

## **Greek city mayor brings up Hagia Sophia conversion ahead of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities con'f**



**The mayor of the central Greece city of Larissa, Apostolos Kalogiannis, spoke to the Orthodoxia news agency this week over an initiative by his municipality towards UNESCO, regarding the shocking decision by the Turkish president last July to convert the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.**

The initiative comes ahead of a conference of UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities, of which Larissa is a member.

The Greek city's mayor said a letter was sent to the director of UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning, David Atchoarena, expressing the municipality's concerns and disappointment against the provocation, adding that UNESCO should press for

a reversal of the decision.

The Hagia Sophia, the greatest of all cathedrals of eastern Christendom, is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The development comes after Turkey's controversial directorate for religious affairs said a Muslim prayer service will be held at the historic Chora Church, the first time in 75 years.

The iconic Byzantine-era cathedral was recently also reconverted into a mosque by Turkey's Islamist government.

Erdogan himself is set to attend, with the incomparable Christian Orthodox mosaics and frescoes that survived to this day to be concealed with curtains during the prayer service.