| 01 | KU HIGHLIGHTS |
| 04 | LATEST ON GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS |
| 05 | UNIC NEWS |
| 06 | EXPERIENCING DIVERSITY THROUGH EXCHANGE PROGRAMS |
| 07 | OUTGOING NEWS |
| 09 | INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEWS |
| 11 | SPECIAL PROJECTS & PROGRAMS NEWS |
PROF. METIN SITTI APPOINTED AS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF KOÇ UNIVERSITY

Prof. Metin Sitti has been appointed as the new President of Koç University in Fall 2023. He previously worked as a Director at the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Stuttgart, Germany during 2014-2023 as the only Turkish fellow of the Max Planck Society in Germany.

Having completed his undergraduate studies at Boğaziçi University Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering in 1992, Sitti received his Master’s degree from the same department in 1994. He completed his doctoral research at the Tokyo University Department of Electrical Engineering in Japan in 1999. Between 1999-2002, Sitti worked as a research scientist and lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley in the United States. Between 2002-2014, he was a tenured professor at the Robotics Institute and the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University in the United States. Between 2011-2012, he was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University, EPFL and Sorbonne University.

Prof. Metin Sitti received the 2018 Koç University Rahmi M. Koç Medal of Science and worked part-time at Koç University School of Medicine and College of Engineering from 2018-2023. For further information, you may visit the Office of the President Website.

CELEBRATING THE 30TH YEAR OF KOÇ UNIVERSITY

We are thrilled to share our joyous celebration of the 100th anniversary of Türkiye’s proclamation of the Republic and the 30th anniversary of Koç University’s establishment. Our celebrations took place on October 4th at the Rumelifeneri Campus, uniting students, faculty, staff, and alumni with a memorable series of events.

Commencing in the Sevgi Gönül Auditorium, the celebration kicked off with a concert by the 100th Year Gala Orchestra, conducted by maestro Cem Mansur. Soprano Dilruba Bilgi and baritone Caner Akgün enriched the evening with captivating performances of pieces by George Frideric Handel, Nevit Kodalli, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Following the concert, a torchlight procession accompanied by a marching band, beginning at the Science Portal and culminating at the Odeon, brought together students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The Odeon event featured the Koç University Choir’s concert, a speech by our President Prof. Dr. Metin Sitti, and a visually engaging performance led by faculty members and voiced by the esteemed theatre actress Tilbe Saran. The celebration continued at the Student Square with the Hey Douglas! concert, blending psychedelic and funk pieces from the ’70s and ’80s with electronic and disco music.
Koç University has once again been recognized as the most successful research institution in Türkiye in the 2021-2022 call of Horizon Europe. The prestigious program is the world’s largest research and innovation initiative. Koç University has received a total of 14.4 million euros for 19 projects, including 9 ERC grants and 1 EIC grant, as well as other research initiatives.

The nine ERC grants include five in engineering, three in social sciences, and one in life sciences. The Twinning Program focuses on migration research, and Koç University has received the EIC transition fund for the first time. The interdisciplinary projects in the fields of engineering and medicine have been deemed worthy of consortium support. Other projects in administrative sciences, law, and social sciences were conducted in collaboration with other universities and institutions.

Koç University’s success can be attributed to its distinguished faculty profile, commitment to interdisciplinary studies, and excellent research environment.

Koç University’s Graduate School of Business ranked 35th in the “Executive MBA” (EMBA) program rankings of the Financial Times, one of the world’s most prestigious publications, and ranked first in Türkiye for the 10th consecutive year. With women constituting 50% of its faculty members, the Koç University Graduate School of Business shared first place with another university in this criterion.

With its Executive MBA and MBA programs, the Koç University Graduate School of Business is the only institution in Türkiye to attain accreditation from AMBA (The Association of MBAs), the leading authority in graduate business education.

In 2023, we experienced a notable increase in international diversity among our undergraduate students, with applicants from 57 countries compared to 38 in 2022. The new cohort includes Ghanaian, French, Swiss, Taiwanese, and Saudi students for the first time. Notably, there is a 14% rise in the admission of students from International Baccalaureate (IB) and A-level curriculum schools, and the SAT remains the predominant test for 75% of admitted candidates. There is also a significant increase (from 9% to 18%) in the ratio of admitted applicants with IB diplomas scoring in the 40-42 range. The university welcomed a record number of 28 Computer Engineering students. Additionally, there is a growth in the percentage of first-generation students, reflecting the institution’s commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in higher education. The international student community now constitutes 10% of the student body across all degree levels, contributing to a more diverse and vibrant campus environment.
**SAVE THE DATE: KOÇ UNIVERSITY’S INTERNATIONAL STAFF WEEKS & STUDY ABROAD FAIR**

