

MEDIA DOSSIER · FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPIGONOS AMKE · HEYDAY ROAD INITIATIVE

HEYDAY International Symposium 2026



*From the field of Heyday Road to knowledge,
science, cultural diplomacy and public dialogue.*



International Olympic Academy · Ancient Olympia · Sunday, 3 May 2026

SPARTA → MEGALOPOLIS → ANDRITSAINA → ANCIENT OLYMPIA

165.96 km · Heyday Road 2026

Institutional & Field Support



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HEYDAY International Symposium 2026

From the field of Heyday Road to science, cultural diplomacy and public dialogue

International Olympic Academy · Ancient Olympia · Sunday, 3 May 2026 · 11:45 - 18:35

The HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 took place on Sunday, 3 May 2026, at the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia, as the natural continuation of Heyday Road 2026 - the 165.96 km field route from Sparta to Ancient Olympia.

The Symposium brought together scientists, institutional representatives, public voices in sport, cultural stakeholders and people of the field to reflect on human endurance, recovery, adaptation, Olympic memory and cultural continuity.

Its significance was reinforced by the publication of ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026, Sport, Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy: The Heyday Road Experience in Sparta, which frames Heyday Road as an emerging example of cultural diplomacy connecting sport, heritage, the Olympic Truce, community participation and sustainable local development.

The Symposium was also organized in cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD - the Hellenic Sports Medicine & Sports Safety Association NGO - reinforcing the dimension of sports medicine, safe exercise and scientific awareness around the prevention and rehabilitation of sports injuries.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- A 165.96 km non-motorized cultural route connected Sparta, Megalopolis, Andritsaina and Ancient Olympia.
- The field experience was transformed into scientific and public dialogue at the International Olympic Academy.
- ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026 positions Heyday Road within sport, heritage and cultural diplomacy.
- The Symposium created a bridge between endurance, medicine, cultural memory, public responsibility and regional cooperation.
- EPIGONOS AMKE is preparing the next field-and-knowledge chapter for September 2026 and the 2027 cycle, inviting institutions and media partners to follow this emerging platform.
- The cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD strengthened the sports medicine and sports safety dimension of the Symposium, connecting endurance with safe exercise, prevention, rehabilitation and responsible human performance.

WHAT MEDIA CAN USE FROM THIS DOSSIER

- Background on Heyday Road and the HEYDAY International Symposium 2026.
- Speaker profiles and thematic summaries ready to support reporting and feature stories.
- Institutional context linked to ELIAMEP, the International Olympic Academy, UN80 Initiative, CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission, the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO), the Region of Western Greece and local authorities.
- Field images from the Sparta - Ancient Olympia route and photos from the Symposium, speakers, honorary moments and community participation.
- Sports medicine and sports safety framework developed in cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD, with emphasis on safe exercise, prevention and rehabilitation of sports injuries.

A quick newsroom reference

The following page is designed for fast editorial use: numbers, contact details, photo-credit guidance and suggested angles for coverage.

165.96 km	Sparta -> Megalopolis -> Andritsaina -> Ancient Olympia.
4th edition	Heyday Road activated the route for the fourth consecutive year.
6 wayfarers	Participated in the field journey; two completed the full Sparta - Ancient Olympia route.
40+ participants	Joined the HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 at the International Olympic Academy.
10+ voices	Speakers and institutional contributors from medicine, physiology, neuroscience, cultural studies, sport journalism, regional cooperation and public life.
1 policy paper	ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026 positioned Heyday Road within sport, heritage and cultural diplomacy.

MEDIA CONTACT & MATERIAL

- 📞 **Press contact:** EPIGONOS AMKE - Heyday Road Initiative · George Vamvakitis, Founder & President
- 📞 **Email / Web:** info@heydayroad.org · www.heydayroad.org
- 📞 **Media assets:** High-resolution photos, field images, Symposium visuals, speaker moments and route documentation are available upon request.
- 📞 **Photo credit:** Free to use for editorial purposes with credit: HEYDAY ROAD / EPIGONOS AMKE.

SUGGESTED COVERAGE ANGLES

Sport and cultural diplomacy · Olympic memory · Human endurance · Sports medicine and sports safety · Science and recovery · Regional cooperation · Community participation · Heritage routes · Sparta and Ancient Olympia

This press layer is followed by the full media dossier, including the executive summary, institutional context, speaker notes, field documentation and next steps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 took place on Sunday, 3 May 2026, at the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia, as the natural continuation of Heyday Road 2026 - the route from Sparta to Megalopolis, Andritsaina and Ancient Olympia. The gathering carried the lived experience of the field into knowledge, science and public dialogue around human endurance, recovery, adaptation, Olympic memory and cultural continuity.

