape.

Throughout 2022–2025, VNLU hosted events that showed a steady increase in foreign participation. Attendees included representatives of the diplomatic corps, leading library and information institutions from Europe, North America, and Australia, as well as international organizations such as the United Nations, CENL and CDNL (Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, 2025a; Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, 2025b). This tendency was particularly evident in the growing number of international contributors at the Library’s annual scientific conference held each October. These developments confirm the growing recognition of VNLU in the global professional community and illustrate its integration into the international scientific and information space.

During this period, VNLU consistently demonstrated openness to intercultural dialogue, international scientific communication, and partnerships based on mutual respect. The Library acted as an initiator, coordinator, or co-organizer of numerous international cultural and academic events that reaffirmed its role in strengthening cultural diplomacy. These diverse international engagements may be broadly classified into the following principal typological dimensions: cultural initiatives, exhibition activities, and scholarly projects, which were implemented either independently by VNLU or in co-organisation with foreign library institutions or the diplomatic corps, as well as a distinct category of diplomatic activities. Such a typological framing elucidates the specific contribution of each direction: cultural initiatives strengthened VNLU’s role as a custodian of documentary and intellectual heritage and advanced Ukraine’s cultural diplomacy; exhibition activities enhanced the visibility and interpretive accessibility of the Library’s extensive collections and contributed to their international promotion; and scholarly projects facilitated

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VNU's integration into the global research landscape and supported the development of its intellectual potential. Diplomatic activities, including the hosting of foreign delegations and the organisation of official receptions, further reinforced VNU's function as an institution engaged in international dialogue and public diplomacy. Cooperation with diplomatic institutions also provided essential institutional support and shaped the Library's international profile as a credible and reliable partner, a factor of particular significance in the context of ongoing wartime challenges.

Among the most significant exhibition initiatives was the preparation of the joint exhibition "Splendour and Knowledge: The Royal Library of Stanisław August," developed in cooperation with Polish colleagues from the Royal Castle in Warsaw and the National Library of Poland, and based on rare editions and materials preserved in VNU's holdings. A two-volume catalogue documenting these materials was prepared and published for the exhibition. Although originally scheduled for 2022 in Warsaw, the exhibition was postponed until the end of hostilities due to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in 2022 and the imperative to ensure the safety and preservation of heritage collections. In 2023, exhibition activities advanced further through the launch of the pilot project "Polish Shelf in Ukraine", initiated by the governments of Poland and Ukraine and resulting in the establishment of a permanent collection of Polish publications at VNU. In 2024, the exhibition strand expanded to include the online exhibition "70th Anniversary of Ukraine in UNESCO: UNESCO Publications from the UN Depository Library at VNU", the digital mobile exhibition "Franz Kafka: A Man Beyond Time", the presentation of the unique "Mazepa Gospel" (1708, Arabic, Aleppo) at the international exhibition "Crossroads: 1000 Years of Shared History of Sweden and Ukraine", organised by the Swedish Army Museum, the Swedish National Archives, and the National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War. In 2025, the exhibition activities continued, and an important milestone was the signing of an international museum loan agreement with the Ukrainian Museum in New York, which enabled the display of rare publications from the VNU holdings at the exhibition "Tatlin: Kyiv" in New York.

While the exhibition activities illustrated the Library's growing international presence, its cultural initiatives also developed substantially during this period. In 2024, these included the international round table "The Reception of Franz Kafka's Works in Library Collections", dedicated to the centenary of the writer's death. In 2025, cultural cooperation broadened further through the presentation of "Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Selected Prose", marking the 150th anniversary of the Austrian author; the cultural and artistic event "Austrian Drama on the Stage of Ukrainian Theatres" at the Kyiv Academic Theatre "Koleso"; and the presentation of the poetry collection "Poesie der Sinnlichkeit" by Liza Svitlana Buder. Collectively, these initiatives were carried out in cooperation with the Austrian diplomatic corps, whose involvement was instrumental in advancing Ukrainian and Austrian cultural relations. In 2025, the Library also expanded its cultural work through the opening of the "Hungarian Literature Corner", implemented with the support of the Embassy of Hungary in Ukraine and carried out within the framework of the official visit of representatives of the National Széchényi Library to VNU.

Some major projects of this period had a mixed character, combining cultural, scholarly, and diplomatic components. In 2023, a notable initiative was the international project dedicated to the Welsh journalist Gareth Jones, implemented with the support of the Government of Wales and supplemented by philanthropic contributions from Canada and the United States. The initiative included the unveiling of a memorial plaque, the transfer of a digital copy of his archive to the Library, and the round table "Gareth Jones: The Figure of a Journalist in the Study of the Holodomor in Ukraine" (Vernadskyi National Library of Ukraine, 2024). In 2025, this category of mixed initiatives was further expanded through the international panel discussion "The

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Historical Figure of Wilhelm von Habsburg (Vasyl Vyshyvanyi) in the Context of Ukrainian and Austrian Relations" (marking the 130th anniversary of his birth), which brought together scholars, diplomats, and cultural practitioners to explore the historical and cultural dimensions of Ukrainian and Austrian relations.

