

Lisbon, 12th April 2018

Subject: Heritage in Danger – Support Request
National Theatre of Albania, 1938, Giulio Berte, Tirana, Albania

Dear Mr. Edi Rama,
Prime Minister of Albania

Docomomo International – the International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement, wishes to draw your attention for the alarming future of the National Theatre of Albania, a considerable case of compromising cultural property in the capital town of Albania, Tirana.

Built in 1938 near the Skanderbeg square as an “Italo-Albanian” cultural center, this rationalist building was one of the first Italian architectural works in Albania. Conceived by the architect Giulio Berté, this building - a cultural and sporting center, with a cinema, swimming pool and restaurant - is of historical interest for its original construction technique. The shell of the building, achieved during the economic period of Autarchy, is composed by prefabricated material “populit”, an experimental cement mixed with fibers of poplar and algae. Renamed the National Theatre, from 1947 it is the principal theatre of Albania.

On the context of the extraordinary transformation and innovation period that the city is facing, and since a reconstruction project has been approved for the National Theatre of Albania and adjacent areas, Docomomo foremost concerns rely on the new plans for this cultural center which intent to erase its original integrity. The new, 9,300 square meter contemporary building will be placed in the heart of downtown, right close to the National Opera and the National Art Gallery, replacing the original theatre.

We address this letter to the Prime Minister of Albania, the Minister of Culture, the Mayor of Tirana and all other relevant individuals and institutions that may help, appealing to utmost efforts and collaboration upon the protection of this modern landmark.

Docomomo International urges all relevant institutions to take this issue very seriously and halt any irreversible works done on the monument.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Docomomo International in case you need any guidance.

Looking forward for your best attention to this case.

Yours sincerely,



Ana Tostões
Docomomo International Chair

International committee for
documentation and conservation
of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the
modern movement

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National Theatre of Albania in its current state



The Proposed design