

**Priority question for written answer P-005607/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Protection of Sami rights and safeguarding European cultural heritage

According to Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the EU 'shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced'. The Sami culture represents a unique part of this heritage. Traditional reindeer husbandry is recognised as an integral part of Sami culture in international and Swedish law.

This culture is under threat from a planned iron ore mine in Kallak (Gállok), Sweden. The regional authority has denied the mine permit because of the potentially harmful consequences for reindeer husbandry. UNESCO states that the mine would have a large, or very large, impact on the nearby Laponian Area, which is a World Heritage Site.

The issue is on the government's table and recently, Sweden's new Minister for Business, Industry and Innovation announced it is time to 'get going'.

Sweden has been criticised by the Council of Europe and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for violating Sami rights. This mine would threaten Sami residents' ability to maintain and develop their culture, which is a constitutionally protected right. As noted in its resolution on the rights of indigenous peoples in the world¹, the EU has to guarantee Sami rights.

1. Does the von der Leyen Commission acknowledge the risk posed to the protection of Sami rights?
2. In this context, what measures will the Commission take to ensure the Swedish Government fulfills their commitments under Article 3 TEU?

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52018IP0279>