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REGIONAL INFODAY OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MISSION CONFERENCE ON “ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION”, 21-22.05.2026

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Abstract. This article presents the major outcomes, recommendations and impact of the Regional Information Day of the Erasmus+ Programme and the Technical Assistance Mission (TAM) Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education, held in Astana on 21-22 May 2026, the event that brought together representatives of higher education institutions, policymakers, researchers, and international experts from across the region to discuss opportunities for academic cooperation under Erasmus+ and the transformative role of AI in teaching, learning, research, and university governance.

Keywords: Erasmus+, AI, higher education, competitive project proposals, international and regional partnerships, reforms, exchange of best practices and experience, networking.

On 21-22 May 2026, the Erasmus+ Regional Information Day and the TAM Conference “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education” were held in Astana at Seifullin University. The event was organized by the National Erasmus+ Office in Kazakhstan with the support of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

The event served as the largest regional platform for discussing higher education development, international cooperation, and the integration of AI technologies into higher education. It brought together more than 300 representatives of ministries, universities, National Erasmus+ Offices, researchers, and members of the Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) teams from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Among the participants were representatives of 57 higher education institutions from 17 cities across Kazakhstan, as well as 14 universities from 8 cities in Central Asian countries. The event also welcomed experts from the European Union, including:

- Dominguez Parrado Maria Sol, Project Officer, EACEA
- Matteo Testa, Project Manager-Senior Credential Evaluator, CIMEA Naric Italia
- Martin Ebner, Head of the Service Department Educational Technology at Graz University of Technology, Austria (online)

The participants were welcomed by Sayasat Nurbek, Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who set the strategic tone and overall context for the event. In his address, he highlighted the key challenges and opportunities arising from the rapid advancement of AI for higher education systems and emphasized the importance of preparing a new generation of professionals for the digital economy.



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H. E. Aleska Simkić, Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan, stressed the importance of further strengthening cooperation between the European Union and the countries of Central Asia. She underscored the significant role of the Erasmus+ Programme in fostering international partnerships, promoting academic mobility, and strengthening connections between people and nations.

The participants and guests were also welcomed by Kanat Tireuov, Chairman of the Board and Rector of Seifullin University. In his remarks, he highlighted the importance of hosting the event for the region and acknowledged the contribution of the Erasmus+ Programme to the university's internationalization, the development of international cooperation, and the enhancement of educational quality.

Welcome addresses were also delivered by representatives of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, reflecting the high level of regional cooperation and the strong commitment of Central Asian countries to the joint development of a common higher education space.

The programme was structured around two thematic pillars. The first day focused on the Erasmus+ Programme and its contribution to the modernization of higher education in Central Asia, as well as to the development of international partnerships. The second day was dedicated to the integration of AI into teaching and learning processes and university governance.

Throughout the two-day event, an exhibition of Erasmus+ projects and AI-related initiatives was on display. 23 universities from Kazakhstan showcased their achievements, presenting successful examples of international project implementation and innovative AI-based solutions.

A special highlight of the programme was a study visit to Astana IT University for representatives from Central Asia and the European Union. During the visit, participants were introduced to the university's latest developments and innovations in the fields of AI and digital technologies.

One of the key outcomes of the event was the signing ceremony of cooperation memoranda between Seifullin University and leading universities from across Central Asia. The new agreements are aimed at strengthening academic partnerships, expanding research collaboration, and implementing joint educational initiatives. The memoranda were signed with Ala-Too International University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan, Osh State University, Salymbekov University, Kulob State University named after A. Rudaki, Namangan State Technical University, Sarbon University, and Karaganda Industrial University.

KEY OUTCOMES OF THE EVENT

1. Practical guidance was provided on preparing competitive project proposals, as well as on the effective management and implementation of international projects.
2. Regional ties were strengthened, and new opportunities for cooperation among higher education institutions and other stakeholders were created through the exchange of experience, networking, and discussions on prospective partnerships.
3. The impact of AI on the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna



Process and the fundamental principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was examined, including issues related to quality assurance and academic integrity.

4. The event provided a platform for meaningful dialogue among representatives of the Ministries of Central Asian countries, the expert community, researchers, and other stakeholders on the opportunities and risks associated with the use of AI in higher education.

