

**Question for written answer E-011535/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Illegal trafficking of cultural heritage

Scholars and experts on cultural heritage have recently drawn attention to the case of illegal artworks trafficking as a consequence of looting by the terrorist group ISIS.

This phenomenon of the archaeological mafia has been the subject of an inquiry lead by an international project called The Land on Nineveh, which highlights how Western countries are de facto financing a terrorist group.

Those artworks looted by terrorists are commercialised through an illegal network. Starting from countries that inadvertently supply them, their transit is allowed by assigning them with a false pedigree in countries where laws on cultural heritage are less strict. They then enter the American and European market through auction houses or purchasing catalogues of museums.

Trafficking of archaeological objects and works of art is the third largest source of income for criminal organisations, a business that is second only to trafficking in arms and drugs. UNESCO and Interpol have estimated a global turnover between EUR 6 and 8 billion per year.

Which action is Europe taking to counteract this illegal trade in cultural goods and in particular to control the financial flows that support the financing of terrorist organisations?