

ORAL QUESTION H-0690/99

for Question Time at the part-session in December 1999
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Pedro Aparicio Sánchez
to the Commission

Subject: Renting rooms in the British Museum

UK press reports indicate that the British Museum rents out one of the rooms housing the Elgin Marbles for private functions, which have nothing to do with any of the normal functions of a museum. £7000 is charged for receptions and £12 000 for banquets. This practice not only offends good taste and insults the dignity of art in general; it demonstrates a singular lack of sensitivity towards the historical issues surrounding the sculpture on display, with which the European Parliament is only too familiar.

Can the Commission intervene, whether directly or via the UK Government, to put a stop to a profit-making activity so utterly foreign to the European approach to the arts? Or, as usually happens when cultural matters are at stake, will subsidiarity be invoked as a reason for doing nothing?

Tabled: 11.11.1999
es