

# Tourism Faculty Newsletter

Our faculty proudly and joyfully celebrated the graduation of the 2024-2025 academic year graduates



We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Vice Rector Prof. Dr. Cengiz TOKER, all our academic and administrative staff, parents, and dear students who attended the Akdeniz University Faculty of Tourism Graduation Ceremony, held at the University's Atatürk Conference Hall on June 13, 2025.

We warmly congratulate all our graduating students on their achievements—especially those who graduated with top honors at the faculty and departmental level—and wish them continued success in the next chapter of their lives.

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## 49. Tourism Week

In the scope of the 49th Tourism Week events, a panel titled “People Creating Value for a Sustainable Future” was held on April 21, 2025, at our faculty’s Nuri Özaltın Conference Hall.

The panel was moderated by our Dean, Prof. Dr. Ebru İÇİGEN, and featured the following speakers: Hakan SAATÇIOĞLU, Chairman of the Board of POYD; Mehmet BAHAR, Deputy Secretary General of POYD; Suha ŞARK, Vice Chairman of the Board of İNKAY; and Hayri DEMİRER, Board Member of İNKAY.



## Disability Awareness Week Event



On May 16, 2025, as part of the Disability Awareness Week celebrations, 11th-grade students from Kepez Special Education Vocational School visited the Faculty of Tourism. During a workshop organized by the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, the students showcased their talents by working in teams to prepare dishes inspired by the local cuisine of Antalya.



## Chef's Jacket and Knife Presentation

On Friday, April 25, 2025, the “Chef's Jacket and Knife Presentation Ceremony” was held at the Nuri Özaltın Conference Hall of our faculty, marking a significant milestone for our first-year Gastronomy and Culinary Arts students. During the ceremony, students received their chef's jackets and knives, which will accompany them throughout their educational journey.

The event was honored by the presence of Akdeniz University Rector Prof. Dr. Özlenen ÖZKAN, Vice Rectors Prof. Dr. Şükrü ÖZEN and Prof. Dr. Cengiz TOKER, Dean of the Faculty of Tourism Prof. Dr. Ebru İÇİGEN, faculty members from the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department, senior students, and representatives from Swandor Hotel. As part of the program, speeches were delivered on themes such as kitchen discipline and professional ethics, followed by the ceremonial knife presentation and a group photo session to celebrate the occasion.



## Research and Development Commission Activities

**Eye-Opening Talks:** The 6th session of the “Eye-Opening Talks” series—initiated by the Tourism Management Department to bring together leading figures from the tourism sector and our students—was held on April 24, 2025, within the scope of the Research and Development Commission activities.

The event, titled “How to Use Generative AI Effectively in Tourism?”, was coordinated by Prof. Dr. Beykan ÇİZEL from Tourism Management Department, and Tourism Sector Consultant Mr. Timuçin DİŞ as guest speaker.



# Internationalization Activities

**Visit to Our Faculty:** On May 5, 2025, faculty members and students from Katholieke Hogeschool Vives Noord University (Bruges, Belgium)—one of our partner institutions under the Erasmus+ Program—visited our Faculty of Tourism as part of the bilateral agreement with our Tourism Management Department. The visiting group, coordinated by Prof. Dr. Inge SERRUYS, was provided with information about our departments, campus, and academic activities. Meetings were also held to explore opportunities for strengthening our collaboration.



**Erasmus+ Outgoing Staff Mobility:** Within the scope of the Erasmus+ KA131 staff teaching mobility, Dr. Hatice KARAKAŞ, Research Assistant at our Tourism Management Department, visited Katholieke Hogeschool Vives Noord University in Belgium as a visiting researcher for 14 days, between April 21 and May 4, 2025.

**Visit to Our Faculty:** On April 28, 2025, researchers from the International Hospitality and Service Innovation Department at the Rochester Institute of Technology (United States) visited our Faculty. During the visit, ideas were exchanged on potential collaborative projects and joint initiatives that could be developed between the two institutions..





## Tourism Faculty's TUBITAK 2209-A Program Success

We congratulate the following students whose projects have been accepted under the TÜBİTAK 2209-A Program:

Ela BEYAZGÜL (under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Ferhan BALCI TORUN),

Elif Nur ÇAKAR (under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Nurşah ŞENGÜL),

Enes ÇİFTÇİ (under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Hava KESKİN),

Gamze ESEN (under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Ferhan BALCI TORUN),

Suat COŞKUN (under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Ferhan BALCI TORUN).

We sincerely thank our students and their academic advisors for bringing us this pride and wish them continued success in their academic journeys.



## Akdeniz Youth-Rec-Fest 2

The "Akdeniz Youth-Rec-Fest 2" festival, organized by our Department of Recreation Management in collaboration with the Recreation and Animation Student Club, was held on May 13, 2025, in the faculty's garden.

