

PRESS RELEASE

Eurobank sponsors the Award Ceremony for the Pan- European “Empress Theophano” Prize

Eurobank supports for the fifth (5th) consecutive year the “**Empress Theophano**” **European Prize**. This year’s Prize, aimed to distinguish individuals and institutions in Europe and abroad who embody universal values, was presented to **Special Olympics, its Chairman, Dr. Timothy Shriver** and **CEO, Ms Mary Davis**, at a special ceremony that took place on Wednesday, 23.10.24, at the emblematic **Rotunda Monument at Thessaloniki**, in the presence of distinguished guests and the participation of Special Olympics Athletes.

This year's Prize, that highlights the social role of sports through the vision of Special Olympics underlining each one’s right to distinction based on their gifts as well as the power of sports in shaping a strong, open, inclusive society, was awarded at a moving ceremony, **sponsored by Eurobank**.

Short speeches were made by the **Chairman of the Governing Council of the Theophano Foundation**, Mr. Stavros Andreadis and the **Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Theophano Foundation and President Emeritus of the European Council**, Mr. Herman Count Van Rompuy.

Dr. Timothy Shriver expressed his gratitude for the Prize, noting that it was an accolade not just for the organization but for a movement for human dignity.

Eurobank’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Fokion Karavias, stated: *«Respect of human rights is the cornerstone of our civilization. And there is no measure like inclusivity and the recognition of the potential that exists in every human being. The athletes and the entire Special Olympics community give a paramount example of how sports can be a lever of inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and a motivation for society to fully embrace the cause of equal opportunities for all its members. We are delighted to sponsor, since its inception, the Empress Theophano Award which recognizes individuals and organizations that promote the most fundamental universal values.»*

The ceremony was honored with the presence of leading personalities from across Europe and representatives of Greece’s political, business and cultural communities. Among them: **representing the President of the Hellenic Government**, Ms Aikaterini Papakosta, **Deputy Minister of Social Cohesion and Family Affairs**; **Deputy Minister of Interior, responsible for Macedonia-Thrace**, Mr Kostas Gioulekas; Mr Stelios Angeloudis, the **Mayor of Thessaloniki**; Mrs Anna Diamantopoulou, **President of ‘DIKTIO’ Network for Reform in Greece and Europe**; Mr Jerrier Ismail, **US Consul to Thessaloniki**; Mr Vasilis Kaskarelis, **Ambassador Emeritus and former Minister of Foreign Affairs**; Mr Dionysis Kodellas, **Ambassador Emeritus and President of Special Olympics Hellas**, numerous members of the Boards of Special Olympics International and Special Olympics Hellas, as well as prominent members of the Advisory Council of the Theophano Foundation, including: Chantal Colleu-Dumond - **Director of Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire** (France); Tarja Halonen - **former President of Finland** (Finland); Maria Luisa Ponce - **former Secretary of State of Spain** (Spain); Michel Praet - **Vice-President, Museum of European History** (Belgium); Eveline Riemen-van der Ham - **Vice-President, Nexus Institute** (Netherlands). Eurobank was represented by Mr. **Fokion Karavias**, Chief Executive Officer accompanied by the Bank’s General Managers, Messrs. **Theofanis Mylonas** and **Andreas Chasapis**.

The ceremony was presented by **journalist and editor of ‘Kathimerini’ newspaper**, Mr. Alexis Papachelas along with **Special Olympics Hellas basketball athlete**, Mr. Agis Diakopoulos. The ceremony ended with a symbolic event of music, screenings and dance, where the music of the **‘MOYSA’ Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Thessaloniki Concert Hall** was combined with a demonstration by unified group of gymnasts, **Special Olympics athletes** as well as athletes of the **‘Wolves Team’** World Champion gymnastics team. During an intensely emotional event, the artistic programme confirmed in the best possible way the concepts highlighted by the Prize itself: the joy of participation, the power of will, the bravery of effort, acceptance, inclusivity._



This is the 5th Pan – European Empress Theophano Award following the awarding of the prize to, the **President of the European Commission**, Ursula von der Leyen for the ERASMUS student exchange programme (2020), the pair of scientists who developed the first vaccine against the novel coronavirus, **Dr. Uğur Şahin and Dr. Özlem Türeci** (2021), Mr. **Daniel Barenboim** (2022) highlighting the role of Art in intellectual dialogue and the **United Nations in the name of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres** (2023) for its contribution to world peace and international cooperation._