



EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Hilal Mahallesi
Turan Güneş Bulvarı
Hollanda Caddesi No: 5
06550 Yıldız, Ankara

April 19, 2019

Dear Mr Mayor,

First of all I would like to congratulate you on your re-election as Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality of Konya. I wish you all the best in governing and leading your city in the coming years.

I would like to thank you for your letter I received in the last week of March. In your letter you stress the importance of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and his heritage for the world. You also ask us to stop a Dutch company from using his name as the brand of an alcoholic beverage.

We recognize the value of the ideas of this great philosopher, among which is also the idea of tolerance. Tolerance and freedom of expression are values we hold in high esteem in the Netherlands. In that light, citizens and companies are allowed to express their views and opinions freely. The freedom of expression, including the choice of a brand name, is also applicable if the expression may disturb a part of the population. It can only be limited by law, for example in case of incitement to violence or hatred. Against this background the Dutch government does not intend to take any action against the company concerned.

The question of whether an expression of opinion is violating the law, is decided by the court. The way to the court is open to anyone believing that an infringement exists in a particular case.

I hope that in the future I will have the opportunity to visit the city of Konya, see its beauties and meet you in person.

Dr. Marjan de Kwaasteniet
Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
to the Republic of Turkey

Greater Municipality of Konya
Mr Ugur Ibrahim Altay
Mayor of the Greater Municipality
Nisantas Mahallesi Vatan Caddesi No: 2
42060 Selcuklu/KONYA