

Schinas: What is happening today in Hagia Sophia is the wrong beginning



“Turkey must finally decide what its broader geopolitical goal will be,” said Margaritis Schinas, the European Commission’s vice-president and Commissioner for the promotion of the European way of life, during the presentation of the new EU strategy for the Security Union.

Asked about the first Muslim prayer in Hagia Sophia, Schinas stressed that “as a Greek, I feel angry. It is a difficult day and I’m sure it is not just me. What is happening today in Hagia Sophia is the wrong beginning.”

The Vice President of the European Commission pointed out that “Turkey must finally decide what its broader geopolitical goal will be and with whom exactly it wants to go in the future. If it wants to go with Europe, if it wants to continue on this path of alignment with our principles and our values.”

According to reports from Istanbul, thousands of Muslims on Friday flocked to the one-time Christian basilica of Hagia Sophia, which had had the status of a museum since the 1930s, for the first day of Islamic prayers since its reconversion into a mosque by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The prayers began with

Erdogan reading from the Quran, after which the call to prayer was heard from the four minarets around the monument.

Due to the pandemic, only about a 1,000 people were allowed into the interior but many more were crowded outside, many of them failing to observe safety measures, such as social distancing and masks.

[Source](#)