Communication Strategy of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek for 2025[1]

This Communication Strategy is intended as a tool to support the overall goals of the OSCE Academy as they are specified in the mission statement in the institute's founding document. The Strategy addresses multiple audiences, including prospective and current students, alumni, staff, faculty, the academic community, the Board of Trustees, donors and the main partners of the OSCE Academy.

The Mission of the OSCE Academy

The mission of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek is to promote regional cooperation, conflict prevention, and good governance in Central Asia, by offering undergraduate, graduate education, research, professional training, and intellectual exchange. The Academy pursues its mission through a range of activities, including:
- providing expert teaching and educational programmes in politics and security, economic governance and development, human rights and sustainability, economics, conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, journalism, mass media development, human rights, gender, youth, climate change;
- conducting demand-driven trainings and practice-oriented research on relevant Central Asian topics aimed at local, national and regional development and security-building;
- supporting publication, information exchange, networking and scholarly cooperation among OSCE centres and offices in Central Asia, the OSCE Secretariat, Central Asian academic institutions and their international partner organizations;
- establishing and developing a regional network of professionals and researchers.

Communication goals

All communication from the OSCE Academy should reflect and promote its core values: quality education and capacity-building, relevant research and effective dialogue.

The Academy should be an acknowledged, credible provider of education, knowledge and expertise in the fields of politics and security, conflict management and conflict resolution, economic governance and development, economics, human rights and sustainability. The communication activities of the Academy should be a tool for directly supporting and/or enabling its mission and related core activities. Following this rationale, the Academy pursues the following strategic communication goals:

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[1] The initial communication strategy draft has been developed by a team made up of OSCE Academy representatives in cooperation with colleagues from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in 2016-2017, and is based on preliminary consultations with NUPI's communication expert group followed by an extensive internal and external analysis of the current situation (audiences, channels, tools and measures used) and includes a plan for the improvement of both the internal and external communication tools. The first version of the Communication Strategy was adopted in July 2016.

- to sustain its reputation and high visibility as a leading institution of education and research in the region;
- to ensure the relevance of educational programmes, professional training and research by receipt of regular feedback from its target groups, in turn necessitating an ongoing strategic approach to communication with prospective/current students and alumni as well as affiliated partners in the academic and scholarly communities;
- to support and facilitate the role of the Academy as a dialogue platform, meeting place, and policy recommendations provider.

Target groups and communication channels

In order to achieve its goals, the Academy should maximize the effectiveness of measures employed. The clear identification of targets and communication vehicles is an important step in making the measures effective and primary marketing recruitment tools.

Communication channels	Type of content/Technical characteristics/Limitations	Target groups
OSCE Academy **Website**	All information related to the OSCE Academy and its activities, also for formal referencing	Donors, partners, prospective students and trainees, prospective fellows and instructors, current students, alumni, staff, the general public
Global Camus Central Asia **Website**	All information related to Global Campus Central Asia (including MAHRS Programme)	Donors, partners, prospective students, prospective fellows and instructors, current students, alumni, staff, the general public
Mailing lists	News, newsletter, calls and announcements, reports, success stories	Donors, partners, staff, alumni, fellows, students
Facebook	• Social and everyday life of the Academy/Photos and short videos with short text • Calls and announcements for young people (in stories) • Calls for applications and announcements may be shared in video format (engaging students) with a link to a new FB group (below) • Selected news content will prioritize demonstrating values rather than simply focusing on the event itself	Prospective students, current students, donors, partners, faculty and staff, alumni, parents and families
Facebook group "OSCE Academy Opportunities"	New Facebook group dedicated only for calls, announcements and vacancies	Prospective students, current students, faculty, fellows, instructors, experts
OSCE Academy Instagram	Calls and announcements for young people (in stories) Calls for applications, announcements and publications may be shared in video format (engaging students / trainers / authors) Selected news content will prioritize demonstrating values rather than simply focusing on the event itself using youth-friendly language	Prospective students, current students, alumni, parents and families

