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PRESS RELEASE

**Celebration of the National Anniversary of March 25 at the Aristotle
University**

Thessaloniki, 24/3/2026

The official celebration of the anniversary of the Greek War of Independence took place today, Tuesday, March 24, 2026, in the Ceremonial Hall of the Aristotle University.

In his address, **the Rector of the Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis**, emphasized that today's celebration is dedicated to the national anniversary of the Greek Revolution of 1821, an event that, as he noted, decisively shaped the course of the Greek nation and redefined fundamental values such as freedom, self-determination, and collective identity.

He underlined that the great moments of history are not merely memories of the past but serve as a compass for the future, noting that the Revolution of 1821 was such a decisive turning point, where faith in freedom, education, and the unity of the people converged to change the course of history.

He also referred to the National Rebirth (Palingenesia) as the result of a long intellectual process, stressing that the fighters were not only warriors but also bearers of a broader vision, coming from different social strata, with a common denominator being their belief in knowledge and collective responsibility.

The Rector pointed out that, nearly two centuries later, modern society does not stand before this legacy only as its heir but also as its continuator, emphasizing that freedom is an ongoing achievement that requires education, responsibility, and active participation.

Referring to the role of the University, he stressed: “*The Aristotle University, as the largest and most multidisciplinary university in the country, bears a special responsibility: to keep alive the values that gave rise to and supported the Greek Revolution. Because freedom of thought, the dissemination of knowledge, and the pursuit of truth constitute the foundations not only of academic progress but of democracy itself.*”

At the same time, he highlighted the symbolism of this year’s anniversary, as it coincides with the centenary of the Institution’s founding, emphasizing that the University continues to play a decisive role in shaping scientists and advancing society.

He made special reference to the students, noting that the anniversary also serves as a reminder of responsibility, calling on them to innovate, think freely, and contribute to a fairer and more open society.

Finally, he underlined that genuine tribute to 1821 is not limited to commemorative events but is expressed through the continuation of the values for which the ancestors fought, such as freedom, knowledge, democracy, and collectivity.

In his speech entitled “*The influence of the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment on the awakening of the Nation in 1821: Adamantios Korais and Rigas Feraios,*” **the Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, former Rector of the University of Athens and President of the Arsakeia–Tositseia Schools, Georgios Babiniotis**, argued that a small country like Greece—troubled and weakened by four centuries of slavery—would not have embarked on an unequal and harsh struggle for liberation against an all-powerful conqueror if the Greeks had not come to believe in the necessity of freedom through the intellectual ferment that preceded it, through the “enlightenment” of the Nation, which was systematically cultivated in Greece during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The speaker referred to the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, which he defined as the effort to enlighten the enslaved Nation by inspired teachers—the Teachers of the Nation—regarding its origin, values, culture, history, and future, with the aim of throwing off foreign rule through an educational movement focused on the school, the book, and the language.

Mr. Babiniotis made special reference to the contribution of Adamantios Korais and Rigas Feraios, two emblematic figures of the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, using excerpts from the works of both thinkers in his speech.

He stressed that Korais linked the recovery of the Greeks’ freedom with education and language. Korais’ books circulated throughout Greece shortly before the Revolution, and the prefaces to his editions—the famous “*Improvised Reflections on Greek Education and Language*”—served as a source of guidance, inspiration, pride, and motivation for claiming freedom and creating a modern Greek state with a European character.

Mr. Babiniotis praised the importance of Rigas' major works, the four publications of political and national-revolutionary content that together form a "revolutionary manifesto": (a) a proclamation, (b) a declaration of the "Rights of Man," (c) a draft Constitution, and (d) the Thourios. This manifesto constitutes Rigas' political vision for the creation of a Balkan Federation—more precisely, a Greek Republic—which would be a state of a multinational, trans-Balkan character, depicted in the well-known Map of Greece by Rigas.

The musical part of the Ceremony featured the "Giannis Mantakas" Choir and the "Choral Workshop" of the Department of Music Studies of the Aristotle University, under the instruction of Erifyli Damianou, as well as the Symphony Orchestra of the Aristotle University, conducted by Associate Professor of the Department of Music Studies, Vladimiro Simeonidis.

The Ceremony concluded with the National Anthem.

Photographs are attached.

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