5. Key approaches and recommendations were formulated for the responsible, ethical, and human-centred integration of AI technologies into higher education policies and practices, in line with the values and principles of the Bologna Process.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE OUTCOMES OF THE EVENT

As a result of the regional event, participants from the Central Asian countries formulated the following recommendations:

KAZAKHSTAN

1. To transition towards a new logic of internationalization that requires stronger regional cooperation by moving beyond traditional mobility models towards integrated educational ecosystems. In this context, transnational education should be viewed as the next stage in the evolution of academic mobility, encompassing the mutual recognition of qualifications, harmonized quality assurance mechanisms, shared digital infrastructure, strategic partnerships among higher education institutions, and coordinated policy frameworks.

2. Develop a conceptual framework outlining the principles for the use of AI in higher education as a foundation for national and institutional policies.

3. Develop and utilize AI avatars for MOOC courses.

4. Broaden approaches and perspectives in AI research and application. For example, explore the relationship between AI and the environment, including the large amounts of water used to cool data-processing systems. What mechanisms exist for water reuse and recycling? This highlights the need to initiate interdisciplinary research into related and indirect impacts associated with the implementation of AI.

5. Mathematics should serve as the foundation of AI. Accordingly, strengthen education and training in mathematics-related disciplines, including fundamental mathematical sciences and the preparation of mathematics teachers. As a practical recommendation, develop AI-generated assignments that intentionally contain errors, requiring students to identify and correct them.

6. The challenges related to the implementation of AI in higher education across Central Asia are highly similar; therefore, solutions can also be developed collaboratively. The stronger each individual country becomes, the stronger the region as a whole will be.

KYRGYZSTAN

1. To strengthen regional cooperation in Central Asia in response to increasing



global competition by building on successful international examples where strong regions unite and collaborate effectively, such as the EU, ASEAN, EUI, and AUN initiatives in higher education, enhanced regional collaboration can strengthen the global competitiveness, resilience, and international visibility of Central Asian higher education systems and institutions.

2. Support the development of national and institutional strategies for the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence in higher education. Such strategies should address issues related to academic integrity, data protection, quality assurance, inclusiveness, digital ethics, and the impact of AI on teaching, learning, and research processes.

3. Enhance digital and AI-related capacities of higher education institutions by investing in modern digital infrastructure, staff development, and innovative teaching methodologies. Special attention should be given to strengthening digital competencies among academic staff and students, particularly in regional universities and institutions with limited technological resources.

4. Promote interdisciplinary approaches to artificial intelligence by integrating AI-related topics across various academic disciplines, including education, engineering, social sciences, environmental studies, healthcare, and public administration. Universities should encourage research on the broader societal, environmental, and ethical implications of AI technologies.

5. Strengthen the teaching of mathematics, data analysis, computational thinking, and related disciplines as a foundation for AI development and digital transformation. Support the modernization of mathematics education and the professional development of teachers in STEM-related fields.

6. Encourage the use of AI-driven educational tools and digital learning resources, including AI-supported online courses, adaptive learning systems, virtual laboratories, and digital educational assistants, while ensuring that such technologies complement rather than replace critical thinking, creativity, and human interaction in education.

7. Promote wider participation of universities, students, researchers, and young professionals from Kyrgyzstan in Erasmus+ projects related to digital transformation, innovation, and artificial intelligence. Increased involvement in international cooperation projects can support institutional modernization, knowledge transfer, and the exchange of best practices.

8. Support stronger cooperation between universities, government institutions, private sector actors, and international partners to ensure that higher education reforms and AI-related initiatives respond to labour market needs, technological developments, and national development priorities.

9. Ensure that the implementation of AI in higher education contributes to inclusion and equal access to educational opportunities by reducing digital inequalities between urban and rural regions and supporting access for vulnerable and underrepresented groups.

10. Promote continuous dialogue and exchange of experiences among



Central Asian countries regarding the implementation of artificial intelligence in higher education, including the sharing of good practices, policy approaches, research outcomes, and innovative educational solutions.

TAJIKISTAN

1. Continue the organization of regional Erasmus+ information events, thematic conferences, and expert meetings across Central Asia to promote dialogue, exchange of experience, and dissemination of good practices in higher education modernization, digital transformation, and international cooperation.

2. Strengthen advisory and methodological support for higher education institutions in preparing competitive Erasmus+ project proposals, with particular attention to projects related to artificial intelligence, digital transformation, innovation, and the modernization of higher education. Such support may include capacity-building activities, targeted consultations, and the sharing of successful project development and implementation practices.

