

club.da alumni news

2 | 2024



270 years orientalische akademie
60 years diplomatische akademie wien

Jubilees and Inauguration of the Academic Year 2024-25 @ Vienna City Hall

+++ News from the DA and club.da +++ The DA's new logo +++
+++ The Academy in numbers: student statistics, alumni surveys +++
+++ DASI-4 2024-25 +++ New members of the DA Hall of Fame +++

Dear Alumnae, dear Alumni,

One last hurrah to 2024: It's that time of the year when we reflect. Therefore, **club.da** alumni news reflects on a year in which we've reached record numbers of events in our 15 chapters across the globe. We have had an incredible lineup of speakers, lectures, events and next year will see even more thematic events. We expand our chapters to include thematic chapters and I am very excited to see new ideas developed and implemented.

I am particularly happy with the new partnerships with fellow alumni associations, which further increases the reach of our network beyond the Club's confines. Events in London, New York and Paris, to name just few with ties to other associations, have taken place and were well received by attendees. **club.da** also raises the Diplomatische Akademie Wien's flag in international networks like CASE and alumni-clubs.net, where our secretary general represents the Club!

Speaking of teaming up with partners: Our continued cooperation with the Rotary Club Vienna Maria Theresia is going strong, too. This year's mentoring programme



will see members of **club.da** and RCVMT acting as mentors, which is another great opportunity for extending our network. I look forward to continuing in this direction in the coming year.

Every year, we select first-year students at the DA to receive scholarships. This has been a major focus of the **club.da** board's work since 2011. Over EUR 110,000 were awarded for scholarships so far. So this year, we have once again provided financial support for current students. With this, we hope to give something to the next generation of students and future alumni and members of **club.da**! Prior to the traditional St. Nicolas Party & Meet and Greet, the board has selected this year's awardees, who will be fully introduced in the next issue of **club.da** alumni news.

I wish you and your families happy holidays!

For the entire board of **club.da**,
Oliver Authried

PS: To support our work and the **club.da** Scholarships, kindly visit <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/> Membership.