This year's edition acquired additional institutional weight, as it took place only a few days after the publication of ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026 - Sport, Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy: The Heyday Road Experience in Sparta - which analyses Heyday Road as an emerging example of cultural diplomacy linking sport, cultural heritage, the Olympic Truce, community participation and sustainable local development.

AT A GLANCE

- 📅 Date: Sunday, 3 May 2026 · 11:45 - 18:35
- 📍 Venue: International Olympic Academy (IOA), Ancient Olympia
- 📏 Field of origin: Heyday Road 2026 · Sparta → Ancient Olympia · 165.96 km
- 👤 Organizer: EPIGONOS AMKE — Heyday Road Initiative
- 🏛️ Institutional framework / support: ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026 · UN80 Initiative · CPMR Balkan & Black Sea Commission · Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) · Region of Western Greece · Municipality of Sparta · Municipality of Ancient Olympia · Hellenic Red Cross
- 📻 Communication sponsors: ERT · ERT3 · ERA SPORT 101.8 · ERT Tripolis
- 👥 Participation: 6 wayfarers in the field journey · 2 full-route completions · 40+ participants at the Symposium
- 🎯 Central axis: From practice to knowledge: endurance, recovery, adaptation, Olympic memory.

A Symposium born from the field

The Symposium did not stand as a detached academic event, but as the natural continuation of a real road. Only a few hours earlier, Heyday Road had completed this year's journey through rain, night, fatigue, support, care and human presence.

From this experience emerged the central idea of the day: that human endurance is not exhausted by time, speed or result. It concerns the body, the mind, memory, science, the relationship with others and the human capacity to return to meaning.



Heyday Road 2026 · Night, rain and endurance on the Sparta - Ancient Olympia route.

“Human endurance is not exhausted by time, speed or result. It concerns the body, the mind, memory, science and the human capacity to return to meaning.”

— Heyday Road Initiative · International Olympic Academy, 3 May 2026

From the road to the International Olympic Academy

For the fourth year, Heyday Road 2026 activated the route Sparta - Megalopolis - Andritsaina - Ancient Olympia. This year's experience confirmed that the field is not merely the prelude to a one-day conference, but the living material from which scientific discussion, memory and public dialogue are born.

The transition from the road to the International Olympic Academy gave the gathering the character of a bridge: from the body to knowledge, from fatigue to thought, from individual effort to public discussion.



Night, rain, endurance · The road as a living field · Local communities & care stations



The International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia: the place where the field became knowledge.

ELIAMEP's institutional reading

For international media, Heyday Road matters because it is not a symbolic reference to the Olympic Truce, but a living contemporary field practice: a real route where endurance, memory, communities and public dialogue meet between Sparta and Ancient Olympia.

ELIAMEP Policy Paper #205/2026 describes Heyday Road as an initiative that reactivates the historical narrative of the Olympic Truce, transforming a reference from the past into a contemporary lived experience where endurance, memory and collective participation converge.

ELIAMEP also underlines that the distinctive identity of Heyday Road lies in the connection between classical heritage, Olympic ideals, volunteering, local participation and international political significance. This framework gave the Symposium a dual character: scientific and cultural-diplomatic.

In this sense, the Symposium did not function only as a scientific meeting. It functioned as the first public continuation of a field that can be read simultaneously as an athletic route, a cultural act, a community of participation and a living laboratory of cultural memory.

ELIAMEP · POLICY PAPER #205/2026

- 📖 Title: Sport, Heritage and Cultural Diplomacy: The Heyday Road Experience in Sparta
- 👤 Author: Athena Fatsea, under the supervision of Professor Antonia Zervaki
- 🏛️ Institution: Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)
- 🏆 Fields: cultural diplomacy · sporting heritage · Olympic Truce · community participation

Keynote talks and thematic interventions

The programme followed the natural flow of the day: from institutional greetings and honorary interventions in public sports discourse, to the international and regional dimension of the field, and then to the main scientific programme. The themes covered human performance, recovery, neural adaptation, sports medicine, longevity, cardiac ageing and the relationship between body and spirit. The sports medicine and sports safety dimension was further strengthened through the cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD, connecting the scientific programme with prevention, rehabilitation, injury management and the responsible cultivation of human performance.

