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PRESS RELEASE

**Aristotle University – “The Smile of the Child”: Cooperation Focused on
Children’s Rights and Protection**

Thessaloniki, 4/9/2026

Aristotle University and “The Smile of the Child” signed a Memorandum of Cooperation today, Friday, 4 September 2026, at the Senate Hall, with the aim of developing joint educational, research, social, and innovative initiatives to promote, protect, and effectively safeguard children’s rights.

The Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, and the President of the Board of Directors of “The Smile of the Child,” Konstantinos Giannopoulos, signed the Memorandum. On behalf of the Aristotle University Faculty of Law, which will oversee the academic implementation of the cooperation, the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Panagiotis Glavinis, also signed the agreement.

The cooperation establishes a comprehensive framework that connects academic knowledge and scientific research with the extensive experience and expertise of “The Smile of the Child” in the field of child protection. The partnership focuses on strengthening knowledge, prevention, and awareness, while also developing practical tools and initiatives that can make a meaningful contribution to protecting children and ensuring their access to legal protection.

More specifically, the cooperation provides for the exchange of scientific knowledge, expertise, educational materials, and best practices, as well as the joint organization of lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, summer Schools, and awareness-raising activities.

At the same time, Aristotle University and “The Smile of the Child” will be able to design and implement awareness-raising and empowerment programmes for children and adolescents, parents and guardians, educators, and professionals. The agreement

also provides for the joint development and scientific documentation of educational materials, guides, protocols, and tools for child protection.

The Central Role of the Faculty of Law

The cooperation between the Aristotle University Faculty of Law and the structures and services of “The Smile of the Child” holds a particularly important place in the Memorandum. The partnership provides for internships, experiential and clinical legal education programmes, as well as research and diploma theses, under the necessary supervision and with full safeguards for the protection of children.

Research in the Service of Child Protection

The agreement also provides for the development of interdisciplinary research, particularly in the fields of law, social sciences, and humanities, as well as the study and evaluation of policies, institutions, and practices relating to child protection.

A Common Front Against Violence and Child Abuse

The Memorandum also paves the way for joint initiatives addressing critical issues such as child abuse and neglect, sexual violence and exploitation, domestic and Faculty violence, bullying, violence among minors, human trafficking, online risks, missing and runaway minors, as well as children’s access to legal protection and effective support and referral mechanisms.

As part of the cooperation, the partners will also make use of digital technologies and, where appropriate, artificial intelligence systems for education, prevention, awareness-raising, accessibility, and support, with a strong emphasis on privacy protection, security, transparency, non-discrimination, and human oversight.

The Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, stated: *“Through this Memorandum of Cooperation, Aristotle University and ‘The Smile of the Child’ are establishing a strong channel between the University and society, with a shared commitment to strengthening child protection, promoting children’s rights, and creating a safer and fairer environment for every child.*

Through this partnership, we connect scientific knowledge, research, and education with the valuable experience of an organisation that stands alongside children every day. Our goal is to make a tangible contribution to prevention, protection, and empowerment, while also creating new opportunities for our students and the wider academic community.”

The President of the Board of Directors of “The Smile of the Child”, Konstantinos Giannopoulos, stated: *“It is a great honour for “The Smile of the Child” to sign this Memorandum of Cooperation with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Faculty of Law. Young people want to take part in a genuine volunteer movement, rather than in a process that has no real impact. Therefore, what we promised today is precisely*

what we have been putting into practice all these years: for the academic community, working together with those on the front line, namely “The Smile of the Child”, to deliver tangible results and create a meaningful impact. For more than 30 years, we have been honouring a child, Andreas, my son, whom I represent here today. By leaving this world, he managed to bring us together and give us the opportunity, as Greek society and as a university community, to make a difference and accomplish things together.”

Photographs are attached.

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