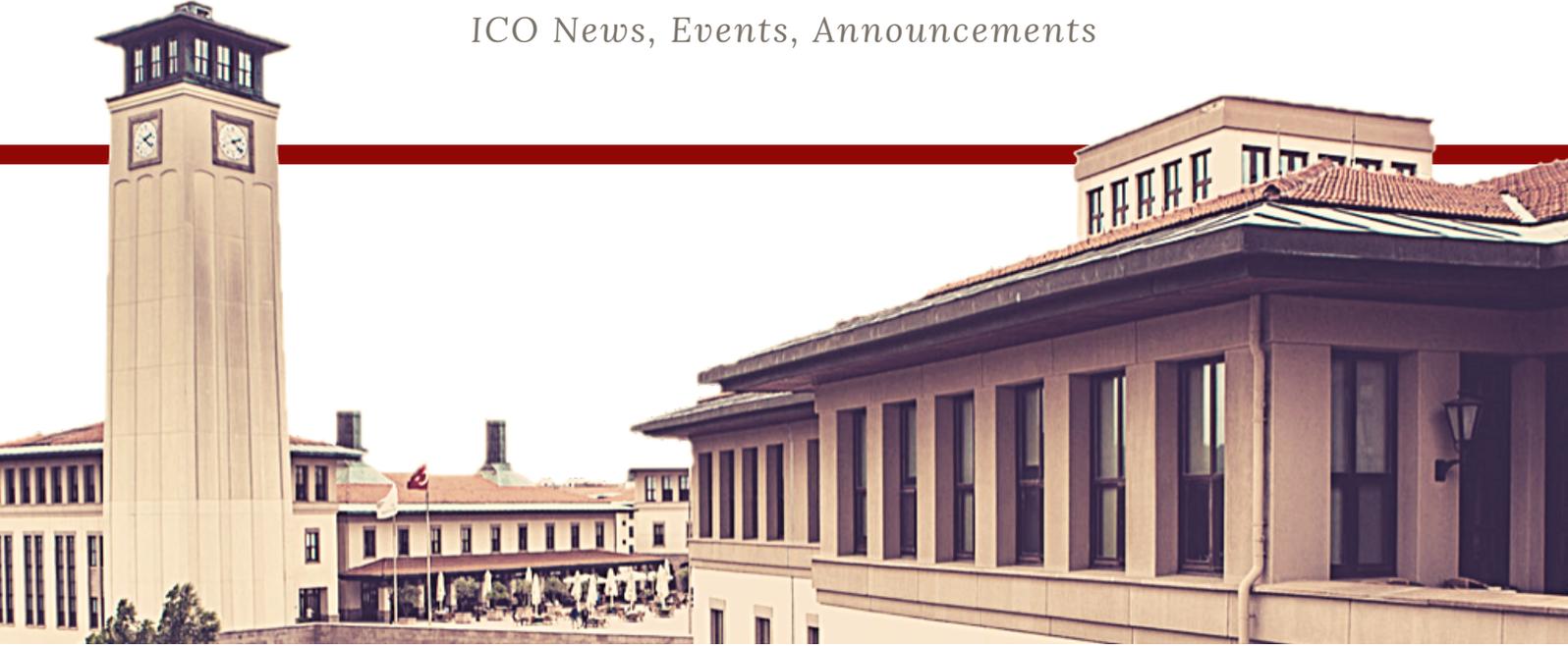


# INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICES OFFICE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ICO News, Events, Announcements



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

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## SPECIAL BRIEF FOR NEWCOMERS

**Are you going to be a Koç University student this fall?  
Then do not miss this brief!**

We have gathered the most necessary information together for you to ease your transition process to university and campus.

In this article, you will find resources on how to arrive on campus, how to proceed with the residence permit application, how to obtain a tax ID number, how to register your mobile device, and more.

The most beneficial KU offices for you and our Virtual Campus Introduction PPT Show are also listed there.

The resources listed here will definitely help you have a smooth adaptation to your new environment.

Read more on *page 5*.

# Celebrating 20th Year at KU

Starting his employment at Koç University's Human Resources Department as an External Relations Specialist in 2001, ICO's Ayhan Şeker celebrates his 20th anniversary at KU this year.

