

ITU FACULTY of ARCHITECTURE * DEPARTMENT OF RESTORATION

10 March 2008

Mr. Alessandro Profumo
CEO
Unicredit Group
Piazza Cordusio
20 123 Milano
Italia

Dear Mr. A. Profumo,

I have been informed that your group is supporting the construction of the Ilisu Dam Project in Turkey. This dam will be 170 km long and flood a large area with more than 200 cultural sites. Among them Hasankeyf, which was on the Silk Road, is a spectacular place with a long history going back to ancient times. This location with a steep rocky acropolis was on the border of the Roman Empire with Persia. Emperor Constantine built a castle over the top of the cliff and later dynasties used the same spot as a stronghold. The ancient city spread on two sides of the Tigris river which was spanned by a medieval bridge having a major arch measuring 40 meters; an extraordinary construction for its time. Most of the arches have collapsed, but the large piers are still standing in the river.

There is no possibility of recreating or salvaging the ancient city by transferring some of its monuments. Transfer of only a small part of the city is proposed as a rescue operation against the claims of archaeologists, art historians, architects and lovers of nature who insist that short lived dams should not damage cultural heritage and nature.

There is no doubt that the flooding of Ilisu Dam will upset the extraordinary cultural landscape, the integral beauty of the Tigris valley, Hasankeyf and several other cultural sites, cause many people to move away from their agricultural land, result in serious environmental losses and extinction of some bird and fish species.

Please reconsider continuing your support to the project which will have a great negative impact on archaeological sites which are of universal importance. Future generations should also be able to enjoy the beauty of the Tigris river and have the chance to see and learn from the rich cultural heritage of its surrounding area.

Kind regards,

Prof.Dr. Zeynep Ahunbay

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