

da. alumni news

WINTER EDITION 2023

The *2023 in Review* Issue

INAUGURATION 2023-24



News from the DA and club.da
Deputy Director Martina Schubert:
"One Year at the DA"
Polemics [•Rec] Podcast Series
Scholarship awardees 2022-23
Student Societies Activities
Sommerfest and
International Alumni Meeting

Dear Alumnae, dear Alumni,

We hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. It is our pleasure to bring you the latest updates from club.da and share some exciting news.

First and foremost, we are pleased to announce the establishment of our Italy Chapter on October 24th. This marks a significant expansion of our international network and offers a wonderful opportunity for alumni in Rome, Milan and surrounding areas to connect and engage with one another. We look forward to witnessing the growth and impact of this new chapter.

In 2023, we continued to uphold our commitment to providing engaging and diverse events for our members. For the first time, we have curated an impressive calendar of 50 events throughout the year. From thought-provoking lectures to stimulating panel discussions and social gatherings, our aim was and remains to offer a wide range of opportunities for professional and personal development. We welcome your feedback and ideas as we strive to make each event more enriching and rewarding.

Additionally, we are excited to introduce our new club.da logo, which represents our continued evolution and reflects an overall harmony with the corporate identity of the DA.

Our recent General Assembly was a momentous occasion as we bid farewell to two esteemed individuals who have made invaluable contributions to club.da. We expressed our heartfelt gratitude to Hermann Hagspiel and Roswitha Strampfer for their dedication and leadership and celebrated their



achievements and the impact they have had on our organisation.

At the same time, let us use this opportunity to acknowledge our newly elected board members. Please refer to our website (<https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/Board>) to see all the dedicated individuals who will be working alongside us to steer club.da in the right direction. Their diverse expertise and commitment will be pivotal as we shape the future of our alumni club.

Furthermore, we are delighted to announce Katharina Dück in her new role as Roswitha's successor. Katharina brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to the position. Her passion for fostering connections and supporting the professional development of our alumni is evident, and we have full confidence in her ability to continue the excellent work of her predecessor.

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude to each and every one of you for your continued support and engagement. club.da thrives because of your participation and contributions. Together, let us embrace the opportunities that lie ahead and further strengthen the bonds of our alumni community.

In the name of the entire club.da Board, we wish you Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the best for the New Year!

David, Brigitta and Oliver

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

Inside this issue

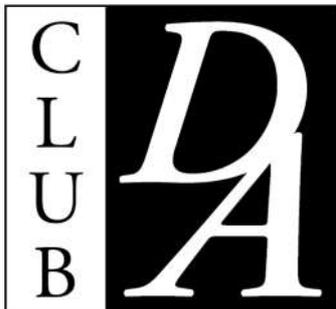
News from club.da	3	Alumni Hall of Fame Scholarship awardee 2022-23	11
Deputy Director Schubert: "One Year at the DA"	4	Student activities in 2023	12
News from the Academy	6	Student Societies 2023-24	13
Polemics [•Rec] Podcasts	7	International Alumni Meeting and Sommerfest 2023	14
club.da Scholarship awardees 2022-23	8	Upcoming events in 2024 and imprint	16

News from club.da

New corporate design, new board members, same passion for our alumni network

Founded in 1969 by alumni of its first two Diploma Programmes and graduates of the former Consular Academy, **club.da** is one of the oldest alumni associations in Austria—celebrating its 55th year of existence in 2024.

Now home to more than 1,800 members around the world, **club.da** has evolved over the years. Initially solely based in Vienna, a group of DA alumni in Berlin organised their first alumni meeting abroad in 2004. It took five more years for the Club's local chapter strategy to be implemented. Since then, the Club maintained up to



23 local chapters in the Americas, Asia and Europe. For more information on **club.da**'s local chapters, please visit <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/Local-Chapters>.



*Your home & anchor
after graduation*

After 13 years, **club.da** re-designed its logo and overall identity. The focus was to a) honour **club.da**'s history—the name has stayed unchanged since 1969—; b) to underline its close ties with the DA—the DA's seal is now part of the Club's logo—; and c) to clarify its main goal by slightly shortening its slogan to "Your home after graduation."



