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PRESS RELEASE

**“Is There Light in the Public University?” – The Rector’s Response with
Clear Messages and Sharp Points**

Thessaloniki, 30/3/2026

The Rector of the Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, delivered clear messages, realism, and optimism about the future of the public university during his keynote speech at the Opening Ceremony of the 10th Conference on Education and Research, held on Saturday, March 28, 2026, in Alexandroupoli.

Starting from what he described as an “almost existential question,” he sought to highlight not only the challenges but, above all, the potential and the role of the Greek public university.

A question with depth: “Is there light in the public university?”

The Rector emphasized that the question of whether there is light in the public university is not rhetorical, but reflects society’s ambivalence.

He stressed that public discourse often focuses on problems, creating an image of constant crisis. *“If one listens only to the public noise, one will believe that the Greek university is in a constant state of crisis. That it is trapped in bureaucracy, underfunding, understaffing, and the contradictions of the system and institutional framework,”* he noted.

However, he countered that the reality within universities is different and far more dynamic.

The “invisible power” of the academic community

The Rector highlighted the everyday life of Greek universities as a space for knowledge production and creativity. He noted that within laboratories, libraries, and lecture halls operates a “vast, often invisible power” of people who teach, research, and innovate.

He stressed that the university does not only produce science, but also shapes the citizens and scientists of tomorrow, cultivating critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and freedom of opinion.

“In Greece, about half of the research workforce is based in and produced by universities”

He placed particular emphasis on the role of the public university as a factor of national strength. The Rector underlined that in the modern era, power is measured not only in economic or military terms, but primarily in knowledge, research, and innovation.

He pointed out that *“In Greece, about half of the research workforce is based in and produced by universities: scientific publications, international collaborations, research programs, and young scientists who stand out worldwide. **Our problem is not the quality of Greek research, but the organization of the knowledge ecosystem and the lack of a unified strategy.**”*

Referring to technological developments, the Rector made it clear that artificial intelligence and digital tools do not replace the university. On the contrary, he stressed, they strengthen it, as the university remains the place where information is transformed into knowledge and understanding.

The need for extroversion and “brain circulation”

The Rector placed particular emphasis on the internationalization of higher education. He stressed the need to strengthen the mobility of scientists and students, not as a loss but as an opportunity.

He introduced the concept of “brain circulation,” emphasizing that the country must promote the circulation of knowledge: scientists should gain experience abroad but also return. *“Young scientists must be able to leave for the right reasons, gain experience, and return. At the same time, students and researchers from around the world should be able to choose Greece. A controlled brain drain and a targeted brain circulation—where knowledge circulates, returns, and multiplies—are what the university, society, and Greece need.”*

The major challenges of the next day

The Rector identified four key challenges: demographic decline, the internationalization of education, the technological revolution, and increasing competition from non-state universities.

He stressed that addressing these challenges requires boldness and adaptation, with a focus on the new generations of students.

Greece as an international education destination

The Rector underlined that Greece can evolve into an international hub for education. He noted that attracting students from abroad is not only a cultural issue but also an economic one, contributing to GDP and to the country's educational diplomacy.

Excellence without compromises

He was particularly sharp on the issue of excellence. The Rector stressed that no society moves forward by protecting mediocrity, while clarifying that equality does not mean leveling down, but equal opportunities for all.

The critical issue of skills

The Rector also raised the issue of deficiencies in students' basic skills. He emphasized that this problem does not begin at the university level and that strengthening career guidance from an early stage must become a national priority.

The University as part of the solution

In closing, the Rector pointed out the contradiction in public discourse, which focuses on problems while ignoring successes. He stressed that *"The public university is not Greece's problem. It is part of the solution, as it constitutes one of Greece's greatest comparative advantages. It is not merely an educational institution; it is a vital national infrastructure."*

The final answer: "Yes, there is light"

Returning to the initial question, the Rector answered emphatically: "Yes, there is light."

He stressed that this light exists:

in young scientists who conduct research,
in students who persist in learning,
in teachers who inspire,
in international collaborations that open new paths.

And he concluded with a clear message of optimism:

"This light is not always dazzling. But it is steady. And it is enough to illuminate the future. Because, at the end of the day, the university is neither just buildings nor just institutions. It is its people. It is the new generation—its students—that represent continuity, the measure of the future, and our country's greatest stake."

Photos from the event are attached.

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