

Presidential decree issued to turn Chora Church into mosque

The English language Greek newspapers have this at the moment, the decree being issued earlier this morning, Friday, the holy day in Islam. From [Greek Reporter](#)

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a presidential decree on Friday turning the historic Holy Saviour in Chora, a medieval Byzantine church in western Constantinople that was a museum, into a mosque.

The move follows the July decision to convert Hagia Sophia to a mosque, a move condemned by the international community.

The change in its status was passed in December 2019 but the decision of the State Council of Turkey had not been implemented, until today.



Chora, which had been turned into the Kariye Museum after WWII and was then extensively restored, is covered with some of the

finest Byzantine mosaics and frescoes. Originally built in the 4th century, the church was comprehensively rebuilt around 1077-81 and again after a partial collapse following an earthquake early in the 12th century. The church is registered as an Unesco heritage site.

French historian Fabrice Monnier noted, Turkey had already turned two church-museums back into mosques in recent years, the artistically less notable Hagia Sophia buildings in Iznik, formerly Nicaea, and Trabzon. Holy Saviour in Chora is different, he told *Le Figaro*. "Its beautiful mosaics and frescos cover almost all the church's walls and domes," he said. "It would be hard to imagine it being returned into a mosque without totally covering them over."