Having served as **club.da**'s treasurer since 2014, Hermann Hagspiel's retirement caused a major change in the Club's board. On 30 June 2023, the **club.da** General Assembly elected Sophie Surinder (MSc ETIA 07 alumna from Austria) as Hermann's successor and Andreas Lernhart (DLG 22 alumnus from Austria) as her new deputy. At the same time, Roger Hilton (MAIS 19 alumnus from Canada) joined the Election Committee. We welcome all new board members and wish them all the best for their important roles.

As always, the full meeting minutes of the General Assembly are available on the **club.da** website.



More information on the topics covered is available at <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/Board> as well as at <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/History>.

ONE YEAR AT THE DA

The DA's Deputy Director, Martina Schubert, gives some insights into her work and duties

I remember my first day at the DA clearly. It was September 21st, 2022. I knew the DA from previous events, but the actual functioning of the DA was new to me as I am not a DA graduate. I was warmly welcomed by Director Emil Brix and my colleagues from the faculty and administration. Cordiality and professionalism are the two characteristics that I particularly liked in all DA employees from day one.

Looking back on my first year at the DA, I would like to highlight the following points that have shaped my work in my first 12 months as Deputy Director:

A financially very demanding time for the DA

In the academic year 2022-23, the DA faced severe financial challenges following the necessary investments during COVID, the slightly lower number of students compared to previous years (146 students in 2022-23 versus 181 students in 2021-22) and a federal subsidy that had remained the same for years.

Together with Director Brix, I coordinated a) the necessary strict cost-cutting measures in all operations of the DA (e.g. by reducing the number of Postdocs, not replacing retired employees and implementing many individual measures in the respective departments) while ensuring the high quality of our academic programmes; and b) efforts to increase outreach to potential sponsors and to the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While the financial situation has improved, there is still the need for additional funding if the DA is to remain competitive in the years to come. Hence my big thanks to all scholarship providers and my appeal to all DA alumni to support the Academy with donations and sponsorships. The culture of giving to higher education institutions is not yet as widespread in Austria as in Anglo-Saxon countries, but institutions like the DA need this support more than ever. So please think of the DA and support it financially!

Committed students

The personal contact between the students and the professors and employees of the DA is one of the reasons why studying at the DA is so valued. This personal contact begins

on the first Sunday of each academic year, when the new students and faculty members traditionally go on a hike in the vineyards south of Vienna. This excursion is a great opportunity for the students to make initial personal contact with our professors, staff and management. Our students have made a very positive impression on me right from the start. And they continued to impress me throughout the year with not only being fully and very actively involved in their courses but also by organising many different activities outside of their studies (e.g. activities of the student societies such as the DASICON 2023 on the subject of "(De-)Globalisation: Untangling Our Present and Future Perspectives" or the Charity Ball at the DA).



Exciting Executive Training Programmes

As head of the seminar department, I am responsible for the Executive Training Programmes (ETPs) at the DA, which my team and I organise for groups of different sizes and professional backgrounds. Since September 2022, 24 ETPs have taken place with a total of almost 500 participants from 100 different countries. We also regularly provide information about these courses via social media. They not only provide the participants with a more profound knowledge of European and international topics, protocol or negotiation techniques, but also always offer the participants the opportunity to broaden their horizons by working on other important topics/countries and by getting to know interesting personalities from around the globe. The diversity of the courses offered is very impressive. When possible, the participants live on campus and enjoy the full DA experience including lunches in our dining room, the beautiful garden and much more.

Within the department, I also had to deal with some personnel changes due to maternity leave, international transfers or reorientation, which made the work for the team challenging at times. Therefore, a special thank-you goes to Ms. Petra Kakuska, who has been working in the department for many years and carefully and diligently trained the new colleagues in their tasks.



Conferences almost every evening

The range of conferences at the DA, which we usually organise in the evenings on various topics, is also very impressive. They provide ample opportunities for DA students as well as a national and international audience to enter into a direct and very stimulating exchange with experts, politicians, scientists and journalists. I am particularly pleased having taken over the responsibility of organising our public events in September 2023. Ms. Melusine Bujak, a DA alumna whom many of you probably know, will continue to manage all events at the DA within the new department now covering Executive Training Programmes and events.

