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EU VP Schinas: Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s positions in perfect agreement with framework of values, priorities set by Commission



European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, in a video message, praised efforts by Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, to bridge differences and build consensus among disparate groups, as he noted.

Schinas, who also holds the Commission portfolio entitled “Promoting our European Way of Life”, repeated the Union’s call for the reopening of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s Halki School of Theology, which is located on the eponymous Marmara Sea isle.

In a video message at the beginning of a two-day international scientific conference at the Halki School, Schinas described the Ecumenical Patriarch as “…a global leader who is always in favor of dialogue on religious issues.”

He said added that the Ecumenical Patriarch’s positions on social and political issues are “…in perfect agreement with the framework of values and priorities set by the European Commission…This model of open and sincere dialogue is the only path to reopening the Halki Seminary.”

In his address, the Ecumenical Patriarch pointed out that in the 127 years of its operation, the Holy Halki Seminary provided to the Great Church, and to Orthodoxy around the world, teachers of Orthodox Christian theology, who served with sacrifice the people of God and the sacred science.

In 1971 official Turkey ordered that the school, the primary seminary for training Ecumenical Patriarchate clergy, be closed, in the wake of an illiberal and discriminatory high court ruling banning private universities in Turkey, unless they are affiliated with a state-run institution in the predominately Muslim country.