



Rethymno, 27-01-2026

## **PRESS RELEASE**

On Monday, January 19, 2026, a scientific evening event entitled “*Child Rights and Inclusive Education: Learning, Dialogue and Lived Experiences*” was held at the D3 Auditorium of the Gallos Campus in Rethymno. The event was organized by the Centre for Children’s Rights of the University of Crete, in collaboration with the Department of International Relations (Erasmus+) and UNICEF.

The Vice-Rector of the University of Crete, Professor M. Vamvakaki, emphasized that children’s rights and inclusive education are not merely subjects of academic study, but fundamental pillars for the development of a fair, democratic, and inclusive society in which no child, regardless of age, remains invisible or excluded. She also highlighted the active role of the University of Crete in contributing to public dialogue and shaping strategies for the protection of human rights and the strengthening of social cohesion.

The Chair of the Centre for Children’s Rights, Associate Professor Maria Kypriotaki, underlined the importance of the event as an initiative aimed at informing and raising public awareness about the effective protection of children’s rights, while also promoting contemporary approaches to inclusive education and the right to diversity.

The UNICEF Diplomatic Representative in Greece, Dr. Ghassan Khalil, referred to the collaboration with the University of Crete and the contribution of the University-based Children’s Rights Centres to the nationwide training of educators.

The event was further enriched by the active participation of Erasmus+ students from the Schools of Rethymno, coming from countries both within and outside the European Union, as well as Greek students of the University of Crete. Participants took part in thematic workshops, exchanged views on children’s rights across all age groups, and interacted with preschool children from the “Paramythenios Kosmos” Kindergarten. These experiential activities added a unique dimension to both the workshops and the overall event, highlighting the importance of inclusion, social cohesion, acceptance of diversity, and the role of art and music as means of promoting children’s rights in everyday life.

Within the framework of the event, an Erasmus+ student from Italy with special abilities shared her personal experience studying at the Department of Philology of the University of Crete, while her father and tutor emphasized the need for meaningful inclusion in education. Both highlighted the warm reception by the academic and student community of the University of Crete, as well as the smooth and non-discriminatory integration into both the educational process and social activities. The student showcased her special talent through music, performing on the harp, demonstrating in practice that diverse abilities can be harmoniously integrated within the educational system.

The event concluded with presentations by Education Supervisors from the Regional Units of Chania, Rethymno, and Heraklion, the Director of Primary Education of the Lasithi Regional Unit, representatives of UNICEF, and academic staff of the University of Crete, who addressed issues related to education and the protection of children’s rights.



Greetings at the evening event were conveyed by Father Evangelos Patinakis, on behalf of His Eminence the Metropolitan of Rethymno and Avlopotamos Prodromos; Professor Nektarios Papadogiannis, Deputy Mayor for Education, Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Municipality of Rethymno; Professor Konstantinos Spanoudakis, member of the Governing Council of the University of Crete and Director of the Public Central Library of Rethymno; the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Research Policy, Professor Maria Vamvakaki; the Diplomatic Representative of UNICEF in Greece, Dr. Ghassan Khalil; the Head of the Directorate of Primary Education of Rethymno, Mr. Lambros Karvounis; the Chair of the Department of Preschool Education Th. Eleftherakis; and Maria Kypriotaki, Associate Professor of the Department of Primary Education and President of the Centre for Children's Rights of the University of Crete.

The evening event was musically accompanied by **Elena Leoni's band**.

Warm thanks to ESN UoC / Rethymnon

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