Coordinated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülseren YURCU from the Recreation Management Department, the festival featured a series of vibrant activities including a drum rhythm show, handcraft workshops, and dance performances.



## Panels and Talks Hosted by Our Faculty

**“Career Days”:** As part of the Tourism Week events held between April 15–22, we had the pleasure of hosting Ms Deniz Selen KILIÇÖZGÜRLER, General Manager of Gezinomi. The event took place on April 22, 2025, and drew strong interest from our students—especially those enrolled in the Career Planning course offered by the Tourism Management Department. During the session, guest shared insights into her career journey, opportunities in the tourism industry, and current sector trends.



**“Guest from industry”:** As part of the Tourism Management Department’s event series, Mr. Tolga CÖMERTOĞLU, Board Member of Delphin Hotels and Energy, was welcomed as a guest speaker in the Career Planning course on May 13, 2025. Mr. CÖMERTOĞLU shared his career journey and professional experiences, responded to students’ questions about the tourism industry, and emphasized the importance of social responsibility projects and contributing to society.



**“Career Steps in Tourism: How to become General Manager?”:** As part of the Recreation Management Department’s event series, a panel was held on April 28, 2025, moderated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murad Alpaslan KASALAK. The panel featured Mr. Ülkay ATMACA (Former Chairman of the Board of POYD), Mr. Ercan ÇEK (Vice Chairman of the Board), and Mr. Erdoğan TURAN (Secretary General of POYD) as guest speakers.





## Panels and Talks Hosted by Our Faculty

**“Shaping the Travel Experience”:** A new step toward collaboration in education and employment has been taken between our Tourist Guidance Department and Tantur Tourism Travel Inc. – TUI Musement. Following the introductory meeting held on May 13, 2025, a panel titled “Shaping the Travel Experience: The Planners and the Storytellers” was moderated by Prof. Dr. Özlem GÜZEL, Head of the Tourist Guidance Department. The panel featured Erdem GÜRSEN (Operations Manager at TUI Turkey and alumnus), Ece DENİZ (English-speaking tour guide, alumna), Hasan KÖMÜR (German-speaking tour guide) and Ufuk YALÇIN (Polish-speaking tour guide). They shared their industry experiences, career journeys, and insights into current developments in the tourism sector with our students.



### **“Nature Literacy and Tourism” Talk :**

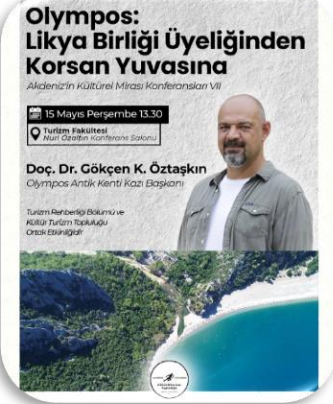
As part of the Recreation Management Department’s event series, a talk titled “Nature Literacy and Tourism” was held on May 6, 2025, at Faculty Conference Hall, featuring a presentation by Hüseyin Çağlar İNCE— bioengineer, documentary filmmaker, and author.



**“From Animator to Group Hotel Coordinator”:** The interview held on May 5, 2025, moderated by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murad Alpaslan KASALAK within the scope of the Recreation Management Department activities, was held with the participation of Hotel General Manager Tevfik YILMAZ.

# Mediterranean Cultural Heritage Conferences

**“Traces of Archaeological Heritage in Patara, the Political Center of the Lycian Union”:** The 6th conference of the series, organized by Tourism Guidance Department and the Culture and Tourism Student's Club, was held on April 24, 2025, with the participation of the Head of the Excavation Asst. Prof. Dr. Şevket AKTAŞ.



**“Olympos: From Lycian League Membership to Pirate Haven”:** The 7th and final session of the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage Conference Series for the 2024–2025 academic year was held on May 15, 2025, with the participation of Excavation Director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökçen K. ÖZTAŞKIN, who presented new research findings..

## Our Faculty Members' Event Participation

Prof. Dr. Özlem GÜZEL participated in the meeting organized by the Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers and Operators Association (AKTOB) on May 23, 2025, where Minister of Culture and Tourism Mr. Mehmet Nuri ERSOY shared evaluations regarding tourism in Antalya.

Our faculty members Prof. Dr. Akın AKSU, Prof. Dr. Özlem GÜZEL, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murad KASALAK participated in the meeting titled “Economy in Tourism,” organized by the Professional Hotel Managers Association (POYD) on April 16, 2025, with Financial Analyst İslam MEMİŞ as the guest speaker.

Our faculty members Prof. Dr. Akın AKSU and Prof. Dr. Özlem GÜZEL also took part in the “Tourism Data and Analytics Evaluation” meeting organized by AKTOB on April 29, 2025.