The Francophonie

The longstanding cooperation between the DA and the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie), which supported our French language courses for a long time, ended in 2022. However, since French still plays a very important role in international relations and at the DA, it was important to me to continue this cooperation, nonetheless. After intensive negotiations with the OIF, which had changed its rules and no longer finances French courses, we were able to conclude a new cooperation agreement for 2023, which provides for organising conferences in French on international topics at the DA. As a result, on November 9th and November 22nd, Professors Thierry Balzacq and Julien Navarro gave top-class public lectures on international topics at the DA. I invite you to check out our YouTube channel to re-watch these and many more events.

The modernisation of the DA

In order to remain competitive, it is of course imperative to provide the necessary space and equipment throughout our premises to an increasing number of students. Consequently, I was tasked with managing the groundwork for the extension that is planned in the inner courtyard of the DA. The

next step is an architectural competition, on which the DA's Board of Trustees will have to decide. Here, too, there is the opportunity for DA alumni to participate in the modernisation of their *alma mater* through donations or sponsorships. By the way: If you prefer to help right away, we are grateful for financial support for the modernisation of the equipment in our lecture halls or the dining room. Don't hesitate!

More information on how to become a partner of the DA is available at <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/Partners>.



Conclusion

During my first year at the DA, my work here was extremely varied and international. No two days at the Academy are the same. The best experience was and will certainly remain to be over the years to come, passing on knowledge to young people and motivating our students and ETP participants in the courses and conferences to work for a free, safe, modern and environmentally conscious Europe as well as for its strong values.

I am looking forward to much more, first and foremost a 2024 full of anniversary celebrations at the DA. I hope you will be able to join in person or via our livestreams! 🌐



Department of International and European Law New chair: Professor Holger Hestermeyer

We are pleased to welcome Holger Hestermeyer as the new Professor of International and European Law at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien.

Before succeeding Gerhard Loibl, Holger Hestermeyer had taught at King's College London for almost a decade and co-founded its Centre for International Governance and Dispute Resolution. He joined KCL from practice, having worked as a *référéndaire* in the cabinet of Advocate General Pedro Cruz Villalón at the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Holger has written extensively on international law, EU law and comparative constitutional law. He has been awarded, amongst others, the Otto Hahn Award by the German Max Planck Society.

Find out more about Holger and his department on our website at <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/Law>. 



Research Area Cultural Studies New head: Priv. Doz. Giulia Pelillo

We are equally pleased to further welcome Giulia Pelillo as head of the new Research Area Cultural Studies, which will eventually become the DA's fifth academic department.



Before joining the DA, Giulia Pelillo was a private lecturer in cultural studies at the Department for Romance Studies at the University of Heidelberg.

Giulia's research has been awarded with multiple grants, amongst others the Olympia Morata Fellowship as well as a Fellowship of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies and many more. In addition, Giulia is a founding member of the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft* (KWG), where she serves on the governing board and as co-chair of the "Transcultural Life-Worlds" section.

Find out more about Giulia and her research on our website at <https://www.da-vienna.ac.at/Cultural-Studies>. 

It's hard to say goodbye!



Sadly, an era came to an end ...

Hubert Nettig and Robert Gulda, two legends at the DA, retired this year

For 26 years, Hubert Nettig shaped the DA with his organisational talent and made life at the DA sweeter for staff and students alike with his humour.

Robert Gulda was a great and outspoken teacher in Viennese Culture for staff, students and visitors of the DA for 21 years.

We wish both a wonderful retirement and are looking forward to them visiting us often at the DA!

club.da Scholarship awardees 2022-23



Mansoor Hussein AYOBİ
MAIS 27 (2022-24)

What brought you to the DA and why did you choose MAIS?

My interest in international relations started in the last years of high school but was already present throughout my life. I read a lot of history and saw the effects of international relations everywhere. Also, I grew up in a pluralistic society where I saw a lot of differences, of course also conflicts, but everyone still lived together in a community where there was intense intercultural communication. In my Bachelor, I started studying political science to look at international relations from that perspective. I had a class on the South China Sea conflict and the professor introduced me to the DA. I looked into the history and classes at the DA and found it was an excellent place to deepen my understanding of international relations, especially in Austria.

What kind of impact did the scholarship have on the rest of your academic year or what will it have?

