

Mr. Edi Rama
Prime Minister of Albania
Prime Minister's Office
Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit
Tirane

The Hague, 18 July 2018

**Subject: Heritage in Danger – Support Request
National Theatre of Albania, Tirana, Albania**

Dear Mr. Rama,

Europa Nostra, The Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe, wishes to express its sincere concern regarding the alarming decision to demolish the National Theatre of Albania, a heritage site of great cultural and architectural importance in Europe.

The National Theatre, constructed in 1938 by the Italian architect Giulio Berté, is one of the most prominent cultural centres in the city of Tirana and is an important social and public space in the city. The Theatre is an outstanding example of modern Italian architecture from this time period and is the only building of its kind that exists in Albania. It is one of the last surviving historic landmarks in the capital.

The construction technique employed and structural elements of the National Theatre of Albania are of unique historic importance and represent a pivotal point in the development of urbanism in Tirana. Preserving this historical type of architecture is crucial as it represents an indispensable part of the country's heritage and has a special place in the collective memory of its past.

In this respect, we disagree with any sentiment that this building has little or no historical, cultural or social value. On the contrary, Europa Nostra believes that the outstanding European value of this public property far exceeds any short-term benefit which stands to be gained by its demolition.

Europa Nostra shares the concerns already expressed to you by Ana Tostões, the Chair of Docomomo International in her letter addressed to the relevant decision makers on 12 April 2018.¹ Europa Nostra also stands in solidarity with the reputable group of conservation specialists, professionals and academics in the fields of science and culture, as well as the many active members of civil society who have so strongly expressed their will to protect the National Theatre from demolition.

¹ <http://www.panorama.com.al/letra-e-pare-nga-nderkombetaret-per-ramen-e-veliajn-mos-e-prekni-teatrin-kombetar/>



**The Voice of
Cultural Heritage
in Europe**

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While we do understand the need for the Albanian capital to have a new theatre which meets contemporary standards, we cannot support any proposal which destroys the existing theatre.

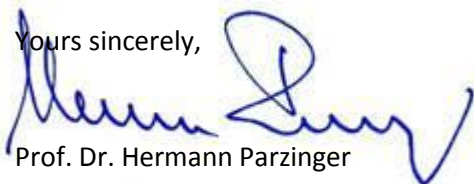
We urge the Albanian government, the Municipality of Tirana, the Ministry of Culture, as well as all other stakeholders, to reconsider their decision to demolish this European landmark and to explore the possibility of instead providing, at the very least, the most basic renovations to bring the current Theatre up to standard.

Europa Nostra has a special interest in the cultural heritage of Albania and has for many years closely followed developments there. In 2013 and 2018 respectively, the Roman Amphitheatre in Durrës and the Post-Byzantine Churches in Voskopoja and Vithkuqi were each included on the list of the “7 Most Endangered” heritage sites in Europe. We are also closely following developments in the UNESCO World Heritage listed Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra.

In spite of otherwise difficult circumstances, we have been reassured by the positive developments at each of these sites thanks to the genuine willingness of Albanian authorities to enter into dialogue with all concerned parties to find solutions which respect the individual demands of each case.

With this in mind, we now call on you to use your esteemed position and positive influence to protect the National Theatre of Albania.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger
Executive President
Europa Nostra