## Our Faculty Members' Event Participation

### **“Antalya Geographical Indications Summit”:**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ferhan BALCI TORUN from our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department, participated in the Antalya Geographical Indications Summit held on May 8, 2025, organized in cooperation with the Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ATSO), the Turkish Research Network for Local Products and Geographical Indications (YÜCİTA), and the Akdeniz University Geographical Indications Application and Research Center (ACİMER), where she delivered a presentation titled “Recommendations for the Sustainability of Gastronomy Tourism in Turkey.”



### **“The Heart of Tourism: Antalya”:**

Prof. Dr. Beykan ÇİZEL, faculty member of our Tourism Management Department, participated as a session chair in the panel titled “The Heart of Tourism: Antalya – A Gathering for Collective Wisdom and Strategy on the Road to 2025,” organized by the Antalya Thought Platform on May 14, 2025.



**“Tourism Master Plan” Workshop:** Prof. Dr. Bahattin ÖZDEMİR, faculty member of our Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department, participated in the “2026-2031 Aksaray Tourism Master Plan” workshop held in Aksaray on May 8–9, 2025, as the Chair of the Gastronomy Commission.

**International Manavgat From Crete to Side: Culture and Taste Festival:** Prof. Dr. Özlem GÜZEL, faculty member of our Tourist Guidance Department, participated as an invited guest in the International “From Crete to Side: Culture and Taste Festival”, held in Manavgat between April 24–26, 2025, under the leadership of Manavgat Municipality.

This festival, which highlights the historical ties between Mediterranean cultures, served as a significant platform drawing attention to Side’s potential for sustainable cultural tourism.

## A New Sector-Oriented Initiative from the Tourism Management Department: “Executive Summaries” Now Published!

The Tourism Management Department of our faculty has launched a new initiative aimed at strengthening the bridge between the university and the tourism industry. As part of this initiative, “Executive Summaries” have been prepared to highlight the practical contributions of academic research conducted by our faculty members and to make these studies more accessible to sector stakeholders.

These summaries have been categorized under the title “Academic Studies Catalogue” and made available on our faculty’s website. You can access the summaries, which are organized into 17 different categories, via the link below:

➡ [https://turizm.akdeniz.edu.tr/tr/akademik\\_calismalar\\_katalogu-15797](https://turizm.akdeniz.edu.tr/tr/akademik_calismalar_katalogu-15797)

This new content serves as a valuable resource for both the dissemination of academic knowledge and for keeping the industry informed about current developments.

## Teaching and Learning Activities

**Astro Tourism Guiding Specialization Training:** As part of the Tourist Guidance Department’s activities and the Specialization in Guiding course, a training program titled “Astro Tourism Guiding Specialization” was conducted. The training was delivered by Kadir ULUÇ, Co-Founder of Dark Sky Tour and an expert at TÜBİTAK National Observatory, with 26 years of experience. Students learnt about the fundamental concepts of astro tourism, sky observation techniques, and how to integrate mythological stories about stars and planets into guided narratives.

**Technical Field Trip:** On April 14, 2025, students of the Tourist Guidance Department took a field trip to Demre–Kekova, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diren ÇAKILCI. Students had the opportunity to explore the region’s unique historical and natural heritage on site: the sunken ruins of Kekova, the ancient city of Simena, and historic Lycian tombs, allowing them to deepen their field knowledge in a real-world context.



**Seminar Presentations by 2nd-Year Tourism Management Students:** Second-year students from both the 100% English and Turkish programs of the Tourism Management Department successfully completed their end-of-semester seminar presentations as part of the Marketing course conducted by Prof. Dr. Tahir ALBAYRAK.



## Our Students' Social Awareness and Contribution Projects

As part of the “Volunteering Studies” course offered by the Tourism Management Department, a series of activities were carried out under the supervision of Prof. Dr. R ya EHT YAR.

The first event took place on May 7, 2025, with the aim of introducing T rkiye’s rich tourism destinations to primary school students. During this event, young students were informed about the country’s natural beauty, historical landmarks, and cultural heritage, and were introduced to the fascinating world of tourism.

The second event, held on May 14, 2025, involved a visit by our faculty students to a nursing home, promoting social engagement and intergenerational connection.



As part of the “Volunteering Studies” course, students from the Tourist Guidance Department, under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. Hava KESK N, conducted seminars titled “Antalya’s Cultural Heritage” aimed at raising cultural heritage awareness among middle school students. 6th and 7th grade students from  zpnarlar Tenzile Sert Middle School participated in the seminars with great interest.

## New Issue of Our Faculty Journal

The June 2025 issue of our faculty’s international peer-reviewed journal, *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)*—indexed in ESCI, Scopus, and TR Dizin—has been published. All issues are accessible via DergiPark, and article submissions can also be made through the platform:

<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ahtr>

**On Behalf of the Faculty of Tourism**  
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