The scholarship helped a lot. It put me at ease with my budget plan. Also, I had the freedom to join extracurricular activities like conferences. I thought about going and doing some sort of part-time job. But now I have more time for my studies and experience the DA to its fullest extent. So, it's a huge help with great impacts.



Carina KARNIČAR
ETIA 16 (2022-24)

Was there a pivotal moment that made you apply for the MSc ETIA programme?

My time as an intern at the Austrian Embassy in Beijing in autumn 2019 has contributed to my interest in diplomacy formidably. It has taught me the importance as well as the potential of international and intercultural cooperation. Besides being a currently vital, interdisciplinary combination of fields, the ETIA programme combines all my past experiences and interests and will hopefully equip me for a career in international environmental management (or whatever the future will bring).

Do you think that you can contribute to changing the world through your work? How do you see yourself accomplishing this?

I think everyone can contribute to changing the world by starting within their own communities. You don't have to be a global leader to do so. Empathy, humbleness, the willingness to listen and learning from our past mistakes can have the greatest impact for our social and actual environment. No matter how small. And in the long-term, this might have an impact on the world, too. Being surrounded by so many different personalities and backgrounds can help us acquire better communication skills, teach us patience where needed and compassion. I believe these things also make a good leader.

What aspect(s) or experience(s) of your life led you in the direction of diplomacy and the DA's Diploma Programme?

In fact, my academic background played a preponderant role. Studying philosophy, global studies and education sciences allowed me to realise that human beings are complex to comprehend, but regardless of who they are or how they behave, it is always possible to find common ground in times of conflict or disagreements. Furthermore, my background provided me with an intercultural approach of the modern society where disagreement can stem from differences in cultural backgrounds. One of my professors at the university proposed me the Diploma Programme, convinced that it would dovetail with my eclectic profile and a career in diplomacy would allow me to further develop my potential. I took his advice and applied for the programme, which led to my admission.

I am delighted that it happened. Thank you.

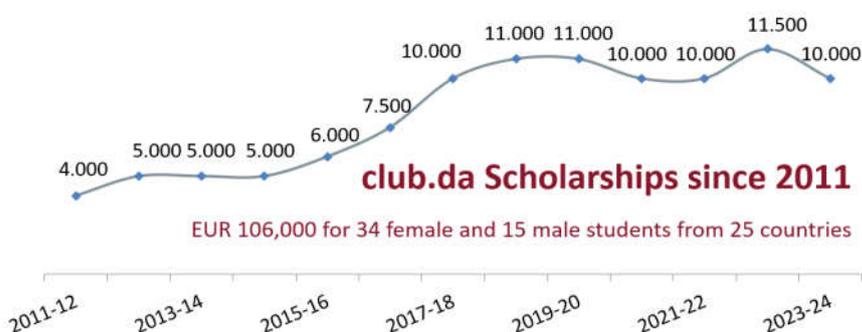
As a DLG student, what are your long-term ambitions regarding the job and the impact you want to have on the world?

My answer to the question is a combination of personal and strictly professional aspirations. As for everyone, after the DA, you need to find a career path where you can accomplish yourself as an individual and live a life you wish for yourself and your family. In addition, the DA contributes to the enhancement of some of our capabilities such as enabling us to speak three languages, which means building bridges to connect three different cultures. If this ability is later on utilised to connect and help decision-makers shape a better world, then you would be contributing to the change with regard to the common maxim that says: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

I would not claim the aspiration to become a decision-maker. They carry a significant responsibility and are sometimes blinded by propaganda, and yet are expected to make the right decisions. I see myself more as a counsellor who can provide insights to them. I am convinced that with valuable advice, their decisions might be more efficient. These are my long-term goals.



Conrad Gautier MBATSOGO
DLG 59 (2022-23)



Alumni-sponsored scholarships

There are currently two scholarship programmes which are solely funded by DA alumni.

club.da Scholarships are available for first-year students and financed by membership fees and additional donations. At the end of 2023, **club.da** concluded its "Road to 100K", having spent more than EUR 100,000 on scholarships since 2011.

The Alumni Hall of Fame Scholarships are open to second-year students and based on donations by the members of the DA's Alumni Hall of Fame.

In total, EUR 144,500 have been awarded through both programmes since 2011.

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



Anne Roos VERVERS
MAIS 27 (2022-24)

What motivated you to choose the Master of Advanced International Studies programme at the DA?

