

# 'My City' to present Turkey's cultural richness

## ANKARA

Hürriyet Daily News

A European Union-financed art project, "My City," under which European artists will produce pieces of public art for five Turkish cities, was launched at a high-profile reception last week in Ankara. Visiting British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, along with governors and mayors from the five participating cities, attended the reception for the project, which will be implemented by the British Council.

"In addition to its artistic purposes, this project is about projecting the truth about the dynamism and diversity of modern Turkey into the European Union," United Kingdom Ambassador to Turkey Nick Baird said at the reception.

Five prominent European artists will be selected in September to carry out public-art projects in Çanakkale, Istanbul, Konya, Mardin and Trabzon. The artists will work with local young people to reflect the cultural richness and diversity of each city and introduce it to the world. In exchange, five Turkish artists will go to Europe and share their experiences as part of a "guest artist" program.

"I am a city person. Cities are places where people and ideas and money and art and culture mix and develop and transform," Miliband said in his opening remarks. "Cities are sometimes in newspapers or on television for bad reasons, such as crime, drugs or other problems, but today we are celebrating the magnificent elevation and excellent imagination of great cities in Turkey, some of which are not well known by Europeans."

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Miliband emphasized that the process of Turkish accession to the EU as a full member is one that "depends on governments and businesses, but also depends on changing the minds and perspectives of people."

"There is no better way of bringing people together than through art and culture," he added. "That is why I am so excited about this project, which aims to present a modern Turkey – the best of the old and the best of the new, the best of its history and also the best of its imagination – to a wide European public." It is impossible to succeed in politics without cultural contact, Miliband said, adding: "I believe this project is an important signal of the growing links between Turkey and the EU. I believe that its success will be a harbinger, a signal of success of the integration of Turkey into the EU."

Egemen Bağış, Turkey's chief negotiator for the EU-accession talks, said culture is important component of civil-society dialogue, one of the musts in the Turkey-EU talks.



British  
Foreign  
Secretary  
David  
Miliband