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DA Students 2024-25

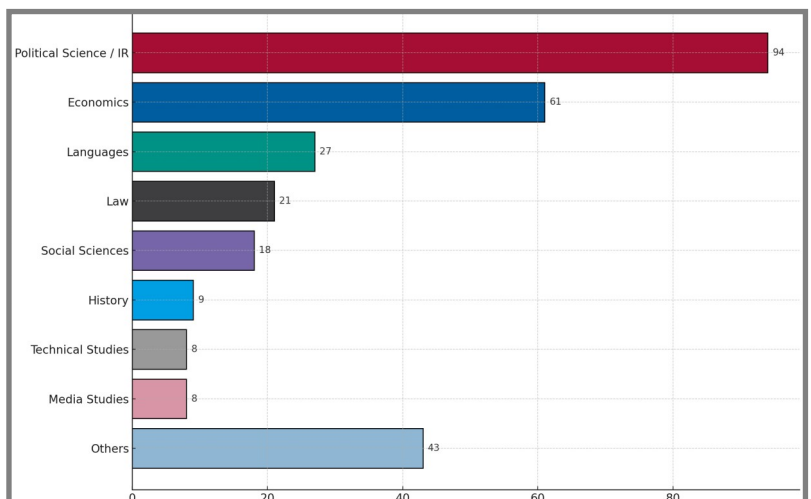
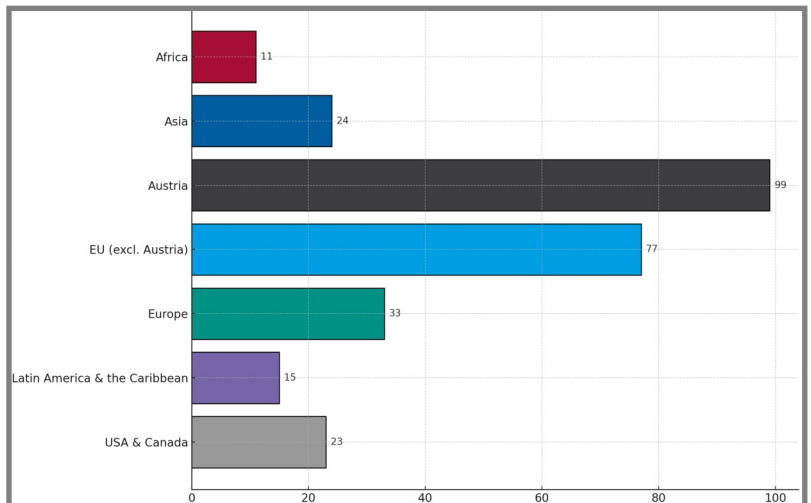
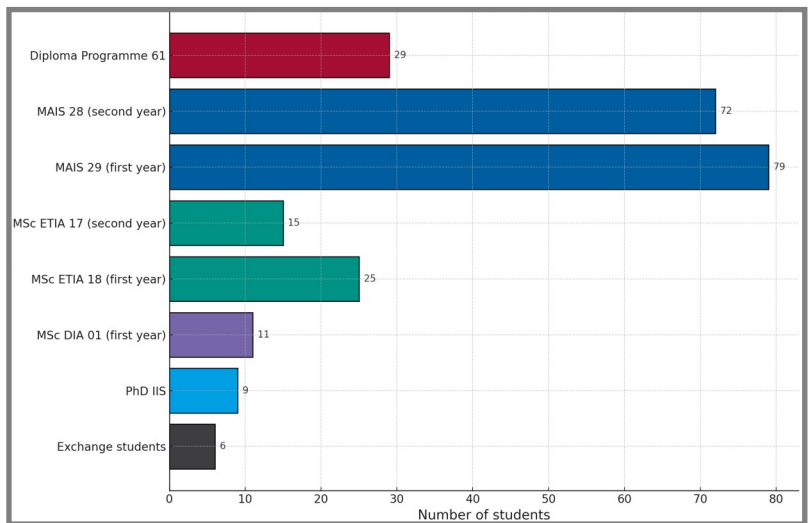
For the first time in its history, 240 students are currently enrolled in the DA's academic programmes. Let's get to know them

From 2013 to 2022, more than 100 students graduated from the DA's programmes every year with a record-breaking 124 at the end of this 10-year stretch. This was followed by a couple of years in which the Academy—like most institutions of higher education during and after the Covid-19 pandemic—saw declining numbers of applications and, therefore, students.

This year, however, the DA is back in full swing. At the end of November 2024, 240 students were enrolled in our programmes full time or as participants in our exchange programmes coming from universities like Stanford, Denver, the Sorbonne or Korea University.

As always, our student body represents a broad variety of backgrounds:

- Our 240 students hold 282 citizenships from 64 countries on all continents except for Australia. 99 Austrian students are followed by colleagues from Germany (20), the U.S. (19), Italy (10), Russia (9), Poland (6) and the U.K. (6). On top of this, the DA had the pleasure of welcoming a student from Costa Rica for the first time.
- Our students' academic backgrounds show equal diversity. While roughly a third holds a degree in Political Science / International Relations, economists are also going strong.
- Finally, the majority of the DA's student body continues to be female (55.4%); 44.2 percent are male and 0.4% identify as non-binary.



The Students' Voice



Diplomatic Academy Students Initiative



Maria Gonzalez Perez, DASI President 2024-25

"I am from Panama and completed my previous studies in International Affairs with a minor in Psychology.

As DASI president, I represent the students before the administration and the academic chairs and coordinate the work of the DASI praesidium. I look forward to fostering strong



communication between DASI and the student body while encouraging the sense of a respectful, active, and vibrant community at the DA. Feel free to reach out anytime, and I look forward to seeing you around the DA campus!"

