



ICOMOS
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL
ON MONUMENTS AND SITES

European
Association of
Archaeologists

The Hague, 16 September 2005

HE Mr Ali Babacan
Minister of State
Secretariat General for EU Relations
Eskisehir Yolu 9.Km
TR-06800 Ankara
TURKEY

Your Excellency

Re: The Roman Baths at Allianoi

Europa Nostra, the pan-European federation for cultural heritage, acting jointly with two other distinguished partner organisations, namely ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and the European Association of Archeologists (EAA), wishes to draw your urgent attention to the ongoing construction of the Yortanlı Dam on the River Ilyya. As you might know, in November, the irrigation basin which this dam is meant to create, will flood the significant archaeological site of Allianoi where ongoing excavations continue to reveal a great wealth of historic and cultural heritage, which forms integral part of Europe's common cultural heritage.

Already in January 2005, Europa Nostra wrote to Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to express its concern over this imminent danger. In this letter, we stressed that according to the Turkish and German archaeologists working on the site, the dam could be relocated without jeopardising the undisputed water needs of the local agricultural sector. Moreover, we expressed our conviction that the site of Allianoi constitutes a major potential for cultural tourism development with associated economic returns contributing to a sustainable regional development of the entire region. Much to our regret, this letter has remained to date without any response. More recently, on 2 September 2005, ICOMOS wrote to Prime Minister Erdogan, also asking for the dam to be relocated.

Ever since its first intervention, Europa Nostra has continued to protest against the risk of imminent destruction of this unique site. We have been mobilising other civil society organisations and have now joined forces with ICOMOS and EAA. We have also sent an appeal to the European Parliament with the aim to step up pressure against the imminent destruction of Allianoi. In addition to Turkish media, a number of important European newspapers and magazines have also drawn attention to this endangered site and have supported Europa Nostra's appeal. On a national level, an overwhelming number of 35,000 protest signatures have already been collected at the site - 30,000 of those who signed were Turkish citizens.

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In the light of the above, we appeal to you to take urgent action to help to save the Allianoi site by common agreement of all concerned Ministers within the Turkish Government. As already mentioned, according to local and international experts, it appears to be possible to relocate the Yortanlı dam to a more suitable site which would meet both agricultural and cultural interests.

We believe, that at the moment that Turkey prepares for entering into accession talks with EU, a courageous political decision to save Allianoi - which constitutes Europe's common cultural heritage - will demonstrate the Turkish government's firm attachment to the widely agreed European standards, also with regard to the safeguard and enhancement of cultural heritage.

Sincerely,



Otto von der Gablentz
Executive President
Europa Nostra
*The Pan-European Federation for
Cultural Heritage*

Europa Nostra Secretariat
Lange Voorhout 35
NL-2514 EC The Hague
The Netherlands

T +31 70 302 40 51
F +31 70 361 78 65
office@europanostra.org
www.europanostra.org



Prof. Michael Petzet
President
ICOMOS
*The International Council on
Monuments and Sites*

ICOMOS International Secretariat
49-51, rue de la Fédération
F-75015 Paris
France

T +33 1 45 67 67 70
F +33 1 45 66 06 22
secretariat@icomos.org
www.icomos.org



Prof. Anthony Harding
President
EAA
*The European Association of
Archaeologists*

European Association of Archaeologists
c/o Institute of Archaeology CAS
Letenska 4
CZ118 01 Praha 1
Czech Republic

T/F +420 257 01 44 11
eaa@arup.cas.cz
www.e-a-a.org

Cc: H.E. Mustafa Oguz Demiralp, Permanent Delegate of Turkey to the European Union

Enclosures: copy of the Europa Nostra letter to HE Abdullah Gül, Foreign Minister
copy of the ICOMOS letter to HE Recen Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister