

Question for written answer E-006222/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
Notis Marias (ECR)

Subject: Return to the Holy Monastery of Prodromos in Serres of holy relics stolen by Bulgaria

In the spring of 1917, the Bulgarian occupation army invaded and looted the Holy Monastery of Prodromos in Serres, stealing holy relics, manuscripts and books of great historical and material value, which are part of the cultural property and heritage of Greece.

For one hundred years, the Bulgarian authorities have refused to return the stolen religious and cultural treasures, despite constant requests from the Greek authorities and the Greek Church. Indeed, on 25 June 2017, Bulgarian President Rumen Radev made it quite clear that he had no intention of returning them.

These ecclesiastical treasures, including 100 parchments, over 200 manuscripts and 1500 volumes, such as the Monastic Code, the Monastic Foundation Charter and ten nomocanons, are currently in the possession of the Ivan Dujev Centre for Slavonic Byzantine Studies and the Bulgarian National History Museum in Sofia.

In the light of Council Directive 93/7/EEC on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State, together with the 1970 UNESCO Convention and the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention concerning the restitution of cultural objects:

- What action will the Commission take, in collaboration with the Greek authorities, to ensure that the Bulgarian authorities return the above stolen ecclesiastical treasures to the Holy Monastery of Prodromos?