

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/EG/1694/IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 21 December 2022

H.E. Ms Gülnur Aybet  
Ambassador Extraordinary and  
Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate  
Permanent Delegation of Republic of Türkiye  
to UNESCO  
Maison de l'UNESCO  
1, rue Miollis  
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## World Heritage List 2023

### Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye) – Interim report and additional information request

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2023. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation procedure.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to the “Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure” was carried out by Ms. Yasmine Makaroun (Lebanon) in September 2022. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organisation and implementation of the mission.

On 10 October 2022, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information on the links between the component parts of the serial nomination, the rationale for selecting the component mosques, documentation, research, management, and risk management plans. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 14 November 2022 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2022, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2023. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2023.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation for attending the meeting held on 24 November 2022 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During the last part of its meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

### **Comparative analysis**

The ICOMOS Panel considers that the nomination dossier and additional information already provided by the State Party have effectively established the historical, political, cultural, social and religious contexts in which the wooden mosques were introduced and flourished in Anatolia during the Seljuk and Principality periods. ICOMOS considers, however, that the origin of the construction technique of the nominated wooden mosques remains unclear. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide an extended comparative analysis within the region and in a succinct manner to illustrate the contemporary situation outside Anatolia in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and early 14<sup>th</sup> century so as to elucidate the origin of the construction technique of the nominated mosques. Considering that the wooden building construction technique has been practised throughout history both locally and outside Anatolia, ICOMOS would also like to know whether the construction technique of the nominated mosques emerged from the adaption of the local tradition of constructing wooden civic and residential buildings.

### **Implementation of the management plan**

The ICOMOS Panel considers that while the state of conservation of the five mosques is overall stable, there are several pressing issues that need to be addressed, such as active deterioration of the fabric due to moisture in the walls, insect and possibly fungi attacks on the wooden elements, and flaking and loss of the original paint layers. ICOMOS notes that the actions to address these issues are listed in the management plan submitted as a part of the nomination dossier. ICOMOS would be pleased to know when the management plan will be implemented, and how the implementation progress is monitored.

ICOMOS notes that some of the periodic maintenance measures are very sensitive according to the nomination dossier, and that there is a lack of guidelines to follow. ICOMOS is concerned that these measures may cause detrimental changes to the integrity and authenticity of the component mosques over the long term if they are not properly implemented. ICOMOS considers that a maintenance manual with internationally accepted principles should be developed. This manual should be followed by the staff responsible for maintenance when undertaking maintenance activities. Could the State Party consider the development of such manual?

Furthermore, ICOMOS notes that a Scientific Committee will be established to guide the conservation activities. ICOMOS would be pleased to receive more information on the legal status of this Committee, its relationship with the Advisory Board of each nominated mosque, its role in the implementation of the management plan, and whether specialists with expertise in documentation, scientific analysis, conservation technology, preventive conservation and risk management will be appointed/involved in this Committee.

### **Documentation and baseline information**

The ICOMOS Panel notes that there is a lack of up-to-date and comprehensive documentation for all the nominated mosques, including measured drawings following the same standards, condition surveys and recordings, assessments of the state of conservation, and assessments of the authenticity and integrity. ICOMOS is aware that a comprehensive documentation campaign for each nominated mosque will be undertaken to address this issue, as indicated in the management plan. ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could clarify when these campaigns will be conducted, and whether there will be a common standard to follow.

ICOMOS would also like to know whether the State Party envisages establishing a database to record all the information produced from these campaigns, as well as the relevant archives of past interventions, and historical texts. ICOMOS considers that by sharing the database with all the stakeholders, the level of informed conservation, management, and monitoring of the nominated property will be significantly improved.

### **Coordinated management**

The ICOMOS Panel appreciates the State Party's efforts in improving the coordinated management of the nominated property as a whole and welcomes the initiative of the State Party to appoint a site manager to coordinate the management of all the component mosques. ICOMOS would be grateful if the State Party could provide further information on how the coordinated management of the five mosques will be achieved, in terms of continued research, documentation, conservation approaches, monitoring, presentation and interpretation, capacity buildings, and how the management experience and expertise will be shared between the staff of all the five mosques.

### **Risk management plan**

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is vulnerable to risks such as fire, earthquakes and floods, and therefore a risk management plan is imperative and should be developed as a matter of urgency. ICOMOS notes that there is a pilot project at the Eşrefoğlu Mosque and its outcomes are to be evaluated in December 2022. These outcomes will be used to develop the risk management plan for all the component mosques. ICOMOS would be pleased to know when this risk management plan will be ready and implemented.

### **Heritage Impact Assessment**

ICOMOS understood that a cable car will be constructed to access the Afyonkarahisar Castle, which may cause visual intrusion to the view of the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque. ICOMOS would be interested to know whether a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been carried out before the approval of this construction project. If the HIA has been made, ICOMOS would be pleased to obtain a copy in English of this report for its consideration.

We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation procedure.

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above information **by 28 February 2023 at the latest**, the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* for additional information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted, however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any additional information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So, we would be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation procedure.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin  
Director  
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to      Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums  
Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Foundations  
Konya Regional Directorate of Foundations  
Kütahya Regional Directorate of Foundations  
Turkish National Commission for UNESCO  
UNESCO World Heritage Centre