

Hagia Sophia is a world heritage monument and must be respected as such, Greek Culture Minister Mendoni says



Hagia Sophia along with other monuments of Istanbul has been included on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 1985, and is strongly protected as a major cultural artifact of humanity, Greek Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said to national broadcaster ERT1 on Friday.

Responding to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's plans to celebrate the 567th anniversary since the Fall of Constantinople at the monument, Mendoni said that "it was the founder of the modern Turkish state Kemal Ataturk who converted Hagia Sophia to a museum in 1934. This was a recognition that this specific monument belongs to humanity, while it also recognized Istanbul's history through the ages and its multiculturalism."

She said she deplored such action by President Erdogan that catered to domestic politics.

Her statement follows that of government spokesperson Stelios Petsas earlier on Friday, who also expressed disapproval.

[Source](#)