

Council of Europe condemns Hagia Sophia conversion from museum to mosque



The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) on Friday condemned Turkey's July 13 unilateral decision to change the status of the UNESCO-protected World Heritage Site of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul from a museum to a mosque.

PACE's Committee on Culture, Science, Education & Media also adopted a written declaration, which says the decision is "a discriminatory step backwards, that clearly undermines Turkey's secular identity and multicultural legacy."

The Committee stresses that it "also runs counter to the Parliamentary Assembly's core values and principles, particularly as regards interreligious and intercultural dialogue and the principle of living together."

Chairperson of the Greek Parliamentary Delegation to PACE Dora Bakoyannis, wrote on Twitter: "Europe takes a stand against Turkey's systematic policy of

violating democratic principles and values.”

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