

Platform of Anatolian Religions and Beliefs Platform / Those who are backing our cultural heritage Vanguards of Our Cultural Heritage / Part 12

UNESCO World Heritage and TurkeyTürkiye with Namık Kemal Döleneken

TOPICS: TurkeyTürkiye's UNESCO World Heritage Monuments, Application Process to UNESCO, Site Management and Its Importance, Things to Consider in the Application Process, What are the Changes After Entering the UNESCO List, Challenges TurkeyTürkiye Faces in the UNESCO Processes, Rejected Applications and the Reapplication Process, UNESCO's Role in the Protection of Cultural Heritage, Suggestions for TurkeyTürkiye's Success in UNESCO Processes

Nükhet Everi: In this part of our interviews series prepared for the Anatolian Religions and Beliefs Platform, we are discussing the UNESCO processes. Namik Kemal Döleneken, a UNESCO World Heritage Expert. First of allFirstly, can we get to know you a little bit you briefly introduce yourself?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: I am an urban planner, but it has been a long time since I stopped working in the field of planning. I am currently focusing on UNESCO world heritage and site management. In the past, I have provided training to municipal employees and administrations within the Honorary Cities Union. Currently, I am the UNESCO process consultant for the Yesemek sculpture workshop in Gaziantep.

Nükhet Everi: What is UNESCO and who can participate in this organisation? What are Turkey Which of Türkiye's artefacts are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: UNESCO, as a unit of the United Nations, is a co-operation organisation representing states. Its main purpose is to protect cultural and natural assets of outstanding universal value. Within the framework of the criteria determined by UNESCO, cultural and natural heritage assets are included in the world heritage list. In TurkeyTürkiye, important monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage List include Pamukkale, Cappadocia, Safranbolu, Goreme National Park and Divriği Great Mosque.

Nükhet Everi:How does the What is the process of an artefact being included in the UNESCO list work?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: The first stage is to be included in the provisional list. In TurkeyTürkiye, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism proposes to UNESCO the assets it deems appropriate. After evaluating these proposals, UNESCO places them on the provisional list. TurkeyTürkiye currently has 83 assets on the provisional list. File preparation is very important in this process. In accordance with UNESCO's application manual, the environment of the asset, intangible cultural values, and other factors are explained in detail. Scientific research is carried out and a site management plan is created with the participation of all parties. This plan includes a commitment to conservation and should be a document signed by all actors.

Nükhet Everi: What does site management mean and why is it important?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: The concept of site management emerged in the year 2000. It states that it is not enough for the protection of an asset to be carried out only by the state or a ministry, the participation of local administrations and civil society is also necessary. With this change, a wider stakeholder participation in the protection of assets has been ensured. Site management aims to protect cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable manner. In this process, local people, non-governmental organisations, and public institutions work together to create and implement a management plan.

Nükhet Everi: What should be considered during the application process to UNESCO?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: File preparation and follow-up of the process is very important. Those who want to apply to UNESCO should carefully follow every stage of the application. Files may be sent incomplete or incorrectly. In accordance with the criteria specified in the application handbook, all features of the asset should be documented in detail. A unit to be established in local administrations should monitor and manage the application process from start to finish. It is also critical to ensure the participation of scientific research and local people in the application process.

Nükhet Everi: What changes after being included in the UNESCO list?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: Once on the UNESCO list, the property gains international recognition for its protection and promotion. However, conservation and management work must continue even after the inscription on the list. This process requires constant monitoring and updating. Listed assets are regularly inspected by UNESCO to check whether the criteria set are met. If the necessary measures are not taken, the asset can be removed from the list.

Nükhet Everi: What are the difficulties TurkeyTürkiye has experienced induring UNESCO processes?

Namik Kemal Döleneken:Turkey Türkiye has experienced setbacks in bureaucratic processes from time to time. The fact that no application was made between 1998-2011 is related to the changes brought about by the concept of site management during this period. In addition, it took long processes for important sites such as Göbekli Tepe to be included in the list. In these processes, the importance of co-operation and co-ordination at the local and national level emerged. Deficiencies in the preparation of application files and coordination problems also prolonged the processes.

Nükhet Everi: Is it possible to reapply to UNESCO in the case of rejection?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: Yes, a reapplication of rejected applications can be madereapplied. However, the deficiencies must be eliminated removed and the application file must be prepared again in accordance with UNESCO criteria. The process should be managed carefully. It is important to reorganise the application file in accordance with UNESCO criteria and to eliminate the deficiencies. In this process, it is critical to carefully analyse the reasons for the application's rejection of the application and to make the necessary corrections.

Nükhet Everi: What is the role of UNESCO in the protection of cultural heritage?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: UNESCO provides a global co-operation platform for the protection and transfer of cultural heritage to future generations. In this process, states, local governments, and non-governmental organisations work together to protect cultural and natural assets and create a sustainable management plan. UNESCO's role is to ensure this co-operation and protect cultural heritage in line with universal values. UNESCO carries out various programmes and projects, raises awareness and organises trainings courses for the protection of cultural heritage.

Nükhet Everi: What can be done for TurkeyTürkiye to be more successful in UNESCO application processes?

Namik Kemal Döleneken: For TurkeyTürkiye to be more successful in UNESCO processes, every stage of the application process needs to be managed carefully. In this process, it is important that local administrations, civil society organisations and academic circles work in cooperation. In addition, application files should be prepared on a scientific basis and organised in accordance with UNESCO criteria. The active participation of local people and relevant stakeholders in the process should be ensured through trainings and awareness-raising activities. In this way, the number of TurkeyTürkiye's

assets inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List can be increased and cultural heritage can be protected more effectively.