Koç University is hosting three International Staff Weeks from May 13-17, 2024, inviting university professionals to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange. International Staff Week is hosted by the Office of International Programs (OIP), International Library Staff Week is hosted by Koç University Libraries, and International Staff Week is hosted by the Gender Equality Office (GEO). All three programs offer unique focal points for professionals to converge, exchange insights, and cultivate collaborations across diverse fields, thereby enriching the global landscape of higher education and information sharing. Interested individuals can access further details and participation from this link. Here’s our International Staff Week 2023 video.

We invite you to present your university at the Study Abroad Fair held held during our dynamic International Staff Week. This event offers a prime platform to showcase your institution’s unique offerings to Koç University students.

**ISRÐ’S RECRUITMENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM HIGH SCHOOL VISITS TO VIRTUAL FAIRS**

Throughout its dynamic recruitment efforts, the International Student Recruitment Directorate (ISRÐ) embarked on a comprehensive series of activities to enhance global outreach. These initiatives included visits to high schools in the UAE, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan, fostering direct student engagement and providing valuable insights into the university’s offerings. The ISRÐ also participated in the “Compass Education Fair” in Kazakhstan, the “e-fellows LLM day” in Germany, and the “Brive Student Education Fair” in Greece, reinforcing the institution’s commitment to international diversity. In the virtual realm, the ISRÐ joined the Ashoka University Virtual Study Abroad Fair in India and the CUPL Virtual Study Abroad Fair in China, expanding its reach to students seeking quality education from the comfort of their homes. For more details of upcoming events in your country or virtually visit https://international.ku.edu.tr/upcoming-events/ or contact the team at study@ku.edu.tr.

**OIP RAISED FUNDS AT THE ISTANBUL MARATHON**

OIP Runners completed an 8k marathon in early November in hopes to raise awareness and collect donations for Spastic Children’s Foundation of Türkiye, to help with their efforts to raise funds for the rehabilitation and treatment of children with Cerebral Palsy in the earthquake region of Türkiye. OIP runners created their campaign pages to invite colleagues and friends to contribute to the donations for this great cause. We thank all our colleagues, students and friends who helped the goal of collecting donations for this foundation.

(*)The Istanbul Marathon is recognized as the sole intercontinental marathon globally. With over 60,000 participants, it has touched thousands of lives through donations to NGOs.
In September 2023, the OIP team attended the EAIE 2023 Conference held from September 25 to 29, 2023, and themed “Connecting Currents” which focused on how international education actively connects ‘currents’ of thought, areas of expertise, disciplines, and cultures.

The OIP delegation included Director Burcu Sarsılmaz and UNIC and Exchange Programs Specialist Tuğba Güven. Their participation in the conference showcased KU’s commitment to fostering international collaboration and educational exchange and provided a valuable platform for networking and sharing insights with professionals from around the world.

The EAIE Conference served as a dynamic forum for discussing the latest trends and innovations in international education, and OIP’s presence undoubtedly contributed to the exchange of ideas and the promotion of global educational excellence.

In accordance with KU’s strategic internationalisation plan, OIP team has been working on increasing and strengthening KU’s international presence in the global arena and networks since the establishment of OIP. Burcu Sarsılmaz, Director at OIP, and Rena Polat Korkmaz, Team Leader for Exchange Programs and Partnerships attended NAFSA Conference in Washington, DC, a welcoming capital city rich in history and culture, from May 30 to June 2, 2023. Our representatives had more than 25 meetings with our valuable partners to strengthen current linkages and discover about latest innovations, proven strategies, and best practices. Click on the thumbnail to watch our NAFSA reels!

Our President Prof. Metin Sitti attended the “Diamond Jubilee University Presidents’ Forum” organized by Chinese University of Hong Kong and the “World University Leadership Summit: Higher Education Collaboration” organized by Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen between December 9-11. In these meetings, where President Sitti was among the panel speakers, Presidents of the world’s leading universities discussed the future of education and research. Mr. Sitti also met with the Presidents of Koç University’s other valued partners in Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong and The Polytechnical University of Hong Kong, to discuss how and in which areas the cooperation between our institutions can be improved.
UNIC EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY OF CITIES IN POST–INDUSTRIAL TRANSITION

An alliance of ten universities educating through teaching, research and community engagement, towards inclusive societies.

