



**ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
PRESS OFFICE**

ph. (+30)2310 997158 e-mail: press@auth.gr
Administration Building «K. Karatheodori» AUTH, P.C. 541 24, Thessaloniki

[f @Aristoteleio](https://www.facebook.com/Aristoteleio) [i @authuniversity](https://www.instagram.com/authuniversity) [X @Auth_University](https://twitter.com/Auth_University)

PRESS RELEASE

**The Aristotle Innovation Forum Concluded, but “Now It Begins,” Says
the Rector of Aristotle University**

Thessaloniki, 24 May 2026

The Closing Ceremony of the Aristotle Innovation Forum (AIF) concluded with great success on Saturday, 23 May 2026, at the Ceremonial Hall of Aristotle University, marking the culmination of a week dedicated to dialogue on innovation, technology, science, and the future of education.

The Aristotle Innovation Forum, held from 17 to 23 May 2026, established Thessaloniki as an international meeting point for academia, entrepreneurship, technology, and society, bringing together internationally renowned personalities, scientists, researchers, students, and representatives of institutions and organizations from Greece and abroad.

In his address at the Closing Ceremony, the Rector of Aristotle University, Kyriakos Anastasiadis, described the Forum as “an experience that created connections and opened new paths for collaboration,” emphasizing that “the Aristotle Innovation Forum concludes today, but in reality, today it begins.”

The full text of the speech delivered by the Rector of Aristotle University, Professor Kyriakos Anastasiadis, follows:

“We have just seen images. But what we experienced this week was not images. It was an experience. It was the people. It was the encounters. It was the ideas that found space to be heard. And above all, it was this shared feeling that something is beginning. Because the Aristotle Innovation Forum concludes today, but in reality, today it begins!

For a few days, Thessaloniki became a point of contact between the world and the future. It transformed into a meeting place for science, technology, education,

entrepreneurship, and culture. People from different worlds came together here not simply to talk about the future, but to design it together.

And this is especially significant. Because in every hall, in every discussion, in every moment, there was a distinct yet powerful energy: that we can do it. That we can collaborate differently. Think differently. Create differently. And that is the most important outcome of this week. Not what happened, but what changes from this point forward. This “different way.” The innovative way.

The Aristotle Innovation Forum was not an event. It was an experience. An experience that brought together people who do not easily meet. That connected research with practice. That gave space to ideas that are not always heard. That created connections that will continue beyond this hall.

And if we retain one image from these days, it is that of young people with confidence, scientists engaging in dialogue with society, and ideas beginning to take shape. This is the future!

There is something else I especially take away from this Forum: the sense that our young people want to believe. To believe that the country can produce high-level knowledge and research. That it can retain its talent. That it can create opportunities. That it can transform a controlled brain drain into a targeted brain circulation. And this will be the central theme of the next Aristotle Innovation Forum, where we look forward to welcoming you all.

Dear friends,

In an era of rapid technological developments and fast-moving events, in a time of geopolitical change and uncertainty, universities must return to their historic role: to serve as spaces of freedom, democracy, the production of ideas, knowledge, and perspective.

“From Aristotle to AI” was not a title. It was a strategic statement. It was a direction. Greece does not need to copy the future of others. It can participate in shaping it. And the public university can—and must—stand at the forefront of this effort. Because universities are not only places of education and research. When a public university produces knowledge, innovation, international collaborations, and confidence, it produces national strength.

For one week, Thessaloniki did not simply host a Forum. It once again felt that it could engage in dialogue with the future. And I will say this very clearly: during these days, Thessaloniki did not look at the world. The world looked at Thessaloniki!

Today does not close a cycle. Today opens one. Because what was born here cannot remain only here. It must gain continuity, scale, and impact. The Aristotle Innovation Forum does not aspire to become just another conference. It aspires to become a tool. An annual point of reference for the country. An institution measured not by the duration of its events, but by the impact it leaves behind.

That is why the next step is clear. From “From Aristotle to AI,” we move forward to: “From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation.” Because this country never lost its minds. And now is the time to reconnect them with the homeland. Not with nostalgia, but with perspective. Not with words, but with actions.

Greece does not suffer from a shortage of people. It needs a framework. And this is the framework we are coming to build. Through synergies. Through extroversion. Through confidence. Through institutions. And the Aristotle Innovation Forum aspires to

become such an institution. A steady meeting point for ideas. A window from the country to the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

None of this would exist without you. I would like to thank you. I would also like to thank the participants, the scientists, our students, the people of the city, and everyone who believed in this vision. And of course, I would like to thank my close collaborators, the Vice-Rectors, for our shared vision, for which we continue to work, especially the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Mr. Iakovos Michailidis, and the Program Coordinator, Professor Panagiotis Patsalas, as well as the large team of collaborators and volunteer students who supported this demanding endeavor and contributed to its excellent outcome.

Because at the end of the day, institutions are not structures. They are the people behind everything significant and behind every result. And the greatest gain of this week is the human connections that were created. From these connections, we expect the true outcome of the Forum and its real impact on society.

I close with a clear commitment: the Aristotle Innovation Forum will continue. On a larger scale. With more collaborations. With a stronger international presence and influence. Because the country cannot afford to allow such initiatives to remain momentary. It must turn them into institutions.

Centuries ago, Aristotle taught us that knowledge gains value when it becomes action. This week, we took a step in that direction. And perhaps this is the most important thing: that we proved we can transform an idea into reality.

So, we will meet again next year. With more people. More ideas. Greater boldness. Congratulations to everyone for your participation, and thank you very much."

The AIF is held under the auspices of His Excellency the President of the Hellenic Republic, Konstantinos Tasoulas. The AIF took place with the support of the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Municipality of Thessaloniki, and the Region of Central Macedonia, while the Thessaloniki International Fair serves as a strategic partner. Major sponsors include PPC S.A. and Piraeus Bank.

More information: [Aristotle Innovation Forum](#)

Photos are attached.

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