## **By his own words;**

*I have been serving the KU international community since 2001 by assisting their work (academic and administrative) and residence permits and taking care of the official correspondences on this matter. Since the university moved its permanent Rumeli Feneri Campus one year before my employment, I dealt with the university's administrative procedures such as tracking the utility bills, notary public visits, and such.*

*Before the formation of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and the establishment of the Immigration Directorate in 2013, it was the Police Department holding the immigration matters.*

*Back these days, we used to wait for long times in queues for the work and residence permit applications. There, the officers used to check each application file one by one while we were waiting there to answer any possible questions.*

*The great increase in the number of the international community at KU paved the way for the establishment of ICO in 2014. My expertise on the immigration matter brought me here. Since then, I have been serving the KU international community as an ICO specialist.*

*My purpose is to support KU international community (academic and administrative staff, students, and their families) in a way that they do not feel any bureaucratic challenge on their way so that they can fully concentrate on their academic and administrative works peacefully.*

*I am happy to assist you in your journey!*

**We thank our valuable team member for all his efforts and presence.  
Congratulations Ayhan! Happy 20th anniversary!**





# Meet Melissa Abache

## *International Student Recruitment Director*

As you already know, our Instagram interview series continues with great enthusiasm and receives high interest. We took the summer vacation as an advantage to move more towards our colleagues at KU.

We started our very first KU employee interview with Melissa Abache, International Student Recruitment Director. We asked her employment story, challenges, favorites in Istanbul, and of course, advice for the KU community.

If you prefer watching or listening to our interview, you can find the video version on our [Instagram account](#).

### **Can you please introduce yourself briefly?**

Of course! So my name is Melissa Abache. I am originally from Caracas which is the capital of Venezuela, which is the country in the north of South America. People often do not know where it is so I always explain that we are between Colombia and Brazil, which more people know about. So that is where I was born and I completed my primary, secondary, and university education and then I moved out of Venezuela in 2005 and I have been living in different countries since then.

### **When did you come to Turkey by the way?**

Actually, the first time [visiting] as a tourist was in 2006 and then I came to live here permanently in 2011, so this July, in a month, I will be celebrating my 10th anniversary of living here.

### **Congratulations in advance! How did you find the employment opportunity at Koç University in the first place? Which platform did you use? Is there any specific reason why you are in Turkey at Koç University at the moment?**

For me, it's always the story that I like to share with people who are studying right now to give an example of the importance of your networks, you know, how to cultivate your networks and how it helps people in the long run. When I first moved to Turkey, I started to look for jobs and I wasn't sure if I would be able to work in the field that I was working in before. I was living in London before for 6 years and my area was in the public sector, developing community engagement around built environment projects so I realized, okay, I don't speak Turkish [so] it's not likely that I will be attractive to the municipalities or architectural firms here in Turkey. So I started to think about what I can do here and I had a friend of mine from my Master's at London School of Economics (LSE) who told me "I have a friend who is American and lives in Istanbul, you should meet him," this was back in 2011. That friend was James, who used to work at Koç University in the Office of International Programs (OIP).

# Meet Melissa Abache

*International Student  
Recruitment Director*

He was one of the first team members of the OIP, setting up the Global Learning certificate and other programs. At the time we just had a really nice Turkish breakfast in Moda. I remember, we were just talking about living here, where to live, places to visit, where to learn Turkish and things like that. We just kept in touch after that. Then in 2014, I saw this job OIP which was for a Global Engagement Coordinator and it was advertised on LinkedIn. So I remembered James and I contacted him and then you know, he recommended me to the hiring manager at OIP, Meline, who was working there at the time and that is how I got my interview and started working at Koç. And I came to Turkey to live here because I was married to a Turkish man that I met in London. You see, a lot of Latin American women who are in Turkey because of that reason - they met a Turkish man somewhere around the world and they brought them here. So yeah, that is how I came here.

**It's an inspiring story. You really explained the importance of networks well, thank you for this. Did you have any difficulty in adjusting to the working culture in Turkey? Did you observe any differences compared to your previous experiences?**

I think overall is not that different from the working culture in Venezuela for example. It was a bit different from what I was used to in the UK or Spain, in the sense that I was used to getting things done by email a lot more and I realized here in Turkey people value more face-to-face time to agree on things. So sometimes I would question why we were having a meeting about [this], but then I realized, you know, people build strong relationships through all of those meetings so later on if you need a favor or need someone to kind of bend something for you or speed up the process of something, it's because of all those meetings that you [are able to do that]. I think the other thing is that hierarchy is important so if a request comes from the senior manager it gets done very quickly, which is something I was not used to. If a peer asks you to do something, you do it because it's a part of your job. But I realized here it's more effective to ask your manager to help you request something. I have adapted now. But overall, I always tell the friends that come to visit me and ask about the working culture here that I think Turkish people are incredibly hard-working. I mean the amount of time and effort that people put [into their work] here you don't find everywhere.

