

(Πρόταση Ε' ΓΕΝ ΔΝΤΗ):

Mrs Director General

Mr Chairman

I would like to inform the members of the Executive Board on the latest developments concerning Hagia Sophia, a World Heritage Monument, inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage List since 1985. Greece together with all its European partners follows closely Turkish officials' rhetoric to alter the status of Hagia Sophia, a symbol of interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue and transform it from a museum into a Mosque.

The fact that Turkey has asked for the inscription of Hagia Sophia in UNESCO's World Heritage List is an unquestionable proof of its obligation to protect, conserve and transmit this monument to future generations, as provided in 1972 Convention. We are therefore concerned *how Turkey applies in practice this obligation.*

Also, to our knowledge, the change in status of a World Heritage Monument presupposes prior notification to the World Heritage Committee of the intention of the State to undertake changes to the status of this monument. *So, we are asking whether Turkey has made any prior notification to the Committee and on which legal ground it rejects*

cooperation with all those countries that raised their voice against the alteration of the use of Hagia Sophia.

In view of the above, we call upon all UNESCO Member States, Associate Members and Observers, to unite behind the logical demand that Hagia Sofia retains its current status, as an open museum and monument, and avoid steps that encourage cultural and religious polarisation...