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PRESS RELEASE

From Artificial Intelligence to Space Exploration: The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Organizes the Largest Innovation Forum of the Year in Thessaloniki

Thessaloniki, 8 May 2026

A multi-day innovation forum with an international orientation and a broad range of scientific, technological, and cultural activities, the Aristotle Innovation Forum (AIF) will take place from 17 to 23 May 2026, organized by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, with the ambition of highlighting the connection between knowledge, society, and the economy.

At the Press Conference held today, Friday, 8 May 2026, in the Senate Hall of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, organizers presented the full AIF program for the first time in a comprehensive and detailed manner.

The Aristotle Innovation Forum was introduced as a new annual initiative of the Aristotle University, serving as an “umbrella of academic innovation,” aiming to establish Thessaloniki as an international reference point for research, education, technology, and culture.

The Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Kyriakos Anastasiadis, stated: “The Aristotle Innovation Forum aims, through the University, to transform knowledge into a real force for society and the economy. A major institution, with the interdisciplinary nature and capabilities of the Aristotle University, is undertaking an initiative for the country in order to establish an institution that we hope will become an annual point of reference not only for the University, but also for the entire innovation ecosystem, bringing together all those who participate in the forum and are active in what is already the present rather than the future.

For us, innovation is already here, and this becomes evident every day through the rapid pace at which technology, Artificial Intelligence, and digitalization are transforming everything—from agricultural production and tourism to education and administration.

When we speak about innovation, we are not referring only to entrepreneurship or exclusively to research. We are talking about best practices, humanism, the arts, literature, and everything that meaningfully shapes today's conditions, not simply tomorrow's.

Within this framework, we have prepared a truly impressive program.”

The Aristotle Innovation Forum Program

The main venue for the events will be Pavilion 15 of the Thessaloniki International Fair, under the central theme “From Aristotle to AI.” Additional events will take place at the Thessaloniki Concert Hall, the Old Faculty of Philosophy, the Central Library of the Aristotle University, Chemistries Square, the Teloglion Foundation of Arts, Thessaloniki City Hall, Olympion, the Museum of Byzantine Culture, and other locations across the city.

More than 350 speakers from the academic community will participate in the forum, alongside 50 to 70 representatives from political, social, and public life. At the same time, 16 Greek universities will present their own thematic programs, while student groups, spin-offs, and startups will maintain a strong presence.

Members of the university community, volunteers, and students are organizing the event in its entirety. The Chair of the Organizing Committee is Iakovos Michailidis, Vice Rector for International Relations, Outreach, Lifelong Learning, and Student Welfare.

The AIF operates under the auspices of Konstantinos Tasoulas, with the support of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, and the Region of Central Macedonia. The Thessaloniki International Fair serves as the strategic partner. Major sponsors include PPC Group and Piraeus Bank..

From Artificial Intelligence to Space Exploration

The program covers themes ranging from medicine and Artificial Intelligence to philosophy, education, and the arts.

In the field of healthcare, participants will present applications of augmented reality, robotics, and Artificial Intelligence in medicine, along with topics related to genetics, digital health, and pediatric research initiatives. In technology and science, discussions will focus, among other topics, on cybersecurity, nanotechnology, energy, defense, the legal dimensions of AI, and the impact of large language models such as ChatGPT. Space exploration activities hold a special place in the program, featuring participation by former NASA astronaut Bonnie Dunbar and Canadian astronaut Julie Payette.

The forum also places particular emphasis on connecting university research with the labor market and entrepreneurship, covering the entire process from the conception of an idea to its commercial exploitation.

Education, Philosophy, and Society

In the field of higher education, discussions will address topics such as brain circulation, international university collaborations, and joint study programs. Of particular interest is the session titled “Universities in the Digital Age.”

At the same time, the forum will highlight the relationship between Aristotelian thought and modern technology and sustainable education, creating space for discussions on the ethical dimensions of Artificial Intelligence and science.

An important part of the program will also take place at the Central Library of the Aristotle University, featuring exhibitions dedicated to the University’s 100th anniversary, the history of Thessaloniki, as well as rare manuscripts and early printed books.

Cultural Activities and Student Participation

The program also includes numerous cultural events and parallel activities, such as prehistoric cooking, documentary screenings, musical and theatrical performances, traditional dance festivals, and concerts.

Among other highlights, the forum will present the musical narrative “Eden in Olympia” on climate change, a concert by the Symphony Orchestra of the Aristotle University and the State Orchestra of Thessaloniki celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Department of Music Studies, as well as a musical performance dedicated to mental health.

Students will play a particularly active role through activities such as physics experiments, Formula Student presentations by the Aristotle Racing Team, 3D printing demonstrations, theatrical performances, and educational programs for children.

The detailed program is available through the forum’s interactive website: <https://aristotleforum.auth.gr/>

Admission for the public will be free.

The Press Conference also featured remarks by the Vice Rectors: Ioannis Rekanos, Nikolaos Maggioros, and Iakovos Michailidis. Also speaking were the AIF Program Coordinator, Panagiotis Patsalas, and the Chair of the Press and Communications Committee, Kyriakos Chatzikyriakidis.

Photographs are attached.

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