20 years ago, a group of DLG, MAIS and SPIS students founded the Diplomatic Academy Students Initiative (DASI). Meet this year's team

Beatrice Minetti, DASI Vice President 2024-25

"I was born and raised in Milan, Italy, where I completed my undergraduate degree in International Relations and Political Science. I'm eager to foster a strong sense of community and look forward to contributing to the vibrant atmosphere at the DA. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of DA's unique environment in my first year, and now I aim to create opportunities for every



student to explore their interests and get involved. The DA provides a stimulating environment for all students to explore their interests, with societies offering amazing opportunities for personal and academic growth. I'm looking forward to helping the student body organize events that bring us together and create a welcoming, inclusive space for everyone."

Agota Kertesz, Treasurer

"I am originally from Vienna and have a background in Hungarian Studies and Art History.

My aim as DASI member and treasurer is to adequately represent DA students as well as to ensure the maximum financial benefit for our student associations."



Lukas Barcherini Peter, Secretary

"I am half German and half Italian, born and raised in Düsseldorf, Germany, with one part of my family from Bologna, Italy. Focusing on Energy Economics and Environmental Policy during my bachelor's, in both Italy and Germany, sparked my great interest and passion for environmentally sustainable economic practices. This interest led me to ETIA, and I am excited to be the program representative in DASI for this academic year!



As Secretary, I am responsible for all communications between the board, other stakeholders, and the DASI. In this role, I will ensure ETIA is well-represented with the DA while contributing to positive interactions and fostering an inclusive and welcoming campus environment."



For more information on DASI and our students' activities visit <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/DASI> and <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/Student-Life>.

Modernising Traditions

“Educating global leaders since 1754” has been the DA’s slogan since 2020. It was developed by the Academy’s faculty and staff, mainly based on the outcome of our first comprehensive alumni survey which took place in the summer of 2020. (For more information on the surveys’ results, see page 10.)

The mentioned phrase encapsulates the DA’s steadfast tradition of excellence while highlighting its continuing relevance in shaping future leaders. The reference to 1754 underscores the institution’s historic legacy as the world’s oldest professional school in international studies, celebrating its longstanding commitment to preparing its students for the complex challenges of global governance, diplomacy and international cooperation. Beyond its roots in diplomacy, the slogan highlights the Academy’s broader mission to educate professionals who excel across diverse fields and sectors all over the world.

Stronger roots, lighter touch For the Academy’s 270th anniversary, it was time to add to the slogan with a modern appearance connecting its long tradition with

today’s digital age. The results are a new logo and seal, which are both still based on the coin minted on the occasion of the first centennial of the Oriental Academy. However, compared to the DA’s previous logo from 2007, the marketing team put emphasis on highlighting the Academy’s well-known abbreviation as well as the year of its creation by Empress Maria Theresia.

In addition, with its modular design the new logo can be adapted as needed. There are, for instance, versions featuring the Academy’s English and/or French names as well as its slogan. On top of that, the new standalone seal can be used in several different formats. Says Nicole Lojnik, graphic designer and project officer in the DA’s Development Department: “When designing the new logo, it was especially important to me to harmonise tradition and modernity. Traditional elements such as Pallas Athena and Persian motifs were indispensable and, therefore, reinterpreted in a contemporary form. I am deeply proud to have created a seal and logo which not only visually bridge the past and present but also honour the values and history of the institution in a truly unique way.”



diplomatische akademie wien

Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne



Introducing the new logo and seal of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien and looking back at its predecessors, history and development

The new design was proudly presented by the DA's director, Ambassador Emil Brix, during his speech at the Jubilees and Inauguration of the Academic Year 2024-25 at the Viennese City Hall on 1 October 2024 (see article to the right for more information). "It's not so much different. But it tells the story that we believe in traditions, which may be written in a more modern design."

Let me close by thanking all those who have been involved in the yearlong process of creating this new logo. First and foremost, in a second survey in 2023, you, our alumni, provided us with guidelines when you clearly stated that you preferred a traditional (seal and name) over a logotype-like (see our 1997 logo) design. I am also immensely grateful for the many hours our marketing team (Sybil Bitter, Melusine Bujak, Katharina Dück, Nicole Lojnik and Nadja Wozonig) have put into developing and discussing more than 100 different versions. And finally, many thanks for the strong support of the DA's director, deputy director, faculty and staff.

