Question for written answer E-000719/2022
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Protection of religious freedom and cultural traditions in an area of Italy inhabited by the autochthonous Slovenian national community

Guaranteeing freedom of religion and the right to preserve cultural traditions is at the core of the protection of minority rights, one of the fundamental values of the European Union. Earlier this year, these rights and freedoms in Italy were restricted by the seizure and sealing of church bells in the parish church of Saint Urh in Dolina, near Trieste, an area inhabited by an autochthonous Slovenian national community which is protected by bilateral treaties between Slovenia (formerly Yugoslavia) and Italy, as well as by Italian domestic law (the 2001 Protection Act). The Italian authorities seized the bells on the basis of a complaint by six newly-arrived villagers, who said that the bells in the Dolina church, which performs rituals and customs in accordance with centuries-old Slovenian and Christian traditions, disrupt their rest and work.

By seizing these bells, the Italian national authorities not only disrupted long-standing traditions and the culture and customs of the area, but, by taking disproportionate action, jeopardised the hard-won coexistence between the people and national communities living here.

In this context, can the Commission tell us whether it is aware of the seizure of the bells from Saint Urh Church in Dolina, near Trieste, and how it will seek to remedy this disproportionate interference with religious freedom and cultural traditions in the area inhabited by the autochthonous Slovenian national community in Italy.