

PRESS-RELEASE

The EMPATY Project: a science-business platform as a tool for strengthening collaboration between science and business

Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic | 22 May 2026

On 21 May 2026, a meeting of the Scientific and Entrepreneurial Platform (SEP) of the Kyrgyz Republic was held in Bishkek, organized within the frame EMPATY project.

The platform aims to strengthen cooperation between the scientific community, the education sector and the business world, while also developing sustainable mechanisms for interaction between key stakeholders in the labour market and the education system.

The meeting brought together representatives of universities, civil society organisations, the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic, Government bodies, private companies, and young people from the Osh, Jalal-Abad, Issyk-Kul and Naryn oblasts. A total of 30 people participated.

A key focus of the discussions was the improvement and alignment of educational programmes with labour market needs, with the goal of boosting youth employment and encouraging young people to pursue careers within the country.

Following the meeting, the following decisions were adopted:

- *joint organization of internships for students;*
- *conducting guest lectures for students on selected topics (at least 3 universities);*
- *expanding the SEP membership with participants from public organizations in four remote regions;*
- *expanding the SEP agenda to include issues of adaptation to climate change and the development of women's entrepreneurship.*

The young participants in the meeting emphasised the importance of direct dialogue with employers and educational institutions. One participant remarked: "*Meetings like this help us understand what knowledge and skills employers in Kyrgyzstan actually need*"

The event was implemented by the EMPATY consortium, led by Hilfswerk International, co-funded by **the European Union** under the programme 'Support to Civil Society Initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic' and by the **Austrian Development Agency** (ADA).

Project implementation: Hilfswerk International, in close cooperation with PF Open Line, KGFRAS, and AFVE.

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A project implemented

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The European Union is an economic and political union of 27 European countries. It is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It acts globally to promote sustainable development of societies, environment and economies, so that everyone can benefit.

The ADA is co-funding the project "*Empowered CSOs and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Active and Prosperous Civil Society and Young Generation in the Kyrgyz Republic – EMPATY*" as part of International Partnerships Austria. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is Austria's federal agency for development cooperation and humanitarian aid. We collaborate with international organisations, public authorities, civil society, educational institutions and businesses across Africa, Asia, South East and Eastern Europe. Together with the people in our partner countries, we work to improve living conditions in their communities – for example, by providing education and training, by supporting small businesses, or by developing innovative solutions for water supply and agriculture. We are committed to reducing poverty, promoting peace and protecting the environment. For better lives and a secure future for all.

Hilfswerk International in Central Asia is an Austrian non-profit charitable organization promoting international cooperation. It has been operating in Central Asia since 2001, implementing projects and programs for agricultural development, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), projects in the social sector, and other priority areas for the development of the socio-economic sector of Central Asia

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS:

ASSOCIATION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ENTERPRISES IN KYRGYZSTAN (AFVE) *was established in June 2003 and currently unites most fruit and vegetable enterprises in the country, developing the fruit and vegetable processing sector and enterprises by creating a favorable business environment and developing the market for processed products. The "Association of fruit and vegetable enterprises" is a non-governmental, non-profit organization uniting legal entities engaged in the production and processing of agricultural produce, based on free will and common interests.*

Association of Kyrgyzstan forum of rural advisory services *(KGFRAS) was established on September 10, 2019. Currently, the Association unites around 30 advisory service organizations across the Republic. The main activities of the Association are aimed at strengthening the capacity of advisory services working in the agricultural sector through training, promotion of their services, as well as protecting their rights and advocating for their interests before government bodies, public organizations, and the donor community.*
KGFRAS is a non-governmental and non-profit organization that brings together legal entities on a voluntary basis, in accordance with their shared interests in rural development and advisory services.

Open Line *is an educational organization working in the field of protecting the rights of girls and women. Our mission is to advance human rights content through advocacy campaigns, visualization, innovation, and information technologies.*
We educate about the rights of girls and women through innovation and technology to expand horizons and opportunities:

- *We promote increased gender competence and professional skills through the lens of fostering equal opportunities, enhancing effectiveness, and improving the quality of services provided by women-led enterprises, activist groups, and women's NGOs.*
- *We foster partnerships between professionals from marketing, media, and programming and women's organizations and entrepreneurs.*
- *We create innovative social campaigns and simple IT solutions so that ordinary girls and women can use them as motivational/educational/awareness-raising materials, particularly in difficult life situations, to protect their rights.*