

Akbota Sarzhanova

Kazakhstan, Astana

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EDUCATION

Nazarbayev University

BA in Political Science and International relations

Astana, Kazakhstan

2020 – 2024

Student Leadership:

- NU Student Government
- Association of Political Science Students
- NU Korean Club

WORK EXPERIENCE

Embassy of Estonia in Astana

Business and Public Diplomacy Coordinator

Astana, Kazakhstan

Feb. 2025 – present

- Led media engagement and public diplomacy initiatives to enhance Estonia's presence in Central Asia, including event planning, media coverage, and stakeholder outreach;
- Maintained and expanded networks with ministries, think tanks, business groups, and diplomatic missions to support bilateral cooperation in sectors like digital innovation and sustainability;
- Coordinated business missions and visits to support business diplomacy efforts, helping Estonian companies engage with key stakeholders and identify opportunities in local markets;
- Created and scheduled digital content for the Embassy's social media platforms, monitored engagement, and adjusted strategies to increase visibility;
- Monitored local and regional media coverage to identify trends relevant to Estonia's diplomatic and economic interests; prepared summaries and briefing materials for internal use;
- Provided day-to-day administrative support to the Ambassador and diplomatic staff, including meeting coordination, correspondence, and record-keeping.

OSCE Programme Office in Astana

Media Assistant, Office of the Head of Mission

Astana, Kazakhstan

Mar. 2023 – Jan. 2025

- Developed and implemented communications activities across traditional and digital media platforms to enhance the Office's visibility;
- Prepared press releases, social media content, and media lines in English, Russian, and Kazakh, ensuring clear messaging aligned with the organization's objectives;
- Created visual content and multimedia assets for social media channels, including photos, videos, and infographics, to boost engagement;
- As the communications focal point, conducted daily monitoring of local media, compiling summaries on political, social, and security developments for internal briefings;
- Maintained relationships with local media outlets to support the OSCE's presence and facilitated interviews with key stakeholders;
- Provided administrative support for the Office of the Head of Mission.

UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Youth Kazakhstan

PR Manager

Astana, Kazakhstan

Jan. 2023 – Nov. 2023

- Led the "Sustainability in Stories" project, creating a trilingual digital journal (Kazakh, Russian, English) that featured youth-led sustainability initiatives across Kazakhstan; distributed monthly through local channels;
- Assisted in the organization of the "Youth Climate Action in Central Asia" project in partnership with the World Bank, delivering climate education workshops to students in rural communities addressing issues such as water scarcity and air quality;

- Coordinated social media coverage for the first SDSN Kazakhstan Conference at Nazarbayev University;
- Drafted and published press releases, visuals, and outreach materials across digital platforms to promote SDG-related initiatives and engage diverse youth audiences.

Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA)

Astana, Kazakhstan

Public Relations and Communications Intern

Aug. 2022 – Oct. 2022

- Drafted press releases and social media content to effectively promote AFSA's initiatives, ensuring consistency in tone and alignment with organizational objectives;
- Conducted market research on Islamic banking and cryptocurrency trends, providing insights and reports to support AFSA's strategic communications and development of relevant content;
- Assisted in organizing panel sessions and logistics for the World Investor Week at AFSA, coordinating event details and supporting participant engagement to enhance audience experience.

SKILLS & TRAINING

Languages: Kazakh (native), Russian (native), English (advanced), German (beginner), Korean (beginner).

Technical skills: Adobe Photoshop, Canva, R Studio, HTML, CSS, JavaScript.

Certification & Trainings:

- Certificate Training on Disinformation and Cybersecurity, OSCE Academy and CRISP (November 2024)
- Digital Communication for Social Good Training Course (February 2024 - March 2024)
- OSCE Central Asian Regional Simulation-based Training on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (June 2023)
- Astana Diplomatic School Course (October 2022 - December 2022)
- Graphic Design Course, NURIS DC Lab (April 2022 - May 2022)

Research Projects:

- CoronaNet Research Project (June 2022 - August 2022)
- Crisis, Risk, and Uncertainty in Modern Eurasian Governance (October 2021 - December 2021)

Volunteering:

- Seoul National University's World Program at Kazakhstan (July 2023)
- "K-Culture Supporter" at Korean Cultural Centre of Korean Embassy in Kazakhstan (January 2023 - December 2023)
- V Nobel Fest (October 2022)