

Distinguished Rector, Academy staff and students, dear guests,

It is indeed a great privilege to receive this doctorate today from the Academy of Management. I shall treasure it. Thank you deeply. At the same time, I would also like to congratulate all students graduating from the Academy today and the staff who have brought them to this success.

A nation's development and prosperity depend greatly on the quality of its management at all levels, both in the public and private sectors. In this regard, the Academy of Management plays a significant role. For you act as a "power-house" for future managers and leaders in the public service. The OSCE views good educational and management standards as a key contribution to overall security, stability and "change-management". Therefore the OSCE identifies strongly with the Academy's mission and other training establishments to educate and train current and future managers.

Indeed during this year alone the OSCE Centre in Bishkek has trained or supported the training of over 4,000 Kyrgyz nationals. This training ranges widely : from public and financial management to business development to the training of personnel in law-enforcement, customs, the judiciary, journalism and the protection of fundamental freedoms and the environment. Significantly OSCE training also includes the education and research conducted by the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which is so graciously hosted by the Kyrgyz State. I would also mention the internships at the OSCE Centre and the OSCE Secretariat offered to Kyrgyz nationals, which provide job-experience.

Happily, for us all, learning is a life-long experience. It does not stop after formal studies ; it just begins. Equally for me, my own learning continues. I learn from others. I learn how to adapt to new challenges. I learn how to create new opportunities. I try to learn from past mistakes or miscalculations, either my own or others. This openness to continue learning is important for us all. Naturally we need additional stimuli along the road. This can be in the form of supplementary training, peer-exchange or handling different situations.

In my own life, Kyrgyzstan is helping in my learning process. Since my appointment as OSCE's Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic 18 months ago, I believe that through friendship, contacts and OSCE programmes I have equipped myself better as a strategist, analyst and manager. I appreciate and respect the pluralism of views on any given issue. Thus Kyrgyzstan has become an important aspect of my life as well as that of my wife, Doctor Alma, who is here today – and was herself a lecturer before our marriage at the USA-equivalent of the Academy of Management, called the "Federal Executive Institute" in Charlottesville, near Washington DC. We thank the nation and people for adding to our lives. I also wish to thank my Deputy Head of Mission, Lilian Darii, who is also here today for his strong support to the Academy and the OSCE Mission.

The OSCE values its ties with the Academy of Management. I hope they will continue to strengthen and always reflect Kyrgyzstan's strong contribution as a full and equal member of the OSCE.

In closing, let me wish you all and your families a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you for your attention.