PRESS RELEASE

The epiStoa Annual Meeting 2026 has concluded: from Magna Graecia to Europe, ancient languages as instruments of freedom

Reggio Calabria, Bova and Bova Marina hosted four days of dialogue between philosophy, classical languages, science and European values

26 October 2026

The epiStoa Annual Meeting 2026 – “Magna Graecia”, held from 15 to 18 October in Reggio Calabria, Bova and Bova Marina, has drawn to a close. The meeting brought together scholars, academics and representatives of European cultural institutions to discuss the theme “Ancient Languages – Developing the Capacity for Thought’, highlighting the contribution that the study of Greek and Latin can make to a critical understanding of the values on which the European Union is founded: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including those of minorities, as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

The initiative kicked off on Thursday 15 October at the “Tommaso Campanella” Classical High School, with the presentation of “Calliroe. The Aphrodite of Syracuse” and epiStoa. On Friday 16 October, the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria hosted the official opening, with speeches by the director Fabrizio Sudano; Stefano Iorfida, president of the Anassilaos Cultural Association; Michele Rizzi, president of Sfi – VCO Section and president of the epiStoa 2026 conference; and Detlev Schild, president of epiStoa.

The academic sessions offered diverse and complementary perspectives: Pasquale Casile addressed the theme of Dionysus in Bova; Stefano Piazzese discussed the Hölderlinian interpretation of ‘Greekness’; and Michele Rizzi, in his paper ‘Free Reason: Philosophy, Magna Graecia, Europe’, explored the relationship between classical memory, critical thought and freedom. In the afternoon, presentations were given by Christos Yapijakis, on Epicurus’s scientific humanism; Maria Velasco, on areté as dynamis in Pindar’s epinicians; Gennaro Carillo, on the theme of excess and the eternal return of the tyrant; and Flavia Frisone, on the Hellenic language as the code of an ancient yet thoroughly modern humanistic identity.

The guided tour of the National Archaeological Museum, organised for the guests immediately after the Friday morning session, was particularly significant. Viewing the Riace Bronzes and the museum’s collections transformed the archaeological heritage into a further opportunity for reflection: conservation does not merely mean protecting artefacts, but safeguarding from consumption and oblivion the forms, words and questions that still speak to the present. As Michele Rizzi noted in his presentation, ‘not everything of value is immediately useful, and not everything that is truly useful can be measured straight away’: safeguarding philosophy, ancient languages and the memory preserved in museums means preserving the tools of freedom that enable us to look to the future.

Reggio Calabria, with its landscape overlooking the Strait, the layers of its history and, above all, the heritage housed in the National Archaeological Museum, provided the conference with a setting particularly in keeping with the themes addressed. Magna Graecia was thus presented not as a static past to be celebrated, but as a laboratory of ideas, cross-fertilisation and encounters that continues to challenge contemporary Europe.

On Saturday 17 October, the discussions continued at the Museum with a round-table discussion entitled ‘Developing the Capacity for Thought’, focusing on Latin, Ancient Greek and mathematics, featuring Vittore Nason, Valentina Surace, Peter Kuhlmann and Detlev Schild. In the afternoon, proceedings moved to Bova Marina, at the library of the Delia Cultural Association, with a session dedicated to Calabrian Greek and Greek culture in Calabria, before concluding with an internal meeting and the epiStoa General Assembly.
It was the General Assembly itself that set the date for the next event: in 2027, epiStoa will continue its journey in Kos, Greece, carrying on its mission to promote European values, their history and relevance today, and the role that ancient languages can still play in shaping thought and citizenship.

epiStoa invites academics, teachers, students and members of the public to find out more about its activities and to take part in future initiatives. Information, projects and details on how to get involved are available on the official website: https://www.epistoa.eu/.

For further information: epiStoa – European Values and Languages | https://www.epistoa.eu/