

Esteemed Governor, Mr. Vehbi Koç, Honorable Guests, and My Beloved Fellow Countrymen,

My memories of this house are as old as those of the second generation of the Koç family, who were born in it. However, here we are in the presence of three generations of that family. The grandfather, Rahmi the father, his brothers and sisters, as well as grandsons and granddaughters. All members of the second generation were born here. The list of residents of this house includes Marshall Fevzi Çakmak as well.

Cities and countries live on with and exist for people. Without people, neither cities nor countries would exist. Through its extensive history, Ankara witnessed many people and generations, hosted many generations, and lived through the stone and copper ages, as well as Hittite, Phrygian, Galatian, Seljuk and Ottoman domination, to reach to the current Republican era. Through this long history, there have been many junctions we have no concrete grasp of. Yet, the monuments and works left behind by the dwellers of this land have grown into something concrete, and Ankara had never been so glorious and magnificent in all its history. How did this miracle start? How did it happen? Yes, at a time, if I am not mistaken around the days it was called Antoniniana, it was recorded to be the home of a population of 100,000. But never before it had its current level of glory and vitality as well as influence in the region. The miracle of Ankara, the heart of Turkey today, began in 27 December 1919, with the arrival of Mustafa Kemal in Ankara. The choice of Ankara as the center of the War of Independence owes to the loyalty of Ankarans to the idea represented by Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Atatürk was actually invited here, and he took that invitation to the heart. Today, here just me and our elder Vehbi Bey remembers that event which took place 75 years ago. No one else here witnessed it personally. Yet, all Ankarans, thank God, are Atatürkists.

Now, let me talk a bit about the second generation of the Koç family, who were born here. They are a humble folk, so, let me put it this way, they are not very good at showcasing their achievements, or bragging about them. That is a different skill I suppose. All these siblings, three daughters and one son are all patrons of culture and arts. They have all chosen a branch of arts, and tried their hand coming up with some lasting works in that field. Rahmi Koç, as you are probably aware, opened up a museum, and did publication work. Semahat Koç serves tourism, a field that cannot be emphasized enough for the future of the country. Sevgi served diligently in making this place as well as the Sadberk Hanım Museum the really international venues they are today. This country house we are opening today is certainly a humble piece compared to the even more glorious and substantial achievements of Vehbi Koç. It is a humble beginning, just like how he took over his father's business in 1926, but I hope, Vehbi Koç and Ankara Studies Center will grow significantly and provide really crucial services, shedding light on the history of Ankara and the past of Ankarans. That is why I want to take this opportunity to voice a wish of mine.

Ankarans, my dear countrymen; I advise and implore you to pass even the most insignificant document you have to entities like this one. I have donated the humble collection I have gathered so far, to be transferred to Koç University founded by Vehbi Koç Association, and to Sadberk Hanım Museum after I pass away. I would like to ask once again; please do not let your oral memories or unofficial documents, what you remember, what you accomplished, get lost in your homes, thinking them to be worthless. Instead, bring them to institutions like this one.