3. Continue organizing activities on artificial intelligence in higher education institutions in Tajikistan, including TAM events, cluster meetings, information sessions, and Erasmus+ dissemination events aimed at raising awareness, promoting the exchange of experience, disseminating good practices, strengthening institutional capacities, and encouraging the development of new project initiatives in this field.

4. Support the creation of thematic regional consortia among Central Asian universities for the joint development and implementation of projects in priority areas of higher education, including digital transformation, innovation, sustainable development, and human capital development.

5. Develop national guidelines or a policy framework for the responsible use of artificial intelligence in higher education in Tajikistan, ensuring common approaches to academic integrity, data protection, ethical standards, and quality assurance.

6. Encourage higher education institutions to develop institutional regulations, strategies, or guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence in teaching, learning, research, and university management, taking into account international experience and institutional needs.

7. Develop and disseminate methodological recommendations on the effective use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools in education and research, including practical examples and good practices from Central Asian countries and the European Higher Education Area.

UZBEKISTAN

1. Develop national guidelines on the use of AI in higher education to help universities introduce AI tools responsibly while ensuring academic integrity, data protection, and educational quality. Ensure that the integration of artificial intelligence in higher education is guided by the principles of transparency, responsibility, and human-centered learning. Universities in Central Asia should focus not only on the adoption of AI technologies, but also on building educational ecosystems where AI



systems are transparent and trustworthy.

2. Establish AI innovation centers and interdisciplinary research centers in universities that bring together researchers, students, industry, and government institutions to provide practical AI solutions to solve national and regional problems.

3. Preserve the central role of educators in the learning process. AI should augment, rather than replace, teachers. Higher education institutions should ensure a “human-in-the-loop” approach, avoid fully automated assessment systems, and use AI as a tool to support pedagogy while maintaining meaningful human interaction in education.

4. Encourage universities to systematically review and modernize curricula by embedding AI-related competencies, practical applications, and interdisciplinary approaches within existing study programmes.

5. Develop strong partnerships between universities and industry to support the development, testing, and commercialization of AI-enabled solutions in areas such as agriculture, health, education, energy, transportation, public services, and environmental sustainability.

6. Expand strategic partnerships with leading global technology companies and international universities to facilitate knowledge transfer, joint educational programs, faculty development, certification initiatives, and collaborative research in the field of AI.

7. Encourage wider participation of Uzbek universities in international initiatives such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and other global partnerships focused on digital transformation and artificial intelligence. International cooperation can accelerate institutional modernization and facilitate the transfer of best practices.

8. Establish a Central Asian higher education network on Artificial Intelligence to facilitate the exchange of expertise, joint research initiatives, shared educational resources, and regional policy dialogue.

IMPACT AND CONCLUSION

The regional event served as an important platform for strengthening cooperation in higher education in Central Asia, bringing together representatives of government bodies, universities, the expert community, and international organisations to discuss common challenges and development prospects. The event contributed to the advancement of interregional dialogue, the expansion of partnership networks, and the creation of new opportunities for joint initiatives.

1. Awareness of Erasmus+ opportunities among participants was enhanced, and the capacity of organisations to develop high-quality, competitive project proposals and to effectively manage international projects was strengthened.

2. Regional cooperation among higher education institutions and other stakeholders in Central Asian countries was reinforced through the expansion of professional networks, exchange of experience, and the formation of new partnerships for joint initiatives and projects.



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3. A deeper understanding was achieved of the impact of AI on the implementation of the Bologna Process principles, including quality assurance in education, academic integrity, and learner-centered approaches.

4. Expert dialogue among representatives of universities, the research community, and other stakeholders on the use of AI in higher education was strengthened, contributing to the development of coordinated regional approaches.

5. A foundation was established for the further development and implementation of responsible and ethical approaches to the use of AI in higher education, in line with the values, principles, and priorities of the Bologna Process.

We warmly thank all participants and organizers for their valuable contributions and active engagement throughout the regional event. Building on the momentum of this event, we are committed to continuing this dialogue each year and working collectively to enhance higher education systems across Central Asia, foster innovation, and deepen regional cooperation through Erasmus+ and other collaborative initiatives.

CALL FOR ACTIONS

We call on all higher education stakeholders and the Ministries of Higher Education of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to join forces in implementing these recommendations through prompt and coordinated action. By working together, we can develop sustainable solutions, deepen regional cooperation, and unlock new opportunities for innovation, mobility, and academic excellence within Erasmus+ and beyond.

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