Being half Dutch and half Austrian, I have grown up with two cultures and, at first, with no borders. The concept of borders dawned on me when I heard of international conflicts and wars on the news. I knew that I wanted to play a role in solving conflicts which motivated me to take part in the Model European Parliament in high school and used opportunities to travel abroad through my engagement with Girl Scouts. My time with the Scouts has taught me a great deal about leadership and got me involved with an international community. I have always enjoyed studying languages, international relations and law. The interdisciplinary MAIS programme combined all my passions and builds on my previous knowledge.

How did the scholarship benefit you, what was its impact?

Relieving me of some of the financial burden, it enabled me to focus more on my academic work and enjoy my life at the DA more. Since I did not have to take a job thanks to the scholarship, I could use my time to take on responsibilities as a course speaker of the MAIS-1 cohort and attend conferences organised by the DA and the DA student body.

What is the thought you go back to that keeps you motivated?

I have this image of myself, giving a speech about something I am extremely passionate about – conflict resolution and disarmament – in front of the UN General Assembly. I want to use my energy and talents to work towards making the world a better place and this image is the epitome of me doing that.



Kaleb ZEWDINEH
MAIS 27 (2022-24)

Was there a pivotal moment that made you apply for the MAIS programme in particular?

The pivotal moment that made me pursue international affairs occurred during my internship at the African Union in Ethiopia. I learned the bureaucratic structure of an international organisation and the roles of different agents and diplomats who work there. During my internship, I was inspired to be a future leader within an international organisation, especially for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Thus, my interests and the programme offered at the DA aligned with one another.

Do you think that you can contribute to changing the world through your work? How do you see yourself accomplishing this?

I firmly believe that I can contribute to changing the world through my work, as I have experience doing field research in areas that have been devastated by conflict. The studies I am currently pursuing are helping me gain knowledge on how to create a good research study in order to improve and explain what societies need. So, I plan on applying my knowledge of research skills into the practical world in order to contribute to peace-building projects around the world.

How and in which form do you want to be involved with the DA's alumni network?

I have enrolled in the [club.da](#) network and use it to see postings available online. I would want to be involved in the alumni network to learn about different career paths alumni have chosen and what motivated them to pursue those career fields. In the future, I will be happy to guide the future generations of DA students as well.

Hall of Fame Scholarship awardee 2022-23

What brought you to the DA and why have you chosen ETIA?

I sought a programme that would equip me with the skills and knowledge to resolve pressing environmental issues. The opportunity to collaborate with like-minded individuals and conduct hands-on research in fields such as waste management, conservation, renewable energy and environmental policy played a significant role in my decision.

What impact did the Alumni Hall of Fame Scholarship have on your second academic year?

It allowed me to focus more on my studies and extracurricular activities without having to constantly fret about tuition fees and other expenses. Furthermore, the scholarship served as a constant reminder of the confidence and faith that others have in my abilities, and it encouraged me to stretch my own limits and strive for greater levels of achievement.

What are some of the highlights of your time at the DA?

A significant highlight of my time at the DA was the opportunity to engage with a vibrant and multicultural community. Interacting with students from various backgrounds broadened my perspective, increased my appreciation for different cultures and fostered enduring relationships.

What are your professional aspirations?

I aspire to take on roles that allow me to collaborate with diverse individuals and organisations, fostering innovation and driving positive change in the environmental sector.

Who are the people you would like to meet and work with in the future?

I look forward to working and networking with inspiring people who share my values, aspirations and commitment to making positive change. Collaborating with such individuals would enhance my career and provide a platform for collective development, innovation and enduring impact in our respective fields.

How would you want to be involved with the DA's alumni network?

I would like to actively engage with the alumni network by serving as a mentor, participating in networking events, contributing to fundraising campaigns and facilitating industry engagement in order to help future students receive the same benefits I did.



Georgina ODERO
ETIA 15 (2021-23)



Student activities in 2023

DA STUDENT AMBASSADORS

The DA Student Ambassadors are currently enrolled students from each of the DA's programmes who share their experiences about every aspect of life at the DA, including social, academic and professional.

