

Greek Culture minister: Hagia Sophia turned into mosque to satisfy Erdogan's domestic supporters



Culture Minister Lina Mendoni was strongly critical of the decision to turn Hagia Sophia into a mosque while speaking in parliament on Friday, noting that the Greek government's position had been clearly stated on all levels and accusing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of pursuing a personal political agenda when he changed the status of the former Christian basilica from a museum into a mosque. She also noted that, unlike Turkey, Greece has invested more than 50 million euros in the last 20 years to preserve and protect Ottoman monuments within its territory.

"As I have stated, this action by Erdogan is a provocation for all, since a world-class monument with huge and very serious symbolic value is converted into an Islamic temple to serve the personal politics of the president of Turkey and satisfy his domestic supporters," she said.

She highlighted the fact that the culture ministry had spent more than 50 million euros since the year 2000 to repair and maintain Ottoman-era buildings of all types, including mosques, mausoleums and smoking houses, not discriminating between monuments found within Greek territory.

The minister was replying to comments made by a main opposition SYRIZA MP on Turkey's decision for a UNESCO world heritage monument.

[Source](#)