SPORTSMED WORLD

— HELLENIC SPORTS MEDICINE & SPORTS SAFETY ASSOCIATION NGO —



SPORTSMEDWORLD · Sports Medicine & Sports Safety Cooperation

Dimitrios Tsitsiropoulos · Organizing Committee Chair · Scientific coordination

The HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 was organized in cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD - the Hellenic Sports Medicine & Sports Safety Association NGO - confirming its active role in promoting sports medicine science, safe exercise and scientific awareness around the prevention and rehabilitation of sports injuries.

A significant contribution was made by Dimitrios Tsitsiropoulos, Chair of the Organizing Committee, Sports Injury & Rehabilitation Specialist, PT, MSc, Touro University, New York, USA, and President of SPORTSMEDWORLD, who undertook the coordination and scientific supervision of the event together with Professor Dimitrios Spandidos.

Photo: Dimitrios Tsitsiropoulos with Professor Dimitrios Spandidos and Fokion Zaimis Deputy Regional Governor of Achaia during the HEYDAY International Symposium 2026.



Dimitrios Kouvelas · Pharmacology · Noble Competition · Democratic Ideal

Sport, Noble Competition & the Democratic Ideal

A connection between pharmacological and medical knowledge, the ethos of the agon, the concept of noble competition and the democratic dimension of sport. The talk opened the main scientific programme by referring to the value of sport as a public good - not only as performance.



Yiannis Kouros · Honorary presence · Living memory of ultra-endurance

From practice to the language of endurance

The presence of Yiannis Kouros connected the Symposium with the historical experience of ultra-endurance and with the human dimension of the road that precedes theory. His participation, marked by complete humility - without mediation, without sponsors - reflected the core of the field.



Konstantinos M. Konstantinidis · Robotic Surgery · Medical Precision

From Ancient Olympia to Precision Robotic Surgery

The talk highlighted the transition from the ancient concept of excellence to modern medical precision, connecting the body, technology and the evolution of therapeutic practice.



Dimitrios Spandidos · Molecular Biology · Oncology · President of the Scientific Committee

From Cancer to Longevity

A connection between molecular biology, oncology and longevity with the question of human duration and quality of life. A framework for the transition from treatment to prevention and to the modern science of extending life.



Ginger F. Zaimis · Poet, Lit. Translator & Centre for Hellenic Studies Scholar

From Pindar and Poetry to Olympic Modernity: Cultural Legacy and the Pentathlon of the Muses

An intervention in the Humanities, specifically Poetry, Olympic memory, legacy and cultural diplomacy that is immortalized through Pindar, the Pentathlon of Muses and the necessity to re-unite “mind and muscle”. Thus, serving as a bridge between Classical antiquity, Olympic modernity and the philosophical & pedagogical ideologies thereof.



Christos Gogos · Neuroscience · Neural Adaptation

The Brain's Limit: Endurance and Neural Adaptation

An exploration of neuroplasticity and the brain's capacity to adapt, learn and recover. Endurance as a neural phenomenon, not only as a physiological or psychological condition.



Nikolaos Geladas · Exercise Physiology

A Day on the Road: Does the Body Challenge the Spirit?

A scientific approach to endurance through exercise physiology and the relationship between physical fatigue and mental resilience. The talk drew directly on this year's field experience as living material.



Fokion Zaimis · Deputy Regional Governor of Achaia · Region of Western Greece

Regional cooperation and cultural heritage

His intervention highlighted the transition from the field to regional cooperation: heritage, shared routes and public responsibility around Olympia and Western Greece. He positioned Heyday Road within a framework of cooperation, local development and international outreach.



Kyriakos Tsapralis · Sports Medicine · Injury Prevention

Return to Performance and Injury Prevention

An approach to returning to performance with emphasis on prevention, recovery and the proper management of the human body.



Konstantinos Tsarouchas · Cardiology · Pharmacology · Longevity

Slowing Cardiac Ageing

A connection between nutrition, exercise and medication with cardiac health and longevity.

Institutional greetings and public sports discourse

The final form of the programme was strengthened on Sunday morning with institutional greetings, honorary interventions in public sports discourse, and brief international and regional references. This session preceded the main scientific programme and gave the Symposium the character of a bridge between the place of Olympia, the public narrative of sport, regional cooperation and science.

The greetings and interventions included a representative of the Municipality of Ancient Olympia; Vangelis Ioannou, President of the Panhellenic Sports Press Association (PSAT); Nikos Tsonis, with long-standing experience in public sports broadcasting; and Fokion Zaimis, Deputy Regional Governor of Achaia, Region of Western Greece - connecting Heyday Road with cultural heritage, regional cooperation, public television, sports journalism and public sports discourse.



