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PRESS RELEASE

Aristotle University Establishes the First Endowed Chair in “Local Government” in Collaboration with the Central Macedonia Regional Union of Municipalities

Thessaloniki, 14 July 2026

The Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, and the President of the Central Macedonia Regional Union of Municipalities (PEDKM), Ignatios Kaitezidis, signed a Memorandum of Cooperation today, Tuesday, 14 July 2026, in the University Senate Hall, establishing the Endowed Chair in “Local Government.”

The new Endowed Chair will be based in the School of Spatial Planning and Development Engineering of the Faculty of Engineering at Aristotle University. It will serve as an innovative academic and research structure dedicated to advancing teaching, research, professional training, and scientific documentation in the fields of local government, spatial governance, and local and regional development.

This initiative marks a new model of collaboration between Aristotle University and local government by creating a permanent institutional framework for transferring scientific knowledge to municipalities while drawing on the practical experience of local government authorities to support applied research and the development of modern educational tools.

The Endowed Chair will operate as a hub for knowledge, dialogue, and evidence-based expertise on local government. It will support the development of scientifically grounded public policy recommendations, strengthen the administrative and technical capacity of local authorities, and promote innovative approaches to spatial planning, digital governance, and sustainable development.

At the same time, the Chair will develop education and professional training initiatives for elected officials and municipal staff, contribute to the creation of new academic

and postgraduate programmes, support research projects and scientific studies, and expand opportunities for students to engage with real-world applications in public administration and development planning.

With its interdisciplinary approach, the Endowed Chair will cover a broad range of academic fields, including spatial and urban planning, public administration, local and regional development, urban and environmental policy, digital governance, social cohesion, the resilience of local communities, and the use of geospatial data and modern technologies in decision-making.

The Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, stated: *"The establishment of the Endowed Chair in" Local Government" represents a major strategic initiative for Aristotle University. It reinforces our longstanding mission to connect academic knowledge with the real needs of society.*

Our collaboration with the Central Macedonia Regional Union of Municipalities creates a permanent institution for generating knowledge, research, and innovation that will provide municipalities with scientifically substantiated solutions, strengthen the education of the next generation of scientists, and contribute to the development of modern public policies. Through this new partnership, Aristotle University reaffirms its strategic role as an institution that produces knowledge with a direct social and developmental impact, strengthens the connection between the university community and public administration institutions, and makes a substantial contribution to shaping modern policies for the development of local communities."

The President of the Regional Union of Municipalities of Central Macedonia (PEDKM) and Mayor of Pylaia-Hortiatis, Ignatios Kaitezidis, stated that Aristotle University is *"the university closest to our hearts, and this collaboration, which begins today, is a well-deserved recognition. Many people associate local government solely with collecting waste and building roads and sidewalks. These are, of course, responsibilities we must fulfill because they are part of our everyday duties. We are judged by our performance in these areas, as we have an obligation to serve our fellow citizens. However, modern municipalities and modern local government in our country must also be able to address and intervene in major issues. This is precisely the objective of our collaboration with the country's largest and most distinguished university, Aristotle University."*

The Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in the presence of, among others, the Vice President of PEDKM and Mayor of Kordelio-Evosmos, Eleftherios Alexandridis; the Secretary of PEDKM and Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, Vasilis Gakis; while Aristotle University was represented by Nikolaos Maggioros, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and Development; Iakovos Michailidis, Vice Rector for International Relations, Outreach, Lifelong Learning and Student Welfare; Stratos Stylianidis, Member of the University Council and Professor in the Department of Spatial Planning and Development Engineering and Nikolas Karanikolas, Chair of the Department of Spatial Planning and Development Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering.

Photographs are attached.

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