

# WORLD MONUMENTS FUND

## Media Inquiries

Holly Evarts, Director of Public Relations  
646-424-9594, [hevarts@wmf.org](mailto:hevarts@wmf.org)

---

## WORLD MONUMENTS FUND PRESENTS HADRIAN AWARD TO RAHMI M. KOÇ, SEMAHAT ARSEL, AND THE KOÇ FAMILY FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP IN PRESERVING TURKISH HERITAGE

*For Immediate Release—New York, NY, October 19, 2007 . . .* **The World Monuments Fund (WMF), the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of heritage sites around the world, today presented its 20<sup>th</sup> annual Hadrian Award to Rahmi M. Koç, Semahat Arsel, and the Koç Family in recognition of their leadership in conserving the Republic of Turkey’s rich cultural heritage.** The Hadrian Award honors an international leader whose patronage has greatly enriched the conservation and appreciation of art and architecture around the world. **Ambassador Baki Ilkin, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the UN,** assisted in the award presentation to the Koç family at a luncheon at the Pierre Hotel, presided over by **WMF Chairman of the Board W. L. Lyons Brown and WMF President Bonnie Burnham,** and attended by more than 350 distinguished philanthropists, dignitaries, and business leaders.

“The World Monuments Fund has been working in Turkey for many years to help safeguard that country’s rich architectural heritage,” said WMF President Bonnie Burnham. “It is very fitting that today, on the occasion of the Hadrian Award’s twentieth anniversary, we honor the Koç family for their pioneering contributions to their country’s cultural heritage. Three generations of this extraordinary family have made a major impact both inside and outside Turkey and we salute them for their thoughtful and forward-looking stewardship.”

“My family and I are very honored to accept the prestigious Hadrian Award from the World Monuments Fund,” said Rahmi Koç. “We as the Koç family have been committed for a long time to preserving the cultural and artistic heritage of Turkey. This aim, together with furthering education and improving health care, constitutes the trinity of the Vehbi Koç Foundation, founded by and named after our late father. My sisters, our children, and I are very happy that we have been able to continue our father’s legacy, working to preserve our country’s heritage for future generations.”

(more)

## The Koç Family

The Koç family's legacy in Turkey began more than 80 years ago with the work of patriarch Vehbi Koç. An entrepreneur, businessman, and humanitarian, Koç established a corporate and philanthropic empire that supported the growth of the country. Today, his children and grandchildren—son Rahmi M. Koç, and daughters Semahat Arsel, Sevgi Gönül (now deceased), and Suna Kiraç, along with Rahmi M. Koç's three sons, Mustafa, Ömer, and Ali—have successfully built upon this legacy.

Under Rahmi Koç's leadership, the Koç Group of companies has grown into the country's most important conglomerate. Today, under the chairmanship of Mustafa Koç, it is Turkey's largest private employer with 93,000 employees and has become a major global influence. The Koç family's commercial success can be described as a series of firsts. They built the first lightbulb factory in Turkey, the first local manufacturing plants for cars and trucks, and launched the country's first line of household appliances. Along with their business achievements has come a tremendous sense of obligation to the country, its people, and its cultural heritage.

This strong sense of duty is reflected in the family's philosophy that individuals have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of society, regardless of their financial means. Much of the Koç philanthropy is carried out through the Vehbi Koç Foundation, established in 1969 as the first private foundation in Turkey.

The Vehbi Koç Foundation has focused on three priorities: healthcare, education, and culture. It has sought to improve the quality of Turkey's healthcare system through the creation of innovative hospitals, medical centers, and training programs; to advance the nation's education system through the enhancement of public and private schools and universities; and to preserve and promote the cultural resources of Turkey through establishment of the many museums and research centers charged with restoring and protecting the country's heritage.

The Sadberk Hanim Museum, founded in 1980 and named for Vehbi Koç's late wife, houses a rich collection of Anatolian antiquities and works of art dating from 6000 B.C. The museum's first exhibition included Sadberk Hanim's own collection of Ottoman embroideries and costumes amassed during her life. Decorative items embellished with precious stones and costumes dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are also part of the museum's permanent collection. In 1998, the museum earned the Europa Nostra Award, which recognizes best practices in heritage conservation on a European level.

Inspired by a visit to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, Rahmi M. Koç established, in 1994, the first major museum in Turkey devoted to the history of transportation, industry and communications. Two years after the institution opened its doors to visitors, the

*(more)*

Rahmi M. Koç Museum was given the distinction of “European Museum of the Year” by the Council of Europe.

In 2000, the Suna-Inan Kiraç Foundation created the Suna-Inan Kiraç Kaleiçi Museum, which is dedicated to nineteenth-century Turkish life and customs and housed within a beautifully restored traditional Turkish residence. The Foundation also established the Suna-Inan Kiraç Research Center for Mediterranean Civilizations to research, document, and protect the historical, archeological and ethnographical heritage of Antalya and its vicinity; as well as the Pera Museum, which houses a permanent collection of Kutahya tiles, Anatolian weights and measurements, plus a rich collection of Orientalist and European paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The Vehbi Koç and Ankara Research Center, located in Vehbi Koç’s former country house, supports the study of Ankara heritage and its environs. The newly established Research Center for Anatolian Civilization, part of the prestigious Koç University, has the distinction of being the first and only institute offering a Master of Fine Arts program in cultural heritage preservation.

From supporting the excavation of ancient sites to preserving elements of great empires, the Koç family has built upon the vision of its patriarch, elevating his ideal of responsible citizenship to create a philanthropic model for the global community. The generosity and commitment of the Koç family ensures that our shared heritage will remain intact for the benefit of generations to come.

## **WMF in Turkey**

The World Monuments Fund began working in Turkey in the late 1980s at the ancient Greco-Roman city of Aphrodisias in southwestern Asia Minor. Since then, WMF has provided technical assistance and financial resources at several sites in Turkey, including Hagia Sophia, the crowning glory of Byzantine architecture. Many of the sites supported by WMF were placed on the biennial World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites. The 2008 World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites, just announced this past summer, includes five sites in Turkey that face a range of threats, from the ravages of time to new construction. For more information on WMF’s work in Turkey, please visit [http://wmf.org/slideshow\\_turkey/slides.html](http://wmf.org/slideshow_turkey/slides.html).

## **World Monuments Fund**

The World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the foremost private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of endangered architectural and cultural heritage sites around the

*(more)*

world. Founded in 1965, WMF has achieved an unmatched record of successful conservation at more than 450 projects in more than 90 countries. From its headquarters in New York City—and offices and affiliates in Paris, London, Madrid, and Lisbon—WMF works with local partners and communities to identify and save important heritage through innovative programs of project planning, fieldwork, advocacy, grant-making, education, and on-site training. WMF's work spans a wide range of sites, including the vast temple complexes at Angkor, Cambodia; the historic center of Mexico City; Nicholas Hawksmoor's London masterpiece, St. George's, Bloomsbury; the iconic modernist A. Conger Goodyear house in Old Westbury, New York; and the extraordinary 18th-century Qianlong Garden complex in Beijing's Forbidden City. Every two years, WMF issues its World Monuments Watch list of 100 Most Endangered Sites, a global call to action on behalf of sites in need of immediate intervention. For additional information about WMF and its programs, please visit [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org).

# # #