We hope you enjoy the new, equally modern and traditional look of the DA as much as we do.

*Andreas Ehrmann is head of the DA's
Development Department.*

A Brief History: Previous logos of the DA



1854

Centennial Coin

1960s – 1990s

**The DA as part of the
Austrian Foreign Ministry**



1997 – 2007



The DA's first decade as an independent institution

2007 – 2024



Introduction of the official seal based on the 1854 coin

Honouring Excellence

It all started in 2010 when the DA's then director, Ambassador Hans Winkler, introduced the idea of creating a "DA Alumni Hall of Fame". Fourteen years later, the eleventh class of distinguished DA alumnae joined this exclusive group of now 109 graduates who have achieved exceptional merits during their careers in a wide variety of different fields.

Now, the Hall of Fame is made up of 53 alumni from Austria and 56 from an additional 35 countries from all continents except Australia. And while still more than 70% of its members are male, this first all-female group of Hall of Fame inductees underlines once more the ever-growing diversity amongst DA students and alumni when it comes to gender, geographical and academic backgrounds.

With the Alumni Hall of Fame, it is the DA's goal to congratulate its alumni on their highly interesting and successful careers as well as to show current students and young alumni what they, too, can achieve after graduating from the Academy.

During this year's "Jubilees and Inauguration of the Academic Year 2024-25" on 1 October at the Vienna City Hall, Deputy Director Martina Schubert introduced the new Hall of Fame members:

Christina Kokkinakis "Since September 2023, [she is] the Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OECD, UNESCO and the Principalities of Andorra and Monaco. Ms. Kokkinakis is an alumna of the 30th Diplomlehrgang (1993-1995). She has had a variety of important responsibilities in Vienna with the Austrian



Photo: © DA/Peter Lechner

Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, where she was *inter alia* Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to the Austrian Foreign Ministers Benita Ferro-Waldner and Ursula Plassnik.

She worked both in Geneva at the Representation of Austria to the United Nations as well as at the European Union Delegation to the United Nations and many years in Brussels as head of the Political Section of the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU and ambassador and representative of Austria to the Political and Security Committee of the European Union.

Before her current position in Paris she was Deputy Managing Director Global and Director for Values and Multilateral Relations at the European External Action Service.

This academic year, Ambassador Kokkinakis will give a course at the DA on 'Human Rights Diplomacy: The European Union's role in strengthening multilateralism with a special focus on human rights'."

On 1 October, it was an immense pleasure to induct three alumnae into the DA Alumni Hall of Fame's Class of 2024. Here are their stories

Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano “[She] is an alumna of the 24th Diplomlehrgang (1987-89) and currently holds the position of Director General for Management and Reform *ad interim* at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).”

trainee experiences in the field of law, she entered the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs in 2008, where she has worked in different departments.

Her diplomatic career brought her to Brussels, to



Shoura Zehetner-Hashemi “[She] is an alumna of the 44th Diplomlehrgang (2007-08). For the first five years of her life, she grew up in Iran. After the Islamic revolution, her parents and her family managed to escape and moved to Austria, where political asylum was granted to her and her family.

Jakarta as Deputy Head of Mission in Indonesia and to Switzerland as Austrian representative in charge of economic, development, environment and internet governance at the Austrian representation to the United Nations in Geneva.

Since August 2023, Ms. Zehetner-Hashemi is one of two Managing Directors of Amnesty International Austria.”

After accomplishing her studies and different

Jubilees and Inauguration of the Academic Year 2024-25

On 1 October, the DA had the utmost pleasure to welcome more than 200 new and returning students, alumni and guests of honour at Vienna City Hall. With the festive event, we celebrated both the Academy's history – 270 years of the Oriental Academy, 60 years of the DA – as well as our upcoming academic year 2024-25.

Besides a keynote address by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Volker Türk**, speakers included Vienna's Mayor **Michael Ludwig**, the Austrian Foreign Ministry's Secretary General, **Nikolaus Marschik**, Visual Artist **Lisl Ponger** and the DA's Director, **Emil Brix**. Finally, **Alexander Christiani**, alumnus of the 1st Diploma Programme, and **Maria Fernanda Gonzalez Perez**, president of DASI 2024-25, went full circle connecting memories of the first steps of the Academy with a look at today's vibrant student life.

