

Issue of Hagia Sophia discussed in Bulgarian parliament



The recently regurgitated threat by the official Turkish state to reconvert the iconic Hagia Sophia back into a “conquest mosque” surfaced on Friday during debate in the Bulgarian Parliament.

Speculation over a change in the status of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which for nearly a millennium was the seat of Orthodoxy, comes ahead of a July 2 decision by Turkey’s high court.

In response to a tabled question by MP Ivo Hristov, who asked what Sofia official reaction is vis-à-vis the prospect of the Hagia Sophia being reconverted into a mosque, government deputy premier Tomislav Dontsev said any official response would come if, and when the matter reaches the level of UNESCO.

“Until today, all of the (previous such petitions) have been rejected (Turkey’s) council of state. Hypothetically, if the status of a world heritage monument is re-

examined, then the issue will be discussed at a session of the UNESCO's world heritage committee. Only after this will the Bulgarian side have reasons to react," he said.

Bulgarian is a predominately Orthodox Christian nation in the southern Balkans, with a significant Muslim minority in the southeast.



