



Internationalisation Strategy of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek

2020-2025

Introduction

The Internationalisation Strategy of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek serves to outline strategic directions of international outreach and to determine goals for the Academy's efforts to establish and put to use its international contacts. It rests on the overall mission of the Academy as presented in the Charter of the OSCE Academy. And it concludes with an implementation plan to achieve those goals.

Established with the goal to work for the benefit of the whole Central Asian region, the Academy today operates in a truly globalised world. At the same time, it faces new challenges in form of regional boundaries in studies and research and a severe lack of connectivity of the whole Central Asian higher educational area. The OSCE Academy therefore prioritizes the development of a strategic approach to internationalise all of its core activities. With English language as the language of instruction for the MA Programmes and with English and Russian as the preferred languages to publish the results of its research and dialogue activities, the Academy attracts an increasing number of stakeholders, including new partner institutions and universities interested in the region. A growing number of researchers studying the region and young prospective minds of wider Central Asia, who wish to receive a degree of international standard without leaving the region, discover the Academy as their primary host institution.

This Strategy will allow to structure the internationalization process and to ensure that all departments of the Academy are engaged in it.

Background & Rationale

Since its foundation the OSCE Academy has established a wide network of partner institutions – in most cases think tanks and research institutes – inside Central Asia, in Europe and across the wider OSCE area. Most often these contacts reflect the support the Academy receives from donors among the participating States of the OSCE. The partners provide the OSCE Academy with intellectual input and often serve as hosting institutions for the students of its two MA programmes while they conduct their internships, a mandatory part of the studies programme.

This exchange has been quite successful yet also unidirectional (Academy to partners) and limited to internships in institutions, not encompassing academic or study exchange. The OSCE Academy, supported and tasked by its Board of Trustees during regular meetings on 1 November 2017, 5 June 2018 and 17 October 2018, has set the goal to develop exchange

opportunities for the students as well as faculty and staff and to that end seeks to build up cooperation with universities within the wider OSCE area. This step towards internationalization of its study programmes and research and dialogue activities is a first towards the mid-to-long term goal to establish the Academy as an internationally recognized graduate institute that offers double or joint degree programmes and, prospectively, a PhD programme.

The OSCE Academy's strategy to internationalise its study programmes stems, second, from the intrinsic need to overcome regional barriers in studying and conducting research. Comprising students from all Central Asian countries and Afghanistan and Mongolia, both Master programmes follow a concentration on issues and questions directly related to processes of transformation and development in the wider region of Eurasia. The influx of visiting professors from European partner institutions like the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) helps to mitigate against the narrowing of perspectives. And yet the need for the Academy's students as well as its faculty and affiliated researchers to be exposed to comparative views, to learn approaches and models new to debates on Central Asia, and to experience diverse cultural settings, is ever more pressing when cultural and political conditions threaten to re-essentialise public discourse and, implicitly, the academic debate. Conducting research and organizing scholarly exchange become challenging enterprises in such an environment.

Development Goal of the OSCE Academy

The OSCE Academy operates as a full-fledged graduate institute, offering multiple graduate programmes (EQF levels 6-8) supported by, and connected to, diverse research projects that signify the Academy's leading role in the study of regional processes of political and social transformation and development. The Academy serves further as a platform for enhanced dialogue in between the different audiences of academia and policy-making, instilling new ideas and debates with multiple meeting and congress formats and with publication series in English as well as Russian and various local languages. The Academy expands its network of partnerships to act as a true institution of the OSCE and its participating States, engaging with the European Education Area and other international initiatives in higher education, while intensifying its local and regional roots in furthering collaboration with partners in the wider region of Central Asia.

Strategic Objectives

Based on the Academy's 18 years of experience and its Development Goal, the following Strategic Objectives have been identified:

1. Further reinforce its standing **as a leading regional post-graduate institution** with international recognition:
 - a. Double degree post-graduate education
 - b. International Accreditation
 - c. PhD programme

2. Increase the scope of **research of international standard and significance** and its visibility, in-house and by means of collaboration with partner institutions
3. Maintain and develop a **vast network** of international and regional contacts to:
 - a. form the base for its **international exchange** activities and multilateral as well as bilateral collaborations
 - b. increase its engagement with **funding** opportunities provided by different **EU** and other international programmes to further engage into student and faculty exchange and into research projects
 - c. secure a broad offer of **internship places** for students of its educational programmes
 - d. enhance the role of an implementation partner based in Central Asia for **professional and capacity-building training** programmes
4. **Develop into a host institution** for participants in various exchange and visiting mobilities and establishes itself as a **leading partner** in educational, training and research activities conducted in the wider region of Central Asia.