

**Question for written answer E-000704/2019**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Lefteris Christoforou (PPE)**

Subject: The need for EU funding to restore churches in the Turkish-occupied territories of Cyprus

In addition to the tragedy of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus 45 years ago and the continuing Turkish occupation, Cypriot Hellenism is also experiencing a cultural and religious tragedy in the occupied territories.

The destruction wreaked on Christian monuments and churches in 1974 has continued to this day and the damage is irreparable.

The financial support provided by the EU for the restoration, inter alia, of our churches in the occupied territories is minimal compared to the enormous magnitude of the destruction they have suffered. Hundreds of churches have been destroyed and are being further damaged by the ravages of time. Direct EU intervention and financial support are needed if our churches are to be saved. The restoration of one or two churches every year by the Commission with EU funding is not an adequate response to the dozens of direct requests for the restoration of our churches.

It is the responsibility and obligation of the EU to rescue the religious heritage of Cyprus in the occupied territories, which is also part of Europe's heritage.

I suggest that the EU should forthwith pay the full cost of restoring and saving the churches in the occupied territories, otherwise it will bear joint responsible for the wholesale destruction that is taking place.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

- When will it take the initiative to save the churches in the occupied territories?
- My suggestion that the restoration of our churches should be fully funded must be adopted without delay because the march of time is relentless. What is the Commission's position on this matter?