



19.12.2018

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition No 0404/2018 by Daniel Dimov (Bulgarian) on preservation of the ancient settlement of Skaptopara near Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria)**

**Petition No 0421/2018 by K. C. (Bulgarian) on the preservation and restoration of the archaeological site Skaptopara (Bulgaria)**

### 1. Summary of petition 0404/2018

The petitioner is calling for support to preserve an archaeological site, Thracian town of Skaptopara, built in the fourth century, in Bulgaria, which is part of the European cultural heritage, and its destruction is in violation of the European Convention of the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage. It was first discovered in 2016 and many ancient vessels, coins, a church and a bathroom have been found. The petitioner is concerned that building works for the Struma motorway are continuing on that same place where the ancient village was discovered. Therefore the village will be destroyed and covered with cement. The construction of the motorway is co-financed with EU funds under the Operational Programme on Transport 2007- 2013. The petitioner is seeking support of the European Parliament to save and restore ancient settlement of Skaptopara which is part of European cultural heritage.

### Summary of petition 0421/2018

The petitioner is calling for support on preservation of the archaeological site Skaptopara in Blagoevgrad municipality in Bulgaria. The site is located along the Struma motorway which is financed by EU funds under the Operational Programme on Transport 2007-2013. The petitioner explains that the most valuable findings are the tomb, the bathroom and the church, built in fourth century. She is seeking the support of the European Parliament to preserve this remarkable European cultural heritage site.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 12 September 2018. Information requested from Commission under

Rule 216(6).

**3. Commission reply**, received on 19 December 2018

Petitions 0404/2018 and 0421/2018

The archaeological site in question is affected by the construction of “Struma Motorway Lot 3.1”. The Commission has approved the financial contribution from the Cohesion Fund for the major project "*Struma Motorway – Lot 3.1, Lot 3.3 and Zheleznitsa Tunnel*" with Decision C(2017) 7117 of 24 October 2017. In accordance with shared management of the European Structural and Investment Funds, the preparation, selection and implementation of projects falls under the remit of Member States.

In October 2018, the Ministry of Culture’s specialised expert council for the protection of immovable cultural heritage issued a decree concerning the archaeological discoveries. The decree stipulates to displace the Roman tomb and the ancient Christian church, and to keep the Roman villa and bath on site. Details can be found on the official websites of the competent authorities, such as on the website of the beneficiary<sup>1</sup>, the Road Infrastructure Agency.

Conclusion

The competent Bulgarian authority for decisions concerning the significance of archaeological findings is the Ministry of Culture. It is the Ministry that determines and decides whether the construction of the motorway should be diverted or whether the archaeological discoveries will be displaced.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.api.bg/index.php/bg/presentar/novini/ne-se-izvrshvat-stroitelni-raboti-na-am-struma-v-uchastka-s-arheologicheskite-obekti-kraj-pokrovnik/>