

06/02/2019

Greek PM visits Hagia Sophia in Istanbul (VIDEOS + PHOTOS)



Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Wednesday visited the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

Ibrahim Kalin, a spokesman of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accompanied Tsipras on his tour. The Greek premier was also accompanied by Education Minister Costas Gavroglou, Alternate Foreign Minister Giorgos Katrougalos, Deputy Foreign Minister Markos Bolaris, as well as his wife Betty Peristera Baziana.

Tsipras declined to make any comment to reporters.

Built in the 6th century under order of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, Hagia Sophia – a UNESCO world heritage site – was once Christendom's greatest cathedral.

It served as the seat of the Greek Orthodox Church before it was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 1453.

It was turned into a museum by the Turkish government in 1935.

The Greek premier will visit the Halki Greek Orthodox seminary on an island near Istanbul later on Wednesday.

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(Source: ekathimerini.com)