

## Online Master The European Union and Central Asia in the International System



March 22, 2012

Good afternoon dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me introduce myself – my name is Aijan Sharshenova, and I am a student from Kyrgyzstan. Today, it is my honour to speak on behalf of my fellow students, who have become the first graduates of the Master of Arts in the European Union and Central Asian studies programme.

First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to the professors and teaching assistants, project managers and assistants, and the sponsors of this unique study programme for the great opportunity to learn and explore.

The study programme is unique in many aspects. It is unique in its nature: so far, this is the first study programme specifically developed for Central Asian students. It is unique in its educational approach: the continuous e-learning is combined with regular presence workshops and study trips. Finally, it is unique as it brings people from diverse educational, professional and social backgrounds together to discuss urgent political, economic, legal and environmental issues.

I would also like to highlight the benefits of the programme. The programme has been truly beneficial both, for the European side – lecturers and the project management team – and for Central Asian students. The European partners of the programme had a chance to learn about the Central Asian region and our education system, and to hear about the life in Central Asia, our culture, customs and traditions. This chance changed the previously remote and obscure image of the region into a closer, more open and familiar one.

Nevertheless, the greatest benefits were received by us, the students. We had a chance to learn and experience the international standards of education and learning; to broaden our knowledge of the European Union, its history, politics, economics and law; and to discover Europe through first-hand experience. Most importantly, we were able to build an academic, professional and social network, which will certainly have positive lasting effects on our life and work in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that we form a part of the human fundament for the new partnership between the European Union and Central Asia. Hopefully, with our joint efforts this partnership will develop and flourish to benefit both the European Union and Central Asia.

Aijan Sharshenova