CELEBRATING 3 YEARS TOGETHER: 2023 UNIC CONFERENCE IN ROTTERDAM

The Conference was organized by the UNIC team at Erasmus University Rotterdam and brought together students, academics, and project management teams through different sessions, workshops, discussions and social events.

The UNIC Conference held between 25-26 September 2023 in Rotterdam brought together members of the UNIC alliance to celebrate the achievements of UNIC’s first phase and look ahead to the future of the European University of Cities in the Post-Industrial Transition.

UNIC European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transition An alliance of ten universities educating through teaching, research and community engagement, towards inclusive societies.

The Conference was also served as bridge to the Project’s second phase, UNIC 2.0. The Alliance members shared their perspectives about the future of UNIC alongside discussions to wrap up the initial three years.

ERASMUS MUNDUS JOINT MASTERS: REDESIGNING THE POST–INDUSTRIAL CITY (RePIC)

UNIC is calling future urban thinkers who are curious and interested in how we can revitalize post-industrial cities! RePIC is a joint European Master in Science (MSc) developed by 8 world-class universities within the scope of UNIC. A comprehensive 2-year study program with 120 ECTS, fully delivered in English and with tailored mandatory mobility between the participating university campuses.

RePIC’s vision is to develop a new network of the urban thinkers of tomorrow with the capacity to contribute to future-oriented, avant-garde thinking that contributes to the revitalization of post-industrial cities. RePIC aims to create an educational experience that recognizes and responds critically to issues of cities in different forms and stages of post-industrial transition as well as to equip the next generation of specialists with the 21st-century skills and knowledge needed to address the challenges and opportunities of cities in transition and superdiverse societies. For more information about the programs, please visit: ABOUT THE RePIC MASTER’S
FALL 2023 ORIENTATION FOR INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

The start of the academic year of 2023-2024 was joyful! With the arrival of our exchange students to our campus we held an orientation week with various activities for their integration to the campus and life in Istanbul.

Beginning with a heart-warming welcome speech at the Sevgi Gönül Auditorium (SGKM), students got their first taste of the university’s vast array of services offered by the OIP and ICO offices. After the informative sessions, the atmosphere turns more relaxed as students come together for a friendly game of Turkish Culture Trivia, Human Bingo in the Henry Ford Yard, and the Chill and Paint session in the lively Winter Garden. These activities encouraged connections and socializing, making the campus feel cozier.

The Student Clubs Fair offered students the chance to explore and join various student clubs. This orientation week, while filled with excitement, was also a valuable opportunity for students to get accustomed to their new academic environment and become part of the Koç University community.

Here is the video of our orientation week capturing the special moment to remember.

WELCOME BREAKFAST FOR INCOMING EXCHANGE STUDENTS

During the orientation week, exchange students enjoyed a delightful Welcome Breakfast in the Hills of Sariyer, overlooking the stunning Black Sea. The beautiful setting provided a wonderful atmosphere for students to come together and get to know each other. The students chatted while experiencing a range of traditional Turkish breakfast, such as savory börek, an assortment of cheeses and mezze, and, of course, the essential Turkish çay.
In the pursuit of winning the Outgoing Student Video Contest, our outgoing students revisited their favorite moments, showcasing special landmarks and unique encounters from their exchange journey.

Students shared their creations on the Google Form, creating a vibrant collection of memories on our social media account (@kocunivoip). The winners were later announced via email, with selections based on the number and creativity of the submitted videos. Throughout the contest, participants and followers connected on our Instagram account @kocunivoip, exploring last year’s winning videos. A big thank you to all the students who participated and shared their unique stories!

We enjoyed reliving our students’ adventures through their lens. Follow us on Instagram to be updated on our student’s experiences!

“My Exchange Story” Contest
Recap of the Spring 2023 Outgoing Exchange Experience!

Returning from Erasmus in Rome La Sapienza allowed me to appreciate cultural distinctions between Italy and Türkiye, explore Byzantine roots, and engage with diverse international students. Delving into neuropsychology sparked a keen interest and offered an alternative career path. Living alone in a cosmopolitan European city improved my Italian proficiency and provided a memorable experience of integration. The architecture, cultural richness, and exposure to the Mediterranean mindset left an indelible mark. Unforgettable moments included holidays, pride parades, and the Women’s day march. Erasmus, a lifetime experience, is a must for those seeking a new perspective in social and academic life. Even now, I occasionally feel mentally transported back to that transformative period.