Global Campus Central Asia **Instagram**	Interactive and informative content related to MAHRS Programme & generally GC Ca activities, led by MAHRS students.	Prospective students, current students, alumni, parents and families
LinkedIn	Calls, selected news, announcements, vacancies, publications	Partners, alumni, prospective trainers, fellows, instructors and experts
Twitter	News, calls for applications, teaching fellowships, vacancy announcements, publications	Donors and Partners, OSCE institutions, regional experts, fellows
Telegram	News, calls for applications, vacancy announcements, publications, other opportunities (from partner institutions)	Prospective students, training participants, and fellows
YouTube	Promotional videos, short interviews with experts and trainers, students, videos of lectures/Channel in process of development, more quality contents needed	Partners, potential students and trainees, prospective fellows and instructors, current students, alumni, staff

Objectives for 2025:

General:

- Determine ways to improve process/functionality of the social networks to market Academy.
- Continue to use social media platforms to deliver content and respond to the community.
- Expand the number of recipients of newsletter/emails.
- Collaborate with schools to establish a trusted channel of communication with parents of high-school applicants.

Detailed:

Objectives (O)/ Desired results (R)	Status Quo as of the beginning of 2025	Measures and channels	Target groups
O: Enhance recognition (visibility) of the Academy as education/ research/ network institution among target groups **R: Brand recognition, increased number of visitors; higher connectivity and involvement**	1. Website to be updated to improve accessibility (if the budget allows); 2. Additional page in the Kyrgyz language on the website (if the budget allows); 3. Some events are held in a hybrid format, attracting more participants to public events; 4. Lacking wide recognition among experienced teaching fellows; 5. YouTube Channel has 4 videos produced in 2024 (of roundtable and students). Number of subscribers increased from 305 to 326. 6. Academy is advertised through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Telegram, Employment.kg,	1. Visibility in the Central Asian media. Interview, radio and television programmes. (for accreditation) 2. Further development of Social Media channels 3. Increase students', alumni and fellows' participation in the process of creating content 4. Keep using corporate identity, updating the photos 5. Further develop Instagram and put an emphasis on LinkedIn as the number of followers has been lately increasing 5.1. Short videos (reels) \ interactive stories with aesthetic content/storytelling 6. Continue promoting re-established YouTube channel and upload podcasts of major events public 7. Promote OSCE Academy on Academic Platforms like Google Scholar, Academia.edu, Research Gate via Researchers, who should register and upload their publication with affiliation to the the Academy 8. Open a Threads (similar to X previously Twitter) account and lead it in parallel with Instagram 9. Flexibility in using local trends to create appealing content for the youth (e.g. Instagram, Threads and partially Facebook) and professional layout for LinkedIn and X.	Regional governments and institution donors, partners, potential students and trainees, potential fellows and instructors, current students, alumni, staff

	grants.kz and donors.kg 7. To increase the visibility series of videos about the OSCE Academy with its students were produced in collaboration with the OSCE POiB. **Total number of subscribers in Social Media is 48613 people.**		
O: Increase the outreach for advertising the educational programmes of the Academy **R: Increased number and quality of applications received to various educational programmes**	1. The advertisement of the BA and MA programmes is done through several information sources around the region: social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Telegram, grants.kz); 2. Virtual info sessions were held every week and online presentations at partner universities in KZ, KG, UZ, MN by Admission office; 3. The OSCE FO also supported the dissemination of the Call; 4. Overall number of applications from Central Asian countries is lower due to various reasons (political, travel restrictions, visa matters, availability of numerous other	Increase visibility in the Central Asian media and education platforms. Interviews, articles, podcasts about educational programmes admission 1. Prepare and disseminate videos, call text and presentation, information package to alumni members and ask them to spread this information via their networks throughout the academic year 2. Request alumni members to participate in academic events to represent the Academy and/or support admission staff 3. Use personal and partner networks to disseminate information about the Academy and its activities through mailing lists, social media and participation in regional and international events representing the Academy 4. Increase budget for visibility in particular for participation in educational/career fairs in the region, ads on social media 5. Make standard Academy presentation at the beginning of each training programme 6. Organize joint events and student visits for local and regional universities and schools (organizing simulation games, quiz nights or student visits) 7. Collect email addresses in a database and use them for mailing lists.	Prospective M students and prospective trainees