Municipality of Ancient Olympia · Institutional greeting

Connecting the Symposium with the place of Ancient Olympia

The Municipality was present as host of the place that houses the International Olympic Academy and the Olympic Games of antiquity. Its participation affirmed the continuity between local government, the archaeological site and the contemporary cultural initiative of Heyday Road.



Vangelis Ioannou · President of PSAT — Panhellenic Sports Press Association

Sport as public narrative: from performance to value

An intervention on the shift of public sports discourse from performance and spectacle toward value, participation and the social significance of sport. PSAT's contribution to the Symposium highlighted the role of the sports press as a public institution.



Nikos Tsonis · PSAT · Public sports television

Olympic memory and public television: the value of the route

A connection between Olympic memory, public television and sports journalism as carriers of cultural continuity. The value of the route - and not only performance - as a central theme of public dialogue.



EPIGONOS — Field Reflections · Organizer's intervention · Heyday Road Initiative

From the field to memory: people, stations and continuity

Brief interventions and honorary recognitions connected the scientific programme with the field itself: the people of the route, the athletes, the support crews and the continuity of the institution. This section served as a reminder that the symposium is not a separate event, but part of an ongoing journey.

Honorary recognitions and people of the field

The closing of the day consciously returned to the field: to the people of the route, the runners who stood on the road, the support crews and the partners who sustained the act before it became discourse at the International Olympic Academy.

Special recognition was given to Gilles Parralluelo and Andreas Farsalinos, who completed the full journey of approximately 165 kilometres from Sparta to Ancient Olympia. The presence of people and groups who supported the field was also highlighted: Olympia Runners with Giorgos Katsariotis, Trecho me ton Dimitraki ("Running with Dimitrakis") with Giorgos Drakopoulos in Megalopolis, participants who reached Megalopolis, the care stations, and the documentation by Laconia TV.



Care station along the route.



Group photograph at the IOA after the Symposium.



Recognition of Gilles Parralluelo and Andreas Farsalinos - completion of Sparta to Ancient Olympia.



Honorary moments for people of the field at the International Olympic Academy.



Documentation of the Symposium and its legacy by Laconia TV.



G. Drakopoulos / Trecho me ton Dimitraki ("Running with Dimitrakis") and people of the field in Megalopolis.



Katerina finishes in Megalopolis: the field as a route of presence, support and continuity.

Organizer's statement and next steps

“The HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 was born from the road itself. It was not an event detached from the field, but the continuation of an experience that began in Sparta, passed through communities, people and care stations, and arrived in Olympia as knowledge, dialogue and memory. What took place at the International Olympic Academy was a first step toward creating an annual institution where endurance meets science, culture and public responsibility.”

— George Vamvakitis · Founder & President, EPIGONOS AMKE — Heyday Road Initiative

INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNICATION SUPPORT

Heyday Road and the HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 developed within a framework of institutional and communication cooperation, with the presence of bodies and people from sport, science, journalism, local government and local society. The public presence and documentation of the day now create a first legacy for the continuation of the institution and for deepening the relationship between the field, knowledge and cultural memory.



FORTHCOMING MATERIAL

Videos of the talks, photographic material and selected excerpts from the HEYDAY International Symposium 2026 will be published gradually by EPIGONOS AMKE / Heyday Road. This material will serve as an archive of memory and as a basis for the continuation of the institution.

NEXT STEPS · OLYMPIA FORUM & UNITY RACE 2

The continuation of the institution is planned for September 2026, with the Olympia Forum and Unity Race 2 under the title "From Knowledge to the Field". This next chapter carries the knowledge born at the IOA back into the field and opens the way toward the 2027 cycle of the Heyday Road platform.

Media notes

This release is accompanied by photographic material from the Heyday Road field, the International Olympic Academy, the speakers, the cooperation with SPORTSMEDWORLD, the institutional greetings, the honorary recognitions, the care stations, the documentation by Laconia TV and the local communities that supported the route. It is available upon request to journalists, institutional partners and collaborating research bodies.

ABOUT EPIGONOS AMKE / HEYDAY ROAD

EPIGONOS AMKE develops the Heyday Road initiative around the route from Sparta to Ancient Olympia, with the aim of connecting sport, cultural memory, human endurance, education, local participation and cultural diplomacy. Heyday Road functions as a living field where historical memory is transformed into contemporary practice, and where participation, care, science and community compose a new form of public value.

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