



Panel Review

Panel and Forum: The Cultural Value and Identity of the City of Ankara on Its Way to UNESCO

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“The Cultural Value and Identity of the City of Ankara on Its Way to UNESCO”

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Place: Ankara Palas Devlet Konukevi

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In the last two decades, Turkey’s Capital, Ankara, whose history is traced back to very old times, has been subjected to serious criticisms because of what had been done in conservation and planning of historical areas. A major part of these criticisms is closely related to absence of vision, framework and holistic planning activities regarding international conservation standards. As an event targeting discussion of these problems, an academic activity titled “The Cultural Value and Identity of the City of Ankara on Its Way to UNESCO was realized by Atılım University in May 9th, 2016 in one of the prominent architectural pieces of Ankara’s Republican Period, Ankara Palas State Guest House. In this gathering, many high level bureaucrats from various public agencies, representatives of chambers, NGO’s and citizens of Ankara congregated and meaning and process of UNESCO World Heritage are presented together with the city of Ankara’s assets from old ages till now with regards to world heritage.

In the Panel, as the first part of the event, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Savaş Zafer Şahin, as the moderator, talked about the problems related to evaluation of the City of Ankara as a world heritage area and process of emergence of the event mentioning of the proposal prepared in partnership between

Ankara Regional Development Agency and Atılım University for a possible candidacy of Ankara for the World Heritage List. Other problems of conservation, commitment and adoption in the processes similar to UNESCO have also been voiced. The first panellist, Dr. Ege Yıldırım, Head of Mudurnu Management Area and conservation planner, explained process of candidacy to UNESCO World Heritage List in detail. Dr. Yıldırım emphasised that, putting a place in the World Heritage List is a process that requires making of strategic choices necessitating intense efforts, starting with determination of the right candidacy. Then, the second speaker Prof. Dr. Mehmet Tuncer, declared that the city of Ankara is a multi-layered city which has been continuously inhabited as a settlement from antiquity to today, starting with Augustus Temple and Hanlar Region it has many assets that can be considered for world heritage list candidacy, yet, also emphasised that insufficiency in conservation of these places and lack of a conservation plan for Ankara constitutes a great risk. Third speaker, Dr. Açılya Alpan took subject from urban design perspective. Having underlined the importance of handling historical assets of Ankara in a holistic viewpoint rather than taking a single period or singular entities, Dr. Alpan denoted importance of conservation approaches for world heritage candidacy, giving examples from different countries. Then, Prof. Dr. Elvan Altan, faculty of Middle East Technical University, took the floor and put forward Ankara's modern architectural heritage in detail. Starting her speech with touching upon importance of modern architectural heritage and necessity to conserve them, Altan, reminded that Ankara's buildings of the Republican Period is still in the state of an open air architectural museum and involves very important assets for UNESCO. The last speaker, Başkent University Faculty Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nuray Bayraktar, realised a detailed presentation about the value of civil architectural products till the year 1980, based on a TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) research project. In her presentation she displayed examples and accumulation of civil architecture in Ankara.

After the Panel, a Forum was realised in order to take views of all other participants in the venue of the event. In the Forum, participants, proposed various alternative candidacies from Augustus Temple to Republican Period Ankara and discussed the road map for the candidacy. In the Forum it has been especially emphasised that related public agencies, i.e. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, The Governorship of An-

kara and The Greater Municipality of Ankara do not engage in Ankara's candidacy to The World Heritage List and importance of sustaining increasingly intensified efforts.

Main headlines of the Event can be summarised below:

- As a layered city, the city of Ankara, is a city whose historical heritage should be conserved in a holistic fashion. In constituting Ankara's UNESCO candidacy this situation has to be taken into consideration.
- The City of Ankara has many assets that can be considered as UNESCO world heritage area. Nevertheless, past interventions decreases these assets' possibilities for candidacy.
- Above all, UNESCO World Heritage Areas necessitates an institutional engagement. The City of Ankara's institutional stakeholders should take action in no time for this respect.
- Without forgetting that the World Heritage Committee will congregate in İstanbul this year, efforts for Ankara should be sustained in an intensified fashion.
- Some basic works like management and conservation plans for the historical quarter of Ankara should be completed without losing any more time. Completion of these work will constitute the base of UNESCO World Heritage Candidacy Process.

Videos of the event can be accessed in Atılım University Library's Institutional Archive via the link

<http://kurumsal.library.atilim.edu.tr/libinstitutional/view/id/2432/?lang=tr>

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