



**ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
PRESS OFFICE**

ph. (+30)2310 997158 e-mail: press@auth.gr

Administration Building «K. Karatheodori» AUTH, P.C. 541 24, Thessaloniki

[@Aristoteleio](https://www.facebook.com/Aristoteleio) [@authuniversity](https://www.instagram.com/authuniversity) [@Auth_University](https://twitter.com/Auth_University)

PRESS RELEASE

**President of the Hellenic Republic Attends Official 26 October
Celebration at Aristotle University**

26 October 2026

In the presence of the President of the Hellenic Republic, Konstantinos An. Tasoulas, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) held its official celebration today, Monday, 26 October 2026, in the Ceremonies Hall, commemorating Saint Demetrius, the patron saint of Thessaloniki, the 114th anniversary of the city's liberation and the epic of 1940.

In his address, **AUTH Rector, Professor Kyriakos Anastasidis**, spoke about the importance of freedom as a fundamental value built on knowledge, strength and bold action—all principles that the University serves. He emphasized the decisive role of public higher education in strengthening the country's international influence, economic growth and technological competitiveness, underlining that universities must translate knowledge into action through research, innovation and creation.

He also called on young people to defend freedom and democracy, choose knowledge over ignorance, and embrace creativity rather than resignation. He stressed that, as AUTH enters the second century of its operation, it remains committed to fostering these values and preparing future generations for the challenges ahead.

Sir Roderick Beaton, Emeritus Koraes Professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College London, delivered the keynote commemorative address entitled "From Saint Demetrius to Metaxas's 'No'."

In his speech, he discussed the enduring role of Saint Demetrius as the protector of Thessaloniki and examined the historical and political context that led to Greece's "No" on 28 October 1940. He focused on the geopolitical balance of the period,

Ioannis Metaxas's diplomatic manoeuvres and Greece's decision to defend its freedom and independence.

The ceremony opened with the *Apolytikion of Saint Demetrius*, performed by AUTH's "Giannis Mantakas" Choir under the direction of Erifyli Damianou.

As part of the musical programme, the Aristotle University Symphony Orchestra performed works by Aaron Copland, Mikis Theodorakis and Edward Elgar. The Orchestra was joined by AUTH's "Giannis Mantakas" Choir and the Choral Workshop of the School of Music Studies, prepared by Erifyli Damianou.

Associate Professor Vladimir Symeonidis of the School of Music Studies conducted the Aristotle University Symphony Orchestra and choirs.

The 26 October celebration concluded with the National Anthem, performed by the University's musical ensembles.

Photographs are attached.

The speeches delivered at the ceremony are also attached.

We kindly request that this event be published, broadcast, and covered by the media.