To rewatch the event, visit <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/Inauguration-Ceremonies>.

What Do You Think?

In recent years, the DA has made it a priority to not only stay connected with its alumni but also to learn more from their experiences. As part of this effort, comprehensive surveys were conducted in 2020 and 2023, offering a unique opportunity to gather valuable insights into the career trajectories, satisfaction levels and perspectives of you, our graduates.

Tradition and Excellence When asked why they chose to study at the Academy, alumni repeatedly highlighted its reputation, multidisciplinary curriculum and international environment. The surveys revealed consistent appreciation for the Academy's long-standing tradition and academic excellence. Many respondents cited the "Pluridisciplinary curriculum" and the "Reputation and long history of the DA" as their top reasons for enrolling.

In both surveys, respondents also valued the institution's international student body and multicultural environment. Alumni reflected on the opportunities to form lasting connections with peers from around the world, creating a truly global network.

Career Support Over the years, the DA has worked to provide extensive career support for its students and alumni. This effort has not gone unnoticed. While satisfaction with career services and networking opportunities was already high in 2020, the 2023 survey reflected further improvements. Alumni noted the value of the **da.link** career services, which have been instrumental in preparing graduates for diverse career paths.

The surveys also highlighted an important trend: alumni aspirations often shift after completing their studies. Before enrolling, many respondents envi-

sioned careers in diplomacy (65.3% in 2020 and 71.6% in 2023) or international organisations. However, post-graduation aspirations became more diversified, with significant interest in corporate business and education alongside traditional fields like diplomacy and public service (see chart on page 11). This evolution reflects the Academy's success in equipping graduates with versatile skills applicable across a range of sectors.

Satisfaction and Loyalty The surveys revealed that alumni hold their time at the Academy in high regard. In 2020, respondents rated their satisfaction with their choice to study at the Academy at 82 on a 100-point scale. By 2023, this score had risen to 84 points, demonstrating a growing appreciation for the DA experience. Respondents also recognised the Academy's role as a hub for international dialogue, networking and continuous professional training.

The sense of connection to the institution remains strong among alumni. Both surveys revealed that the majority identify closely with the name "Diplomatic Academy of Vienna," reflecting its legacy and prestige. At the same time, alumni also expressed openness to modernisation efforts, such as updates to the Academy's branding and logo, as long as these changes honour the institution's historical identity (see page 6).

Strong Community The surveys also reinforced the value of the alumni network and its role in shaping the Academy's future. Respondents consistently highlighted the importance of maintaining connections with their peers and the institution. Initiatives like **club.da** events and online networking opportunities were recognised as vital tools for fostering these relationships.

Alumni Events in 2024

Berlin Chapter

President: Leoni Wolf

After Work Dinner | 7 March

Georgian Evening | 25 April

Führung durch den Bundestag &

EURO 2024 Public Viewing | 17 June

Alles Fassade?

Architekturführung im Humboldt Forum | 26 October



U.S. Chapter

President: Kara Wilson

Okamoto Exhibition Opening and Reception | 4 March

Alumni Reception & Guided Tour of the

Austrian Cultural Forum New York | 1 May

Happy Hour in Washington, DC | 19 June

Washington Christmas Gathering | 13 December



Latin America & the Caribbean Chapter

Presidents:

Vanessa Cazares Luquin & Marcela Lozano Luna

Democracy Under Fire: Unveiling the Global Battle

for Power in 2024 | 9 March

London Chapter

President: James Hollis

London Chapter Meeting | 20 June

After Work Drinks | 9 October

Alumni Concert and Networking | 10 October

Ten club.da local chapters, the Club itself and the Academy organised no less than 49 events for alumni and students this year. Here's a look back

