



---

*Plenary sitting*

---

**B9-0176/2024**

11.3.2024

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

**on the return of Romanian national treasure illegally appropriated by  
Russia**

(2024/2605(RSP))

**Nicolae Ștefănuță, Francisco Guerreiro, Henrike Hahn**

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**B9-0176/2024**

**European Parliament resolution on the return of Romanian national treasure illegally appropriated by Russia  
(2024/2605(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia,
  - having regard to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
  - having regard to Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
  - having regard to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict,
  - having regard to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property,
  - having regard to the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects,
  - having regard to Rule 132 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas in 1916, Romania’s national treasure was under threat from the Central Powers and Romania’s Government and National Bank of Romania representatives signed a protocol with Russia stipulating the terms and conditions for a first shipment of this national treasure to Moscow for safekeeping; whereas this protocol states that the Romanian treasure was ‘under the Russian Government’s guarantee as regards the safety of shipment, the security of the deposit and the return to Romania’; whereas a second shipment and accompanying signed protocol followed in 1917;
- B. whereas the term ‘national treasure’ here refers to the gold reserve of the National Bank of Romania, made up of gold ingots and rare coins, as well as of cultural and artistic goods belonging to the country’s national heritage;
- C. whereas the total national treasure legally given into Russian custody comprised 91.5 tonnes of fine gold belonging to the reserve of the National Bank of Romania, royal collections of jewels and rare coins, together with assets of cultural and historical importance such as state archives, documents, precious historical manuscripts, heritage paintings, rare books and collections of many public and private institutions spanning over five centuries of Romanian history;
- D. whereas Russia has since refused to fully return the national treasure to Romania despite what was stipulated in the signed protocols; whereas the restitution of the appropriated Romanian national treasure is of significant cultural, historical and institutional importance for the people of Romania;

- E. whereas Russia has been carrying out an illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine since 24 February 2022, in a blatant and flagrant violation of the UN Charter and the fundamental principles of international law;
1. Condemns the Russian Federation for illegally appropriating and wilfully withholding Romania's national treasure in breach of the accompanying protocol documents and legal guarantees of return as signed by both Romania and Russia in 1916 and 1917;
  2. Stresses the numismatic and cultural value of the artefacts that were sent to Russia for safekeeping owing to the risks they faced during the First World War; highlights that while the majority of the cultural, artistic and archival goods were returned to Romania in 1935 and in 1956, the outstanding 91.5 tonnes of fine gold, part of the reserve of the National Bank of Romania, were never returned by Russia despite the protocols signed upon the transfer of the treasure to Russia; notes that the total amount of Romanian fine gold deposited in the Kremlin has a total value today of more than EUR 5.5 billion;
  3. Notes the establishment in 2003 of the Romanian-Russian Joint Commission, made up of experts mandated to enable discussions and efforts to achieve the return of the national treasure; regrets that meetings of this commission held during the years that followed, and most recently in 2019, did not lead to an agreement by the parties for the return of the treasure; notes that the Russian Federation, and the USSR before it, has never formally recognised that the treasure belongs to Romania and should be returned;
  4. Calls on Russia to return to Romania the remainder of Romania's national treasure, as transferred in 1916 and 1917, in accordance with the stipulations of the signed protocols, without delay;
  5. Underlines that Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the context in which EU policy towards Russia, including diplomatic relations, can be discussed and determined; notes the possibility of including the call for the return of Romania's national treasure on a future agenda of resumed EU-Russia relations when Russia has met the requirements for normalisation of relations with the EU, most importantly the complete termination of all of its military activities in Ukraine and the unconditional withdrawal of all of its forces and military equipment from the entire internationally recognised territory of Ukraine;
  6. Calls on the Commission to support the Romanian authorities in exploring legal avenues to ensure the return of the national treasure to Romania without delay;
  7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the President, Government and the Parliament of the Russian Federation.