

**Question for written answer E-005594/2017**  
**to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**  
Rule 130  
**Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: VP/HR - Israeli bill on the status of church-owned land

On 31 July, a Jerusalem court approved the sale by the Greek Orthodox Church of two hotels located near Jaffa Gate in the Old City to Ateret Cohanim, an ultra-nationalist Israeli organisation which calls for the colonisation of East Jerusalem. The Church denied having sold the plot and claimed that the ruling was 'politically motivated'.

The heads of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Lutheran Churches together with representatives of other Christian communities in Jerusalem published a statement condemning Israel's systematic attempts to undermine Christianity in Jerusalem.

At the same time, the Israeli media announced a bill whereby any land which was previously owned by the Churches and subsequently sold to private investors would be transferred to the Israeli State in exchange for compensation.

In their statement, the Churches argued that these two measures threaten a decades-old agreement on the management of religious sites in Jerusalem.

1. Is the VP/HR aware of this bill?
2. Does the VP/HR not consider this as a new way for Israel to confiscate land from East Jerusalem?