Brussels Chapter

Presidents: Alenka Jaschke & Vera Kádas

Study Trip Alumni Meeting | 26 March

19th Alumni-Stammtisch | 10 July

20th Alumni-Stammtisch | 30 September



Italy Chapter

Presidents: Giuditta Toscani, Niccolò Razza,

Simone Ros & Hu Zixiang

Aperitivo in Rome | 20 April

Aperitivo in Milan | 30 November

Bratislava Chapter

President: Erik Szedély

Afterwork Middle Eastern Dinner | 17 April

Summer Drinks on the Danube | 13 August



Paris Chapter

President: Kornelia Lienhart

Reception for DA and WU Wien Alumni | 18 January

Get-together at the Invitation of

Ambassador Christina Kokkinakis | 6 November

Opening Event of the University of Vienna's

Paris Alumni Chapter | 13 November

Switzerland Chapter

President: Jürgen Angleitner & Olivier Naray

Wiener Ball in St. Gallen | 20 January

Meet & Greet am Neujahrs-Àpèro

von Advantage Austria | 23 January

Alumni Excursion to CERN | 26 April

Bal Viennois de Genève | 3 May

Alumni Events in 2024

Vienna Chapter

Presidents: David Lansky & Oliver Authried

Book “Empress Elisabeth – A New Interpretation”
(Regine Neuhauser) | 25 January

3rd club.da After Work Clubbing: New Years Edition |
26 January

Celebrating IWD 2024:
Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress | 7 March

Documentary Screening “20 Days in Mariupol” |
18 April

Evolution of Social and Technological Innovation
(Hertie Alumni Vienna event) | 24 April

World Press Freedom Day:
“Challenges for Journalists in Conflict Zones” |
30 April

Buch „Unbequem für Menschenwürde“
(Homayoun Alizadeh) | 4 June

Ukraine’s 10 Point Peace Formula:
Power or Powerless? | 11 June

15th Vienna Summer Meeting | 22 August

Alumni Meeting for Parents | 28 September

Back to School ... with Professor Row | 21 November

St. Nicholas Party & Meet and Greet | 5 December

Talk by DA alumnus Celso Amorim:
“Understanding the Global South” | 9 December

Photos: © DA/Melusine Bujak, DA/Andreas Ehrmann, Teodora Feierabend



With these pages, we'd like to express our deep gratitude to all those who made all featured events possible. Thank you very much for your dedication and hard work!

DA & club.da

20th DA Ski and Snowboard Championships |
25 February

da.link career day 2024 | 13 March

Talk by DA alumna Emil Brix in Sofia:
"Power Shift in Europe" | 23 April

Talk in Cooperation with the University of Salzburg
Alumni London Chapter:
"Britain and the EU: New Relationships?" | 25 April

Diplomats for Equality:
The DA at the Vienna Rainbow Parade | 8 June

DA Tennis Tournament | 23 June

24th International Alumni Meeting | 28-29 June

"Mozart and Strauss" in Shanghai | 31 August

"Mozart and Strauss" in Beijing | 4 September

Wiener Lichtblicke @ DA Open House | 5 November



Photo galleries and more information on [da.connect](https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/connect):
Recordings of livestreams and more videos from the DA:

<https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/connect>

<https://www.youtube.com/DiplomatischeAkademieWien>



On the calendar ...

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 23 January 2025 | Goldenes Verdienstzeichen der Republik Österreich:
Ordensverleihung an und Gespräch mit Ernst Porpaczy |
| 26 January 2025 | 21 st DA Ski and Snowboard Championships |
| 28 January 2025 | Virtual Open House 2025 |
| 5 March 2025 | club.da/RCVMT International Women's Day panel |
| 12 March 2025 | da.link career day 2025 |
| 25 March 2025 | DA Alumni Meet Students in Brussels (tbc) |
| 12 April 2025 | 30 th Diplomatic Ball at the DA |
| 30 April 2025 | club.da/RCVMT World Press Freedom Day panel |
| 27-28 June 2025 | 25 th International Alumni Meeting in Vienna |

Follow us online

For up-to-date information on all our events please check out our event calendar at <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/events> or log in to our networking and career platform [da.connect](https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/connect) at <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/connect>.

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