

**Question for written answer P-015490/2015/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (ECR)

Subject: Russification of the Crimean Peninsula

After the Russian Federation illegally annexed the Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the Kremlin undertook a series of actions aimed at Russifying the peninsula. Measures are also being taken that amount to cultural purges. The Ukrainian language has been removed from the public sphere, often through the use of force. Christian churches independent of Moscow have seen restrictions put on their activities. The native Crimean Tatar community has been subjected to repression reminiscent of the actions taken by Stalin in 1944, when they were forcibly deported – alongside other national and ethnic minorities – from the peninsula. Also under threat is Crimea's centuries-old cultural heritage, several examples of which are on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Recently, the unique archaeological complex of Tauric Chersonese was registered on the Russian heritage list and put under the control and supervision of the Russian federal authorities. I have come across reports that unique artefacts could be exported to Russia under the pretext of organised exhibitions and – as history teaches us – remain there, despite appeals from the lawful owners and in violation of international law. It is worth noting that Poland and other countries in the region have still not recovered many national treasures looted during wars, partitions or German and communist occupations.

Does the Commission perceive any threat of the Russification of the Crimean Peninsula or the loss of its centuries-old, uniquely rich and diverse cultural heritage? What impact will this worrying situation have on EU-Russia relations? Does the Commission intend to suspend cooperation with Russian institutions which are involved in this?