The Student Ambassadors take prospective students on private tours of the Academy, providing them with an intimate look into the DA. They also offer virtual sessions, scheduling talks on an individual basis. Please feel free to reach out to them with any questions to get an inside perspective of the DA via student-ambassadors@da-vienna.ac.at!



Student Ambassadors 2022/23

VIENNA PRIDE 2023 DIPLOMATS FOR EQUALITY

As a celebration of diversity and inclusion around the world, our students, staff, alumni and friends participated again in the Vienna Pride's Rainbow Parade on 17 June 2023. In addition, the DA is a proud member of Diplomats for Equality.

#DiplomatsForEquality



Photos: DA/Charlotte Ehlers, DA/Sybil Bitter, Anne Roos Ververs, Mansoor Hussein Ayobi

DASI FAIR 2023

As there is more to life and to studying in a multidisciplinary and diverse environment like the DA than only learning in class, the DA's students are engaged in a broad variety of different extra-curricular activities. To that end, they have founded 20 societies and committees (see page 13).

At the start of each academic year, students organise their annual DASI Fair. This event aims at giving societies and committees the chance to introduce themselves and their programmes to the entire student body and, by doing so, to attract more interest in their amazing activities.



FROM THE FIRST DA TENNIS TOURNAMENT TO A NEW SPORTS SOCIETY

The first DA tennis tournament was organised by Prof. Martin Feldkircher and sponsored by **club.da**. After this successful event, a new student society, the DA Tennis Club, was founded. Regular games, cooperations and much more are planned.

Stay informed at the Instagram channel [@da_sportsociety](https://www.instagram.com/da_sportsociety).



Student societies 2023-24

Diversity at the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies



STUDENT SOCIETIES



ITALIAN SOCIETY



QUEER DA



BALL COMMITTEE



DASICON CONFERENCE



CULINARY SOCIETY



SPORTS SOCIETY



DEBATE SOCIETY



FRENCH SOCIETY



WINE SOCIETY



ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY



STUDENTS ADVOCATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY



MUSIC SOCIETY



POLEMICS MAGAZINE



SLAVIC SOCIETY



SOCIEDAD HISPANOHABLANTE



CULTURAL SOCIETY



CHESS SOCIETY



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SOCIETY



BAR COMMITTEE



DAfrica SOCIETY

DA Sommerfest 2023

Impressions from our traditional closing of the academic year



400+ guests—students, alumni, friends and family—again turned our traditional Sommerfest into a very special evening!

Thank you very much for your visit!

23rd International Alumni Meeting

Excursion to the Austrian Parliament and dinner at Volksgarten Pavillon



club.da



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 ...



<https://da-vienna.ac.at/Events>

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 18 January 2024 | Reception for DA and WU Wien Alumni in Paris |
| 20 January 2024 | Wiener Ball in St. Gallen |
| 25 January 2024 | “Empress Elisabeth—A New Interpretation”:
Book presentation with DA alumna Regine Neuhauser and Professor Thomas Row |
| 26 January 2024 | 3 rd club.da After Work Clubbing: New Year's |
| 25 February 2024 | 20 th DA Ski and Snowboard Championships |
| 1 March 2024 | dasicon24: Digital Diplomacy |
| 7 March 2024 | International Women's Day event |
| 9 March 2024 | Charity Ball at the DA |
| 13 March 2024 | da.link career day 2024 |
| 30 April 2024 | World Press Freedom Day event |
| 3 May 2024 | Bal Viennois de Genève |
| 28-29 June 2024 | 24 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 at <https://club.da-vienna.ac.at/connect>.

Follow us on social media and stay informed:

- @DA_vienna
- @DA_vienna
- @DiplomatischeAkademieWien
- @DiplomatischeAkademieWien
- @DiplomatischeAkademieWien



Imprint

- Publisher:** Club der Absolventinnen und Absolventen der Diplomatischen Akademie Wien (**club.da**, ZVR: 737329369)
David Lansky, President
Favoritenstraße 15a, 1040 Wien, Österreich/Austria
- Editor-in-chief:** Andreas Ehrmann
- Editorial team:** Sybil Bitter, Katharina Dück, Nicole Lojnik
- Design:** Nicole Lojnik

All pictures and articles are copyrighted to their respective owners and contributed to **club.da** for non-commercial use. Opinions and views voiced herein are not and should not be read as the views of **club.da**.