

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1500/03
by Florence Kuntz (EDD)
to the Commission

Subject: Safeguarding the Iraqi archaeological heritage

The bombs that have been raining down on Mesopotamia since 20 March and the destruction and looting of the Baghdad Archaeological Museum remind us that Iraq's archaeological heritage has since 1991 been in peril.

Apart from the destruction of archaeological sites during the Gulf War there has been the looting, the departure of foreign archaeological missions, the abandonment of digs and trafficking with the West in stolen property.

The American military campaign of the past three weeks has brought about the collapse of the Iraqi regime. In the absence of a government, one can only wonder who is now protecting the seven national museums and some 10 000 archaeological sites throughout the country.

How does the European Union wish to show its support for the Iraqi people and help them protect their exceptional heritage?

How does the European Union intend to mobilise the Member States against the illegal trade in stolen property?