	opportunities, change in trend study-work)		
O: To expand networks that are important for / support the Academy (experts, fellows, donors, alumni, institutions, others) R: Enhanced support by means of growing partnerships, exchange activities	1. The Academy is expanding its partnership networks and concluded Agreements with 12 universities and institutions. 2. Alumni Survey is conducted regularly and Alumni Database is updated.	1. Inform partner institutions about the Academy's event to attract their expert networks. 2. Expand the list of institutions from which to recruit Academy faculty 3. Establish contacts with relevant departments at universities worldwide 4. Regularly conduct Alumni Survey and update Alumni Database	Experts, fellow supporters, alumni, institutions
O: To improve the dissemination of Academy publications and research results using all available channels R: Increased visibility of research activity at Academy; higher impact on regional security and development discourse, as well as on climate change and China's role in CA.	1. Publications are disseminated through the Academy's main channels and relevant publications translated into Russian language. 2. Policy briefs, Research papers *Academy Papers* are published regularly. Two Springer publications were published in 2024.	1. Increase sharing and demand for the Academy's publications via hook-up introduction targeted and broad distribution 2. Post on Facebook etc. link to Academy publications with updates (read more, see more policy) with every new publication 3. Invite authors to discuss policy briefs with wider audience, e.g. through public lectures 4. Maintain publications databases and resources available online 5. Translate relevant publications into Russian and Kyrgyz 6. Brief (up to one minute) expert interviews including summary of policy briefs or info cards; keep main question or key phrase onscreen for first five seconds 7. Collaborate with partner institutions and/or independent researchers on joint research projects	Experts, policy makers, academic community, donors and partners
O: To improve attractiveness of	Most of the events were held in hybrid format. More events	1. Maintain current activity levels as regards conferences, trainings, public lectures, workshops, roundtables etc.	Institutions, experts, state representative

the Academy as a dialogue platform R: Increased number of platform events; increased number of visitors to dialogue activities	were organized with student participation and partners, like UDHR Anniversary day or IWD events. Additionally, joint event with Central Asia Barometer and University of Trento were conducted.	3. Regularly update mailing list with contacts of Bishkek-based institutions and universities and send targeted announcements for public events.	scholars, IOs, general public
O: To establish good relations with regional governments R: Increased exchange with various government bodies; increased number of cooperation with government bodies	1. Academy has existing Agreements with the Investment Agency in KR, Ministry of Economy of KR, and Agreement with the Kazakh MFA. 2. Good relations established with the Ministry of Education of KR and MFA of KR. 3. Representatives of the Embassies in KR are regularly invited to open events.	1. Increase participation of Academy's students, alumni, fellows and staff in regional conferences and events 2. Invite governmental official and high-level experts to Academy events	Regional governments, embassies
O: To improve internal information flow at the Academy R: Staff members timely and sufficiently informed about relevant developments	1. All meetings are protocoled. Bilateral meetings are held by the Management with the departments and monthly a general meeting with heads of all departments.	1. Organize team-building activities for staff (joint social events) 2. Ensure that relevant staff members are informed about the Academy activities related to their duties via intranet and on-time dissemination of the meeting protocols 3. Develop general calendar of activities	Staff members

O: Establish/improve corporate spirit/team sense among Academy staff and students R: Increased work-output by each staff member and by the team	1. Celebrate Nooruz and a New Year with students 2. Student trips to the mountains 3. Staff celebration of the large holidays internally IO organized a meeting with students and shared about the Academy's activities and alumni opportunities.	1. Organize Nooruz celebration, New year parties, retreats, trips to the mountains, etc. 2. Support participation of staff members and fellows in conferences, workshops and trainings, in-house, and outside the Academy 3. Organize staff retreats	Staff members students, fellows

Appendix I

Findings and analysis

Internal

The activities of the OSCE Academy depend on high-quality internal communications. The Academy should ensure good internal information and knowledge sharing, and enhancing the institutional memory and general awareness of the activities of Academy programmes among staff, students and faculty, in order to maintain its work now and in the foreseeable future. A main tool for improved internal communications and coordination is the professional usage of the joint calendar system by all staff members.

