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PRESS RELEASE

Announcement by the Rectoral Authorities: “Patience Has Its Limits Too!”

Thessaloniki, June 29, 2026

"Within every community, including our own, alongside those who genuinely plan and act, there will always be those who prefer to observe from a distance, offering opinions and criticism. They, too, serve a purpose. As outside observers and commentators, they can scrutinize, identify, and suggest what those taking action may overlook, thereby helping them avoid mistakes. Some commentators at Aristotle University, however, are not merely unhelpful—they have instead proven to be toxic. The current Rectoral Authorities of Aristotle University assumed office exactly one year ago, following a court ruling that removed the previous "rectoral" team because it had unlawfully installed itself in the University's administration by usurping the office of the Rector. The composition of the Governing Council remained unchanged, as determined by the elections of the faculty members for the internal members and by the Senate's vote for the external members—distinguished colleagues from international universities who generously offered their experience and expertise to support the advancement of our Institution.

Over the past twelve months, the Governing Council's decisions have enabled an unprecedented body of work in terms of scope, boldness, and effectiveness, laying the foundations for a modern, truly international university worthy of Greece's largest and most influential public university. During the same period, initially in a subdued manner but with increasing intensity in recent months—as Aristotle University's reform momentum exposes their previous inaction, lack of results, and silence—the minority members of the Governing Council, together with the self-proclaimed "unified" representatives of the Teaching and Research Staff, who, among other things, seek to convince themselves that they are being persecuted, have erected a curtain of falsehoods and misinformation. Academic civility has so far restrained direct confrontation. However, like patience itself, it too has its limits.

Four members of the Governing Council have formed a "sacred" alliance to oppose decisions jointly and systematically while misleading both colleagues and the public.

For example, they denounce the Governing Council's decision to construct a new indoor sports hall on the site above the Student Residence, in cooperation with the Municipality of Thessaloniki, as contrary to the interests of Aristotle University because it supposedly turns the University "into a mere tenant of its own facilities." They have publicly circulated this defamatory falsehood in place of the truth, which everyone deserves to know: the Governing Council's decision was based on the unanimous recommendation of the Assembly of the School of Physical Education and Sport Science, the Deanery of the School, and the Committee of Deans established specifically to examine the site's development potential and assess both the feasibility and the benefits of constructing an indoor sports facility for the University.

The programmatic agreement provides that the Municipality of Thessaloniki will fully finance the project—with a total budget of €6.3 million—as well as undertake its design, licensing, construction, equipment, and subsequent maintenance. This sports facility will ensure the immediate and meaningful development of a site that, according to the applicable urban planning framework, had remained unused for five decades, thereby benefiting Aristotle University. Moreover, the University will bear no financial burden whatsoever at any stage of the project. The Department of Physical Education and Sport Science will enjoy exclusive use of the new, modern facility every weekday during morning hours to meet its teaching and research needs, while the agreement also provides for its use by the wider university community under the terms specified in the contract.

This project represents a highly significant upgrade of the University's sports infrastructure and addresses long-standing needs of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science as well as its students. The parties concluded the agreement only after six months of consultations with the members of the Governing Council and after the Legal Council of the State, together with the legal services of Aristotle University and the Municipality of Thessaloniki, had subjected it to thorough legal review.

In addition to deliberately concealing key facts and disseminating misleading and, in many respects, false "information," the proponents of regression went so far as to display the impropriety of questioning the legitimacy of the external members' votes on the Governing Council, portraying them as supposedly detached from the realities, needs, and future of our University. It is indeed striking—and highly revealing—that those who loudly proclaim themselves defenders of freedom of expression and trade union activity turned against our distinguished colleagues, namely all the external members of the Governing Council, simply because they made the "mistake" of not aligning themselves with their views. Evidently, their democratic sensitivity extends only to those who subscribe to their own positions and practices.

Deeply anti-democratic, opposed to institutional governance, and openly nihilistic toward every initiative that seeks to free Aristotle University from years of stagnation, they also attacked the necessary restructuring of the Special Account for Research Funds (ELKE). Specifically, they opposed increasing the overhead rate from 10% to 13% exclusively for European research projects and from 10% to 15% only for service contracts, sponsorships, and the very limited national research programs for which such an increase is legally permitted. For every other category of research program, ELKE's overhead rates remain unchanged. It is worth noting that 21 of the country's 23 universities apply overhead rates exceeding 15%. These four council members even

opposed allocating 1% of the overhead revenue back to the academic departments where the research projects are conducted, disregarding the long-standing demand for a system that returns tangible benefits to those generating the research activity. This adjustment did not arise in a vacuum. On the contrary, it was based on a 27-page analysis of ELKE's financial sustainability and constituted a unanimous decision of the twelve-member Research Committee, composed of representatives from the University's eleven Schools together with the President of ELKE. The matter was discussed over the course of two committee meetings so that all members could receive comprehensive information and have their observations incorporated into the final proposal. Moreover, this decision forms part of a comprehensive and ambitious restructuring of ELKE's organization and operations for the benefit of the University, with a particular emphasis on supporting Aristotle University's development plan. For the first time, ELKE has already allocated €5.75 million for upgrading university infrastructure—including lecture halls, libraries, and buildings facing major structural issues—as well as €1.5 million to support the University's operating budget within a single year. Even greater financial support is planned in the years ahead.

Remaining faithful to their regressive agenda, these four(!) council members—while claiming to defend interests that one may well ask how much they themselves ever worked to promote or secure—once again attempted, through misleading information and outright falsehoods, to discredit the development strategy we established regarding the AHEPA Hospital. After decades of inertia, we secured not only a thirty-year extension of Aristotle University's agreement with the Greek State, but also preserved the Hospital's integrity, mission, and value as a purely University Hospital, operating with University Clinics while remaining fully integrated into the National Health System (ESY), with its existing personnel and current mode of operation intact. At the same time, we enhanced the University's contribution to society.

Following a decision by the Governing Council and the enactment of legislation ratified by the Hellenic Parliament, the Ministry of Health will undertake the complete renovation of AHEPA Hospital. At the same time, the European Investment Bank will finance, free of charge, the preparation of a master plan for the long-overdue redevelopment of the unfinished "Paraplegics" building into a modern Rehabilitation Centre, the construction of an international Biomedical Research Centre incorporating the Medical School's Special Unit for Biomedical Research and Education, and the modernization of the Medical School's facilities. The objective is to establish within the University campus a modern Biomedical Cluster, unique both in Greece and across the wider region.

Overall, the ethically, institutionally, and democratically unacceptable conduct of these colleagues has failed to halt the countless initiatives undertaken by the Rectoral Authorities, which we presented in the eleven-page report on our first year in office. One may well ask whether everyone has actually read that report; if not, we encourage them to devote a little time to doing so in order to obtain accurate information directly from it. The report is available on the homepage of Aristotle University's website. Their conduct has neither halted nor will it halt the new momentum, the fresh beginning that our University needs if it is to belong—as it should—to the century of its students, rather than to the century that has just passed.

Partisan agendas, threats, intimidation, misinformation, and the sterile rejection of every form of progress will neither weaken nor slow our initiatives.

The Rectoral Authorities, the Governing Council, and the Senate, as democratically elected governing bodies, will continue to ensure the safe, orderly, and forward-looking course of our University toward the progress and development that we owe to our students, the academic community, and society as a whole.

The Rectoral Authorities

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