Mina Bağzibağlı
Media and Visual Arts, Sapienza University of Rome
Erasmus’s wisdom, “Life is what happens to us while we are busy making plans,” became evident as I unexpectedly found myself in Reims, France, instead of Russia due to a global exchange program. Adapting to this change, I discovered the liberating atmosphere at Sciences Po, where students engage in open debates, fostering individual expression. Peer mentorships boosted my confidence and social skills, fostering friendships with students worldwide. My time in France included art appreciation at the Louvre, enchanted moments with the Eiffel Tower, and memorable experiences like hot chocolate at Angèle. This period in my life, filled with European tours and cultural exploration, remains special and cherished.

Ayşegül Sakarya
International Relations & Business Administration
Sciences Po

Living abroad for a semester was an enriching experience, my first extended stay in a foreign country away from loved ones. Accepted by Ruhr University Bochum for my Erasmus period, I initially had reservations about the small city, but Erasmus proved to be a transformative opportunity for self-discovery and improvement. Facing challenges independently boosted my confidence and self-esteem. Beyond the excitement of traveling, making international friends, and immersing in different cultures, Erasmus offered valuable opportunities for personal growth. Embracing every opportunity presented by Erasmus allows you to shape the experience as you wish.

Arzum Başak Ekici
Psychology
Ruhr University Bochum

During my semester exchange at Tilburg University, I had an incredible time. Despite initial anxiety about being abroad, I quickly felt at home. Support from everyone, especially teachers, made the transition smooth. Taking a Dutch class was a highlight, and living in student housing connected me with amazing people worldwide. I formed close bonds, explored the Netherlands and Europe with newfound friends, and enjoyed unique Dutch holidays. In summary, my six months in Tilburg were an amazing adventure.

Sevde Naz Çiçek,
Law & Media and Visual Arts
Tilburg University
THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SERVICE HUB IS BACK!

Since April 2022, we have been welcoming colleagues from around the world to be a member of the International Student Service Hub where we come together monthly over Zoom, to share their experiences regarding providing assistance to international students.

With **43 active members from 32 institutions and 30 countries**, each month there has been the opportunity to learn from each other’s best practices and become inspired to evolve the current services provided to the international student body.

Aside from our monthly series, we also hold **Int’l Hub Spotlight** sessions where colleagues from different institutions can be guest speaker who presents unique projects, programs or courses that they lead in their home institution that may benefit the members.

**ICO invites all university professionals working in the field of internationalization to become a part of the Int’l Hub.** Your valuable perspective and expertise on the services provided would be highly insightful and the discussion of services would be greatly beneficial in broadening the internationalization efforts of all parties involved.

To find out more, watch our introduction video and sign up, you may visit the [ICO Website](#).

FIRST INTERNATIONAL WEEK AT KOÇ UNIVERSITY

In a historic first for KU, the campus recently came alive with a vibrant celebration of diversity and internationalization during the inaugural International Week, held from December 4th to December 8th, 2023.

This groundbreaking event, a testament to the university’s commitment to embracing global perspectives, was a resounding success, thanks in no small part to the active involvement of the KU community.

The International Week offered a platform for students, staff, and faculty to share their cultural heritage, fostering an atmosphere of mutual understanding and appreciation. Participants had the opportunity to represent their home country at cultural stalls, lead engaging cooking workshops, facilitate language circles, and much more.

The event not only celebrated diversity but also encouraged cultural exchange, making it a memorable week for all involved. It was a remarkable showcase of unity in diversity and a testament to KU’s commitment to fostering an inclusive and globally aware community.

You can visit the [ICO website](#) and [Instagram](#) to get a glimpse of all events that took place!
As the International Community Services Office (ICO), we've embarked on a journey of connection and support for our international community through various impactful initiatives. Let's dive into the enriching experiences offered through our Orientations, KU Guides, and Turkish Coffee Hours Program.

In a bid to foster a warm welcome, ICO conducted **multiple orientations** in September and early October, embracing new international community members with open arms.

This year, 90 undergraduates and 46 Buddies experienced a comprehensive event covering campus life, Istanbul, and essential processes, ensuring readiness for their KU journey. On September 25th, Erasmus, Global Exchange, and Stanford students received vital guidance on ICO, Istanbul, and KU for a smooth transition, including insights into residence permits and official procedures.

New international faculty, welcomed on September 26th, gained comprehensive insights into KU's history, administration, and campus life through an engaging tour. October 5th featured an on-campus orientation for international graduate and post-graduate students, with a tailored session for CEMS students on October 6th, providing essential information for their KU educational journey.

