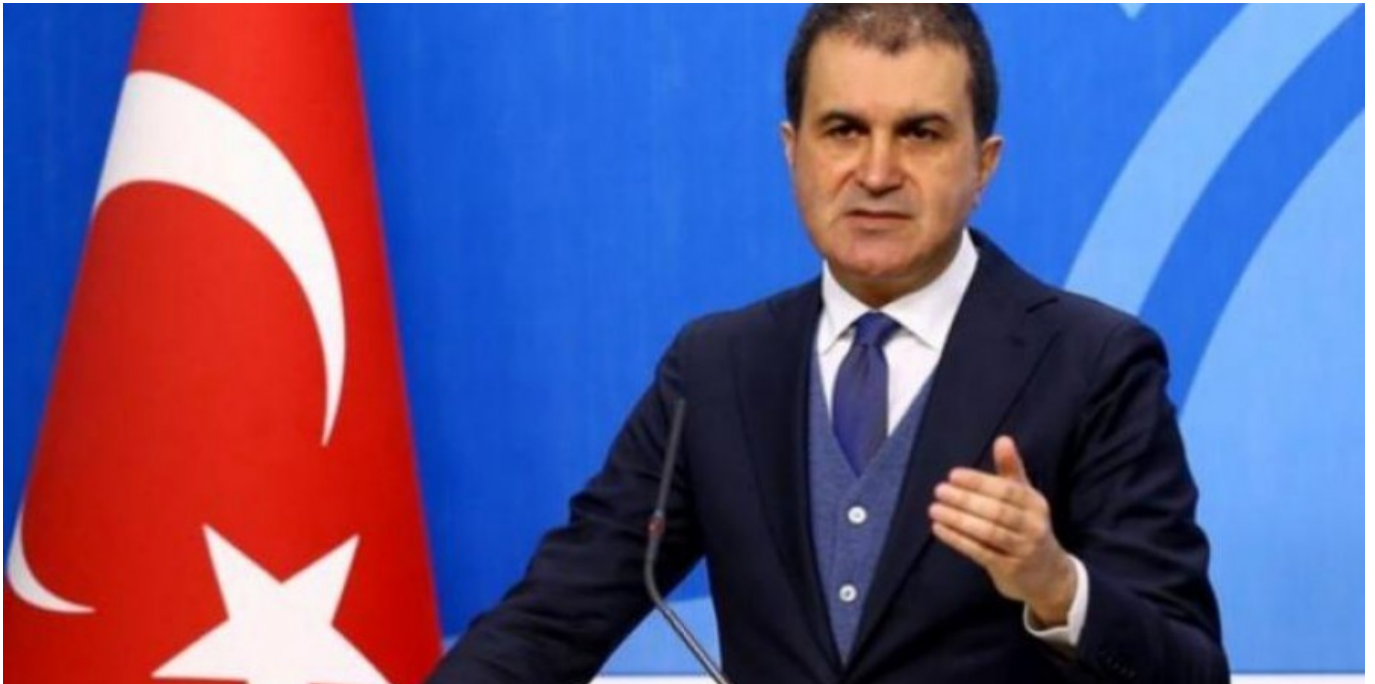


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Turkish ruling party spox says pledge to reconvert Hagia Sophia into mosque stands



A spokesman for Turkey's ruling party, AKP, this week again confirmed that the Erdogan-dominated Turkish government wants to reconvert the Hagia Sophia into a Muslim mosque.

In a briefing of foreign correspondents in the country, spokesman Omer Celik responded to a question by Sigma TV by saying that Erdogan's pre-election pledge for Hagia Sophia still stands.

The increasingly authoritarian Turkish leader had told party supporters that he wanted to reconvert Hagia Sofia, which for a millennium was Christendom's greatest Cathedrals, back into a mosque from its current status as a museum. His argument for the provocative action is to eliminate entry fees.