**Have you ever encountered anything that wowed you in Turkey? Maybe with the local culture, Turkish friends?**

I mean, still many things surprise me, but one of the things that surprised me positively right from the start (coming from the UK) was the amount of trust people have in each

# Meet Melissa Abache

*International Student  
Recruitment Director*

other. Maybe Turkish people do not feel that way, but to someone coming from the outside, especially from Europe or the USA, the amount of trust people have in each other [was surprising]. For example, you go to a shop and you may not have the exact amount to pay, the shopkeeper says "Don't worry, I know you will pay me back when you can. and lets you go without paying the full amount or paying nothing at all. Or, for example, parents with small kids. Strangers come up to their kids on the street and touch them or hug them and give them something. This is something that in the UK is not unseen but is very rare. You know, to see that level of comfort in having strangers approach you and talk to you so that for me was one of the nicest things about moving here.

**Thank you for sharing that. Now I will ask you 5 quick questions, I want you to finish the sentences.**

**Your favorite Turkish meal is** Turkish breakfast. I simply love it. I miss it when I stop having it for a few days.

**Your favorite Turkish dessert is** Sütlaç.

**The Turkish word you use most frequently is** "Yani."

**Your favorite spot in Istanbul is** I think it's my neighborhood, I live in Kurtuluş in Feriköy, and the whole neighborhood is amazing.

**Your favorite spot on campus is** I would say the sports center very early in the morning when there is no one and I have the whole place to myself and it's just nice.

**The last question of this interview is: What would be your advice for other Koc University international members?**

Learn Turkish. As soon as you can, devote as much time as you can to get to the advanced level of proficiency because it makes a huge difference to the experience that you have here, the friends that you make, the opportunities you can have. At first, it sounds very hard but then you realize that it is such a logical and mathematical language that it's easier to learn than English, for me. So learn Turkish!



# Special Brief for Newcomers

Welcome to KU!

Congratulations on your acceptance!

It has been a challenging period for all of us due to the global pandemic. It is planned to have the Fall '21 academic semester on campus in Turkey if everything goes well. We are very excited to welcome you to Istanbul and look forward to meeting you soon.

As the International Community Services Office (ICO), we are a part of the [Office of International Programs](#) and work for the KU international community. We are a resource hub for numerous topics pertaining to the lives of internationals in Istanbul and Turkey. We facilitate your life in Istanbul and on campus by assisting you by providing immigration advising (visa and residence permit), pre/post-arrival support on legal and social procedures, cultural and social integration programs, enhancing multicultural awareness, and likewise.

In this brief, we want to direct you appropriate resources prior to your arrival so that your transition process can be smooth. Please check out the below-given guide by clicking on them.



[GETTING READY- NEWCOMERS' GUIDE](#)



[ENTRY TO TURKEY](#)



[ARRIVING ON CAMPUS AND CHECKING IN](#)



[TRANSPORTATION](#)



[HOUSING](#)



[REGISTERING YOUR MOBILE DEVICE](#)



[STUDENTS RESIDENCE PERMIT](#)



[HOW TO GET A TAX ID NUMBER](#)



[HEALTH & EMERGENCY](#)



[VIRTUAL CAMPUS INTRODUCTION](#)



[CAMPUS LIFE](#)



[KOC UNIVERSITY APP](#)



[ACADEMIC CALENDAR](#)



[STUDENT FARE ISTANBULKART](#)

## Beneficial Offices

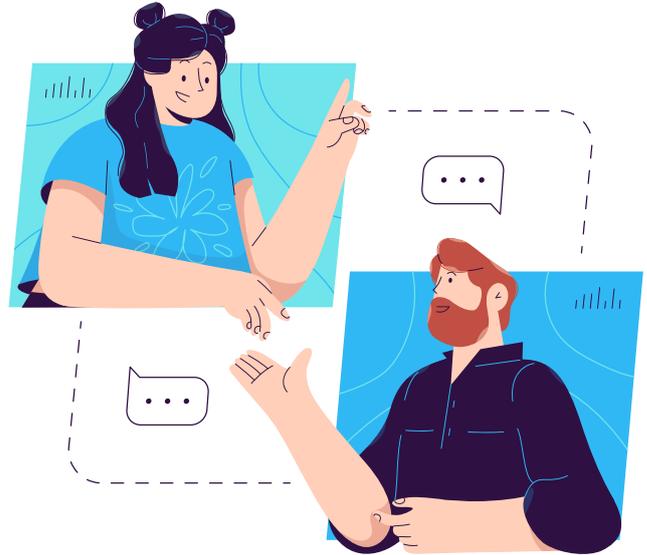
There are plenty of offices at KU for your academic and personal growth. Below you can find only some of them. Please visit the [Dean of Students' website](#) to discover more.