The KU Guides Program is in full swing this semester, with 11 of the planned 16 exciting events already realized. These events, ranging from cultural and artistic to sportive activities, serve as a bridge, facilitating integration between the international and local communities.

Our Turkish Coffee Hours Program, now more comprehensive than ever, offers 21 scheduled meetings for the fall semester to brew conversations. With a participant-tutor ratio of 2:5:3, the program facilitates enjoyable and socializing environments for international community members to practice conversational Turkish skills with volunteer Turkish tutors.

In conclusion, International Community Services is committed to enhancing the experiences of our international community, whether through informative orientations, community-bridging events, or language practice sessions. We look forward to fostering a vibrant and supportive community throughout the academic year.

**We encourage you to check out the [ICO Instagram page](#) to have a look at all of the different events and projects that took place this year!**
On October 27th - 28th, KU’s new KA220-HED - Cooperation partnerships in higher education project titled: "De-biasing in Higher Education for Improved Decisionmaking Skills" kick-off meeting was held in Istanbul. National Training Center (the coordinator Bulgaria), Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), and Artevelde Academy (Belgium), and KdG University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Belgium) are the project partners. Specific objectives are: to improve HE entry-level student orientation programs and courses and build up confidence in rational decision-making related to student life; to provide sustainable and practical solutions to de-bias and improve decision-making in such domains of HE studies where decision-making is a critical function; to design, promote and sustain de-biased teaching practices, including assessment. Prof. Zeynep Cemalcılar of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities attended the meeting.

The Disinfo Academy project team had their TPM in Istanbul on October 30th and 31st. National Training Center (the coordinator Bulgaria), Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), and University of Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), and Asociatia Eurocomunicare (Romania) are the project partners. The collaborative project participants examine, assess, and suggest an enhanced fact-checking algorithm grounded in contemporary practices and trends observed in the online conduct of youth. The project is striving to pinpoint instinctive approaches for fact-checking and navigating the complexities of a digital information landscape that is becoming progressively perplexing, with the distinctions between "true" and "fake" less defined than ever before.
We are happy to have welcomed a group of students, staff, and academicians from the University of Nevada, Reno, as part of the "Entrepreneurship & Business Program" at Koç University! Throughout their visit, our guests had the opportunity to attend insightful seminars conducted by our faculty members, focusing on various aspects of entrepreneurship and business. These sessions aimed to provide them with valuable knowledge and expertise in their field of interest.

We organized several visits such as Koç University's incubation center KWORKS, Arçelik Factory, and its Innovation Center as well as cultural and historical tours. These visits and tours provided them with a deeper understanding of Türkiye's flourishing entrepreneurship ecosystem, fascinating heritage and traditions.

As part of KU’s collaboration with Stanford University, the Office of International Programs and Stanford’s Bing Overseas Studies Program (BOSP) organize an annual program with the title “Stanford at Koç University, Istanbul”. Within the framework of this program, KU hosts a group of Stanford students and Faculty-in-Residence for the Fall semester. This year’s cohort arrived in late September and the program started with the Orientation. The program is designed to give students an integrated study abroad experience in Istanbul and to provide them with an opportunity to experience rigorous academics while at the same time developing a broad awareness, knowledge, and appreciation for Türkiye, its culture, and its role within the global ecosystem. While taking courses from multiple departments at Koç University with top-notch academic quality, the Stanford students are also exposed to several extracurricular activities, both in Istanbul and other parts of Türkiye, organized by the IPEP team that enrich this learning experience to a great extent.

Global Learning and Leadership for Sustainability (GLLS) is a cocurricular program for Koç University undergraduate students to complement their academic studies with a “hands-on” approach. The comprehensive program aims to enable students to acquire global competence and develop personal and professional skills to thrive in a 21st-century world. For more information, you can visit: glls.ku.edu.tr

Between October 4 - 6 students along with the coordinators had a lovely retreat in Ağva, Istanbul, where the group charged their batteries with self-discovery, patience, happiness and respect for others.

Under the mesmerizing spell of the GLLS Homecoming Gathering event on October 30, our community rekindled the flame of togetherness with a wondrous two-hour sojourn. Truly, this event was a vibrant celebration of community’s essence.
WISHING YOU A GREAT HOLIDAY SEASON!

THE EDITORIAL STAFF WELCOMES STORY IDEAS, COMMENTS, AND NEWS. DROP A LINE AT EXCHANGE@KU.EDU.TR