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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Eurobank sponsored the Award Ceremony for the "Empress Theophano" Prize**

**Eurobank** supports the new "Empress Theophano" European Prize, an award of pan-European prestige and scope. The first "Empress Theophano" Prize was awarded to EU's student exchange **ERASMUS Program** in a grand ceremony that took place at the Rotunda historical monument in Thessaloniki under the auspices of her Excellency the **President of the Hellenic Republic Ms. Katerina Sakellaropoulou** and in the presence of the Greek Prime Minister, **Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis**.

The **President of the European Commission, Ms. Ursula von der Leyen** addressed the event via remote video connection while the **European Commission Vice - President for Promoting the European Way of Life, Mr. Margaritis Schinas** received the Prize on her behalf.

The **Honorary President of the European Council, Mr. Herman Count Van Rompuy** strongly supported the new Prize that developed as an initiative of the **President of the Cultural Society of Entrepreneurs of Northern Greece, Mr. Stavros Andreadis**.

Mr. Andreadis and Mr. Van Rompuy chair, respectively, the **Governing Committee** and the **Advisory Committee of Theophano Foundation, the two bodies responsible for evaluating candidacies for the Award**. The establishment of this annual Prize, named symbolically after the Byzantine Empress Theophano – who had a decisive contribution to the cultural renaissance of Western Europe - aims to recognize personalities, organizations and initiatives that support the promotion and understanding of the European idea and the enhancement of a contemporary European identity.

**Theophano Foundation's Scientific Counsellor, Professor of International Relations and New Democracy parliament member, Mr. Dimitris Keridis** introduced the **Prime Minister, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis**, who addressed the event. His presence highlighted the importance that the Greek State attaches to initiatives of this scope. The **Regional Governor of Central Macedonia, Mr. Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Thessaloniki's Mayor, Mr. Konstantinos Zervas, the Dean of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Mr. Nikolaos Papaioannou** and representatives of Thessaloniki's political and business community also attended the ceremony.

**Eurobank's CEO, Mr. Fokion Karavias, stated:** *"The coexistence of people and countries with different cultural origins and national identities is the pillar idea of a united Europe. This coexistence is not only possible, but it acts as catalyst for the common expression of both the national and the European identities. The Empress Theophano Prize honours personalities and institutions contributing to this direction. Our common European reference is of particular importance where East and West meet. Eurobank as a Greek banking Group with a significant regional footprint supports this major initiative which highlights values we share, values which guide us in our relations with the communities we serve in all countries where we are present".*

The student exchange European ERASMUS Program received the first – ever Empress Theophano Prize for actively promoting the idea of European cooperation and mobility, substantially enhancing mutual understanding between the peoples of Europe.\_