Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Tourism in Europe

Almaty, Kazakhstan
22-23 October 2025

Reception Hall (44 Kurmangazy street, Almaty)

Master of ceremony: Ms. Akmaral Sman, Gender Equality Specialist

Preliminary Programme

WEDNESDAY, 22 OCTOBER

08:00 – 09:00 Registration

09:00 – 10:00 **Opening Ceremony**

Cultural Performance by Sazgen Sazy, a folk and ethnographic ensemble

Opening Remarks

- **Mr. Nurtas Karipbayev**, Chairman of the Committee of Tourism Industry, Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan
- **Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- **Ms. Galiya Toxeitova,** Head of the Tourism Department of Almaty city
- **Mr. Diyar Askarov**, Director, Almaty Tourism Bureau

Video Premiere – Kazakh Women in Tourism

10:00 – 10:30 **Networking break**

10:30 – 12:00 **Roundtable Discussion**
Gender inequality in Tourism Leadership: Highlighting the achievements, acknowledging the barriers and recognizing the importance of networks for women's leadership in the tourism sector

- **Mr. Nurtas Karipbayev**, Chairman of the Committee of Tourism Industry, Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan
- **Ms. Ceren Güven Güres**, Head of the UN Women Central Asia Liaison Office and Representative of the UN Women Kazakhstan Country Office
- **Ms. Sadaqat Davudova,** Deputy Chairman of the Reserves Management Center of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- **Ms. Bernadett Kiss**, Head of International Relations Department, Visit Hungary
- **Mrs. Aleksandra Abdykaparova**, Head of the Legal and Marketing Unit of the Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic
- **Ms. Irmela Preissner**, Managing Director of Biblische Reisen (Germany)

Moderated by:
- **Ms. Nina Kušar,** Programme Officer, Regional Department for Europe, UN Tourism

12:00 – 13:30 **Networking Lunch**

13:30 – 14:00 **Setting the Scene**
Regional Overview of Women's Empowerment in Tourism and UN Tourism SDG 5 activities

- **Mr. Ben Owen**, Senior Project Specialist, Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department

14:00 – 15:30 **Panel Discussion 1**
Challenging Stereotypes: Discussing strategies to facilitate women's access to traditionally gendered roles in tourism

- **Ms. Ance Švajnzger**, General Manager East Europe & Caucasus, Intrepid Travel
- **Ms. Aisha Mambetaliva**, President, Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators
- **Ms. Rashida Shaikenova**, Independent Director of the Board of Directors of Kazakh Tourism
- **Ms. Azhar Nessipbayeva**, Senior First Officer Airbus, Air Astana
- **Ms. Danna Karagussova,** Entrepreneur, First Kazakh Woman in Space, Founder of First Media Group

Moderated by:
- **Dr. Gulbaram Kulakhmetova**, Ph. D., Assistant Professor and Senior Research Fellow, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

15:30 – 16:00 **Networking Break**

16:00 – 17:30 **Panel Discussion 2**
The Digital Divide in Tourism: Examining inequalities that exist in access to technology and digital skills and their impact on opportunities for women's empowerment

- **Ms. Misa Labarile**, Tourism Policy Officer, European Commission
- **Ms. Catriona Meehan**, Director of Public Affairs, Omio
- **Ms. Ana Pashalishvili**, Programme Specialist, Women's Entrepreneurship Acceleration, UN Women
- **Ms. Shirin Amonzoda,** Head, Department for Trade Policy and Consumption Market at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of **Tajikistan**
- **Dr. Veronica Bulat,** Associate Professor & Head of the Department of Economics, Marketing and Tourism, **Moldova** State University

Moderated by:
- **Ms. Amina Berdibekova**, Senior Manager of the Department of International Markets, "Kazakh Tourism" National Company" JSC

17:30 **End of Day 1**

19:30 – 21:30 **Gala dinner** (*by invitation only)*

THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER

08:00 – 09:00 Registration

09:00 – 09:30 **UN Tourism and Almaty Tourism Bureau – Capacity Building for Women's Empowerment**
Almaty Training Programme 2025: Women's Empowerment in Tourism implemented by UN Tourism and Almaty Tourism Bureau in 2025

- **Dr. Lucy Ferguson,** Lead Expert on Women's Empowerment for UN Tourism
- **Ms. Laura Tanat,** Local Support Expert on Women's Empowerment

09:30 – 11:00 **Panel Discussion 3**
Almaty Women take Centre Stage: Experiences and lessons learned from women shaping Kazakhstan's tourism landscape

- **Ms. Ada Dussali**, Head of the Almaty Mountaineering School, Founder of the SolQyz women's community
- **Ms. Adiya Karsybek**, Urban Planner and Designer
- **Ms. Anna Degtyaryova,** Co-founder, Almaty TourSstudio
- **Ms. Gulzipa Koyanbayeva,** Trolleybus Fleet Route Supervisor, Almaty ElectroTrans
- **Ms. Svetlana Khaninaeva**, Chef, Managing Partner, KazMyaso

Moderated by:
- **Ms. Kamila Lukpanova**, Co-founder of Journal Central Asia

11:00 – 11:30 **Almaty 'Call for Action' for Women's Empowerment in Tourism**
Presentation of the Almaty 'Call for Action' for Women's Empowerment in Tourism

11:30 – 12:00 **Closing Ceremony**

- **Mr. Nurtas Karipbayev**, Chairman of the Committee of Tourism Industry, Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan
- **Ms. Zoritsa Urosevic**, Executive Director, UN Tourism
- **Mr. Diyar Askarov**, Director, Almaty Tourism Bureau

12:00 – 13:30 **Networking Lunch**