Team-building activities such as joint trainings, meetings and retreats are also important for a good working atmosphere, the internal relations and improved internal communications. It may also be relevant to invest in further professional training for staff, to keep staff-members updated in their professional fields and also balance the Academy's desire to retain staff and avoid strictly performance-based personnel decisions.

Staff-members indicated that they receive information mainly from staff meetings, and through personal communications, including e-mail exchange and the information desk. Few staff-members mentioned the Academy website, the monthly newsletters, Google calendar or the Academy's Facebook/Instagram page.

External

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was used to understand the position of the Academy in terms of the strategy used so far, its weaknesses and opportunities for development. The findings showed that the OSCE Academy is a well-established institution with

more than 20 years of regional presence, supported by a range of donor countries and institutions. It has become a respected and prestigious institution in the region and beyond. Financially the Academy is supported by several donor countries and institutions: this can be considered as a strength but also as a threat, as the Academy is vulnerable to external changes and donor priorities. (Full SWOT can be found below.)

SWOT

Strengths

- a well-established institution with more than twenty years of regional presence;
- a respected and prestigious institution in the region and beyond;
- a unique institution with very competitive Western-standard programmes;
- an institution providing free education and scholarships for students: a comparative advantage in the region;
- supported by a range of donor countries and institutions;
- as a regional institution, the Academy attracts international and regional experts and fellows;
- has a small but professional and highly motivated and effective international team;
- well-equipped (library with up-to-date collections in political science, economics, development, etc., as well as many electronic and online resources and databases updated regularly in line with the needs of the students and instructors); these resources are also distance-accessible to alumni, students and instructors alike;
- the Academy's Alumni Network functions effectively, with regular alumni conferences and reunions, the alumni survey, the alumni newsletter, and the annual alumni journal *SalamAlum*.

Weaknesses

- As a largely grant-dependent institution, the Academy is inherently not self-sustaining. It is necessary to diversify the extra-budgetary funding in order to avoid the potential volatility stemming from changing priorities of main donors. Though within the last years this is improving, but with some limitations on the usage of funds on specific activities or target groups.
- There has been a consistent relatively low number of applications from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, for various reasons: in Kazakhstan, young people have a wide range of educational opportunities and choices available; in Turkmenistan the isolation of regime and society do not allow for active advertisement. Given the Academy's mission to serve the Central Asian region, it is important to retain relevance in *all* states of the region.
- There is room for improvement of internal communications within the Academy, especially as regards general awareness about the activities of the Academy's programmes among staff, students and alumni. During the last year a positive shift in this direction was made.

Opportunities

- Well-established relations with many international organizations and educational research institutions that can be a good source of new experts and fellows;
- updated curriculum of its MA Programmes, with the necessary changes to meet the requirements of a high-quality programme; quality of the three MA programmes certified by independent accreditation agencies with highest remarks; Academy education considered new standard in Kyrgyzstan
- by diversifying its donor pool, the Academy can achieve a more sustainable position and ensure financial support for current and future projects;
- developing the research component by increasing the number of policy briefs and other publication series produced annually. A more focused policy on this component will contribute greatly to raising awareness about the Academy internationally;
- political developments in the wider region may entail some opportunities. Kyrgyz-Tajik reconciliation offers opportunities to reach out to this neighbour and widen the regional network of institutional partners;
- COVID-19 caused lockdowns pushed toward digitalisation of the MA Programmes and other activities of the Academy, which open new horizons for future activities that have to be explored further.

Threats

Some key threats come from the changing international environment. The political tensions might affect the Academy's stand, as the OSCE is a consensus-based organization and Academy-related issues also need to receive the overall consensus of all pS.

- low high-quality application rates from some Central Asian states may be further exacerbated by political developments in these countries. There are no indications that the OSCE and Western organizations are set to receive a warmer welcome from governments in the region;
- decline in number of applications from Central Asian countries for MA and the training programmes; not many applications from Mongolia so far;
- politics in the Kyrgyz Republic is seen as an indirect threat to the Academy and its activities;
- the situation between Russia and Ukraine seems to impact some of activities of the Academy.