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PRESS RELEASE

**Rector of the Aristotle University at the Opening Ceremony of the
Aristotle Innovation Forum: “Innovation Must Become a Constitutional
Obligation of the State”**

Thessaloniki, 18 May 2026

A distinguished ceremony marked the official Opening Ceremony of the Aristotle Innovation Forum yesterday, Sunday, 17 May, at the “Emilios Riadis” Hall of the Thessaloniki Concert Hall.

The Aristotle Innovation Forum—one of the most dynamic innovation forums in Southeastern Europe—is organized by the Aristotle University from Sunday, 17 May, to Saturday, 23 May 2026.

During the opening of the first Aristotle Innovation Forum, the Rector of the Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, welcomed participants to a “meeting point of ideas, knowledge, creativity, and action,” emphasizing that the presence of hundreds of scientists, researchers, politicians, entrepreneurs, and distinguished personalities from around the world already constitutes a major event for Thessaloniki and the country.

He stressed that the aim of the event is not simply to hold another scientific conference, but to establish innovation as a national and European strategic priority.

The Rector emphasized that the future of Greece and Europe depends on how quickly and boldly innovation and its applications move to the center of policymaking. At the same time, he underlined that the University and Research form an “inseparable unity” and that their development must be treated as a single national policy with a strong developmental orientation.

In a particularly notable part of his speech, he stated that promoting science, innovation, and excellence should become a primary obligation of the State, even proposing constitutional protection through the addition of a relevant provision to Article 2 of the Constitution of Greece. As he noted, “the promotion of innovation should constitute a fundamental strategic choice for the country.”

At the same time, he highlighted the need for substantial support for Universities and research centers through funding, human resources, modern infrastructure, international collaborations, and the utilization of the potential of the Greek diaspora.

He also placed special emphasis on the significance of the title “Aristotle Innovation Forum.” He pointed out that Aristotle may never have used the word “innovation,” yet he fully embodied its meaning through systematic study, questioning, exploration beyond established limits, and the connection between knowledge and action. As he stressed, the title of the Forum encapsulates three fundamental concepts: “Aristotle” because roots matter, “Innovation” because boldness is required, and “Forum” because progress presupposes encounter and dialogue.

The Rector underlined that the Forum aspires to become far more than a university event: a new public space for knowledge, technology, culture, and the future of the country. As he noted, the goal is to strengthen confidence that Greece can produce knowledge, innovate, attract talent, and create institutions with international reach. In closing, he emphasized that the Aristotle Innovation Forum belongs not only to the Aristotle University, but also “to the young people who seek a reason to stay, return, or reconnect,” to the city of Thessaloniki, and to the country, which needs “a new productive and intellectual model.” Finally, he stated that the success of the institution will not be judged by its impressive launch, but by its longevity, consistency, and real impact in the future.

Actor Ieroklis Michaelidis presented the Ceremony. The evening’s musical program also held a special place in the event, featuring the “Giannis Mantakas” Choir and the Choral Workshop of the Department of Music Studies of the Aristotle University, under the direction of Erifyli Damianou, as well as the Choir of the 2nd Gymnasium and Lyceum of Pylaia, Thessaloniki, under the direction of Nikoleta Poursanidou.

The AIF takes place under the auspices of His Excellency the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Konstantinos An. Tasoulas. The AIF is held with the support of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, and the Region of Central Macedonia, while the Thessaloniki International Fair serves as a strategic partner. Major sponsors include PPC and Piraeus Bank.

More information: [Aristotle Innovation Forum](#)

The full text of the Rector’s speech is attached.
Photographs are also attached.

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