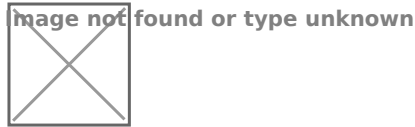


Theological School of Halki renovated buildings set for inauguration as reopening efforts continue



The inauguration of the renovated buildings of the Theological School of Halki is planned for late September, according to the Ecumenical Patriarchate's initial schedule, as efforts continue toward reopening the historic institution for theological education.

According to Greek newspaper TA NEA, the inauguration of the renovated facilities represents an important milestone in the history of the School but is a separate process from its actual reopening. Efforts toward reopening are proceeding within the framework of Turkish legislation and the country's existing constitutional provisions.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew is personally following the process and has repeatedly stressed, during meetings both within and outside Turkey, that the reopening of Halki is an issue concerning the Orthodox world as a whole.

The United States and the European Union are also monitoring developments, while, according to the report, positive statements regarding the possibility of reopening the School have recently emerged from the Turkish side.

Such a development is considered to carry significant symbolic and political importance both for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and for Turkey internationally.

Postgraduate-level institution among options under consideration

According to TA NEA, the scenario currently considered most likely would see Halki reopen in the form of a postgraduate-level institution or a type of theological seminary.

Such an arrangement could reduce the bureaucratic obstacles associated with operating as a university faculty under a Turkish university, while at the same time

providing greater autonomy in teaching and academic organisation.

Another important development in the ongoing discussions was Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Ankara last June.

According to the report, Erdoğan indicated that political willingness remains to seek a solution to the longstanding issue.

The Theological School of Halki has remained closed since 1971. Its reopening has for decades been one of the principal requests of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Source: TA NEA

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