- [Academic and Life Skills- ALIS](#)
- [Career Development Center](#)
- [KU Guidance and Psychological Services Center \(KURES\)](#)
- [Office of International Programs \(OIP\)](#)
- [KU Office of Learning and Teaching \(KOLT\)](#)

Still, felt lost? You can check [KU Student Guide!](#)

# Demand for ICO's Virtual Advising Raises by 90% in the Second Quarter

The outbreak of COVID-19 created radical changes in workflow. The classes moved online, and KU academic and administrative staff started working from home. As uncertainty was a part of daily life back in March 2020, our office received numerous questions. As a result, we adopted rapid actions such as website and social media updates, creating Weekly News Update, aka Bi-Weekly News, and such.



During this period, we moved our advising hours online too. Those KU international community members who would like to discuss a specific topic or issue booked a virtual meeting with us. We mainly met community members through Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and sometimes WhatsApp.

This service grew strong in 2021 and is now a high demand from our community. Compared to the first quarter of the year, the number of virtual consultation sessions we held increased by 90% in the second quarter.

Both our office and community members preferred online meetings since it is a time-saving and more practical option.

We are happy to see such a demand from our community. If you too have anything to discuss, you can email us at [ico@ku.edu.tr](mailto:ico@ku.edu.tr) and ask for a virtual meeting. We will propose the earliest spot to you and send you a meeting invitation after your confirmation.

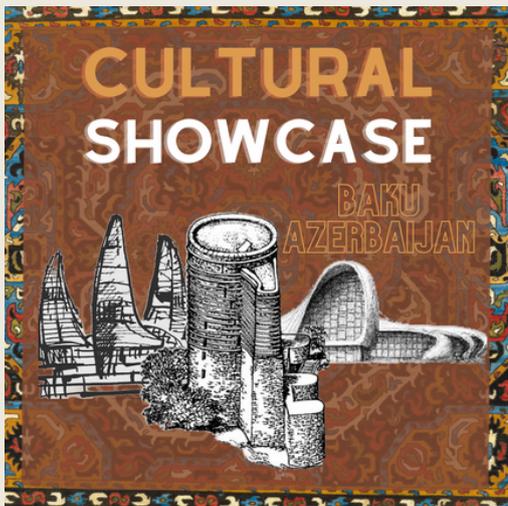
# You are Invited to Our Instagram Project: Cultural Showcase

As you might already know, we have launched an Instagram project for the KU international community to get to know each other and to enrich the community spirit. You are warmly invited to use this opportunity and share your heritage, culture, traditions, daily routines, or hometown in your own words.

If you are interested in taking part in this project, feel free to email us your material at [ico@ku.edu.tr](mailto:ico@ku.edu.tr). For more information, please click [here](#).



## PREVIOUS POSTS



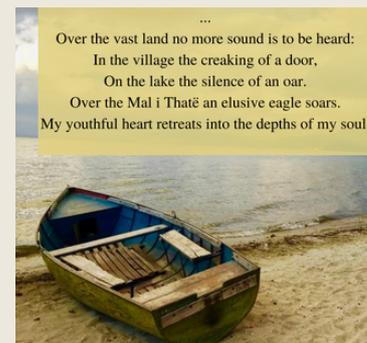
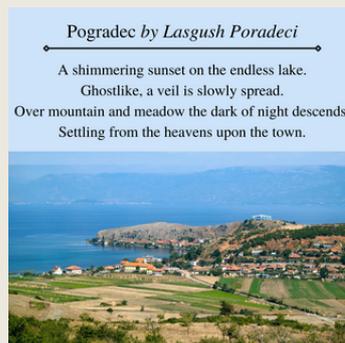
### BAKU, AZERBAIJAN



Full post [here](#)



### POGRADEC, ALBANIA



Full post [here](#)

# Continue to Reach Us

Please contact us if you have any questions.

We are working from home Mon-Fri 8:30 AM- 5:30 PM.

We keep our **advising hours (between 3- 5 PM)** for online advising during each workweek. If you would like to have a live meeting with us, please make an appointment in advance by sending an email to [ico@ku.edu.tr](mailto:ico@ku.edu.tr). Each meeting will be limited to 15 minutes.

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