|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hellenic Republic** **The Agricultural University of Athens,****The International and Public Relations Office,**Address: 75 Iera Odos Str., Gr 11855, Athens, Greece,Information: Rania HindiridouTel. No.: (+30) 210 5294841E- mail: public.relations@aua.gr | A black background with a black square  Description automatically generated with medium confidence  |

 Athens, November 20 2023

**PRESS RELEASE**

**The "Sports for Inclusion" event was held at the Agricultural University of Athens, in collaboration with the Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation (H.W.B.F.) and Jambol Agapis.**

On Thursday, November 9 and Friday November 10 2023 respectively, the Agricultural University of Athens along with the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) hosted the pioneering event “Sports for Inclusion” at the Sports Facilities of the Agricultural University of Athens, in the context of the Erasmus+ European Program, entitled “Sports Handicap Inclusive Experience.” This specific initiative had been organized in cooperation with the Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation (H.W.B.F.) and Jambol Agapis, marking an important step towards the promotion of social inclusion by means of engaging in sports.

At the beginning of the event, the Rector of the Agricultural University of Athens, Mr. Spyridon Kintzios, Professor, warmly welcomed all the people present. Subsequently, the Vice Rector for the European University, Internationalization and Student Affairs, Ms. Helen Miliou, Professor, addressed her speech, inasmuch making a reference to the development of the fruitful cooperation between the University and the Hellenic Wheelchair Basketball Federation (H.W.B.F.), which resulted in the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Afterwards, the Sports Journalist Mr. Giorgos Kogkalidis, being also a member of the Journalists' Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers (JUADN), highlighted the importance of Social Media in everyday and professional life, the significance for gaining knowledge of their proper operation from an early age, while taking into account the major need for maintaining a balance on any posts made on them. Then, Ms. Chrysoula Zacharaki, being the Occupational Therapist, the Adviser to Communities/Environments for Developing Skills and the Coordinator of the National Wheelchair Basketball Team, extended her speech, in the course of which, all the participants had the opportunity to become aware in detail of the sport of wheelchair basketball, as well as the rules governing it and the beneficial effect upon the psychology of the people who practice that sport.

On the second day of the event performed, namely on Friday, November 10 2023, demonstrations of 3on3 basketball games took place at the A.U.A. Open Basketball Court, in collaboration with H.W.B.F. and Jambol Agapis. The event was honored by the presence of important personalities from the field of basketball. In particular, the President of the Greek Coaches Association, Mr. Panagiotis Giannakis, being a former International basketball player and current coach, Mr. Nikos Linardos, a former international basketball player and current coach too, the Secretary - General of the Panhellenic Association of Graduates in Physical Education (PEPFA), Mr. Nikolas Kostopoulos being also the Associate Professor of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, the Treasurer of the Greek Basketball Coaches Association, Mr. Sokratis Iliadis and the Deputy Mayor of Sports of the Municipality of Nikaia - Agios Ioannis Renti, Mr. Eleftherios Chatzipavlidis have given their presence at the event. Everyone present along with the basketball players of the National Wheelchair Basketball Team have had the chance to gain an experience of such things, by moving in a racing wheelchair, even attempting to shoot. On top of that, the whole event was accompanied by cheerful music, bringing a happy note and a lively touch, which had been supervised by a DJ.

It is worth mentioning that Mr. Dimitrios Danitsas, the man in charge of the Gym of the Agricultural University of Athens, together with the Teachers of Physical Education, namely Mr. Panagiotis Kalaitzis and Ms. Suzana Lampropoulou have contributed the most to the implementation of this event, which has made the best impressions on everybody attending and taking part in the event. Furthermore, the organisers have expressed their enthusiasm for future joint actions, in the light of the reflection of the success of the
“Sports for Inclusion” event that was actualized by the commitment undertaken on the part of the Agricultural University of Athens, EU-CONEXUS and their partners, to further create significant initiatives, which shall overcome the practical difficulties faced, thus enabling the promotion of an inclusive society without stereotypes. Participation into such sporting activities provide everyone with the possibility of inclusion and empathy, making the specific event particularly special and memorable.