In parallel with these culturally and diplomatically significant initiatives, VNLU also strengthened its position in the domain of international scholarly cooperation, advancing a range of international research initiatives. A key achievement in 2024 was VNLU's joining of the project "PSF Country: Support to Ukraine on Research Infrastructure Policy" (Horizon Europe Policy Support Facility), aimed at strengthening research infrastructure, promoting open science, and embedding Ukraine's research environment into the global ecosystem (Zagorodny et al., 2025). At the end of 2024, VNLU expanded its international scholarly cooperation through the launch of two further projects: the preparation of a joint digital resource of the archives of the prominent Jewish cultural figure S. A. An-sky, implemented in partnership with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York, USA), and the digitization and digital restoration of audio recordings from 500 shellac gramophone records preserved at VNLU, carried out under a trilateral agreement with the German-Ukrainian Society for Economy and Science e.V. and the Institute for Information Recording Problems of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

In 2025, the Library applied to participate in the project "Open GLAM in Ukraine: Opening up and Bringing Ukraine's Cultural Heritage to the Wikimedia Platforms" (Swedish Ukrainian Cooperation Institute), aimed at digitizing unique documentary heritage and integrating it into Wikimedia resources to enhance global access and visibility. In the same year, a project was implemented with the support of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) to provide VNLU with essential publishing equipment. This contribution was instrumental in ensuring the stable functioning of the Library's Scientific Publishing Department, enabling the continuity of its scholarly publishing activities and supporting the dissemination of academic output across the institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.

In 2025, VNLU further expanded its international scholarly cooperation through the co-organisation of an online seminar of the Slavonic and Eastern European Music Study Group (SEEM), which strengthened professional exchange within the European research community in the field of musicology. Engagement along the transatlantic vector was reflected in VNLU's participation in the consultative process initiated by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library to establish the "United Nations Charter Knowledge Library Network", an initiative aimed at enhancing institutional cooperation, improving access to knowledge, safeguarding information integrity, and integrating libraries into the global information ecosystem. Earlier, in 2023, VNLU, in collaboration with the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Museum and Library in Stamford (USA), published the scholarly volume "Unknown Scientific Works of Mykhailo Kushnir in the Holdings of the Ukrainian Museum and Library in Stamford (USA)", thereby contributing to the preservation and dissemination of Ukrainian intellectual heritage abroad. In 2025, the Library also published a thematic issue of the scholarly journal "Bibliotchnyi Visnyk" titled "Ukraine and Austria: Science, Education, and Culture in the Contemporary Information Space", which further reinforced VNLU's role as a platform for international academic dialogue.

To present a more comprehensive picture of VNLU's integration vectors, it is essential to analyse additional aspects of international cooperation. A particularly important component is the international book exchange, which provides access to foreign academic, educational, and cultural resources, strengthens institutional partnerships, and enriches library collections with unique materials. As of early 2025, VNLU maintained exchange relations with 514 partner institutions in 57 countries. In 2024, the largest inflow of literature, including books and periodicals, came from

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the United States (1325 items), Poland (648), Germany (315), the Republic of Korea (177), the Czech Republic (168), and Japan (149). In total, 4214 foreign publications were received through the exchange program, compared with 3963 in 2022 and 3027 in 2023. This pattern underscores the multidimensional character of VNLU's integration strategy, with a clear predominance of transatlantic and European orientations complemented by increasing engagement with Asia, represented primarily by Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Conclusions

The study indicates that, under conditions of geopolitical instability and national threats, the international dimension of VNLU's activities gained particular importance for strengthening institutional resilience and enhancing the Library's standing within the global library community. The analysis revealed the predominance of the European and transatlantic vectors in the Library's integration processes, which foster intercultural dialogue, international collaboration, professional partnerships, and the preservation of cultural heritage. These vectors reinforce VNLU's institutional capacity and elevate its international agency within the global information space, confirming its ability to operate effectively despite the constraints of wartime conditions. Despite the disruptions caused by Russia's full-scale invasion, VNLU demonstrated adaptability and resilience, establishing a solid foundation for continued engagement with international partners, intensified professional exchange, expanded cooperation networks, and deeper integration into the global knowledge ecosystem.

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Основні вектори міжнародної інтеграції Національної бібліотеки України імені В. І. Вернадського в умовах воєнного стану

Мета. Дослідити основні вектори міжнародної інтеграції Національної бібліотеки України імені В. І. Вернадського (НБУВ) у 2022–2025 рр. в умовах воєнного стану. **Методика.** Дослідження ґрунтуються на системному та структурно-функціональному підході з використанням загальнонаукових методів аналізу, синтезу й узагальнення. Застосовано метод кейс-стаді для виявлення особливостей адаптації міжнародної діяльності бібліотеки в окреслений період. **Результати.** Встановлено, що в умовах геополітичної нестабільності та національних загроз міжнародний складник діяльності Національної бібліотеки України імені В. І. Вернадського набув стратегічного значення для посилення стійкості та позиціонування бібліотеки як потужної інституції серед міжнародної бібліотечної спільноти. Європейський та трансатлантичний вектори

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були визначені як домінуючі в інтеграційних процесах бібліотеки, що сприяло посиленню міжкультурного діалогу, зміцненню професійних партнерських відносин і збереженню культурної спадщини. **Висновки.** Інтеграційні процеси Національної бібліотеки України імені В. І. Вернадського визначаються домінуванням європейського та трансатлантичного векторів, які посилюють інституційну спроможність бібліотеки та її міжнародну суб'єктність у глобальному інформаційному просторі.

Ключові слова: міжнародна діяльність; Національна бібліотека України імені В. І. Вернадського; інтеграція; інституційна суб'єктність; трансатлантичний вектор; європейський вектор; міжнародний бібліотечний простір

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