

Question for written answer E-002519/2024/rev.1

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Respect for and protection of Serbian Orthodox religious sites and the Serbian minority in Kosovo in connection with the provision of EU funding

Between 2007 and 2020, the EU allocated over EUR 1.21 billion to Kosovo under the pre-accession instruments¹ – support which it still provides to this day. These funds are meant to help bolster respect for the fundamental rights of all communities, including the Serbian Orthodox minority, which is heavily discriminated against.

Serbian Orthodox churches, monasteries and cemeteries continue to be attacked on a regular basis, showing the lack of security and respect for this minority. There are no effective measures in place to ensure the preservation of these sites – often defiled and destroyed – despite the fact that they are part of Europe’s cultural heritage.

The lack of effective protection threatens the community’s cultural safety and religious freedom.

1. Can the Commission specify what measures have been taken to ensure the protection of Serbian Orthodox religious sites in Kosovo in connection with the provision of EU funding?
2. Does the Commission plan to directly fund the preservation and restoration of Orthodox churches and monasteries, as it did with the IRPP/Cultural Heritage Project in the Balkans²?
3. What can be done to ensure that the Kosovo authorities uphold religious freedom and protect the cultural rights of the Orthodox Serbian minority, with a view to fulfilling the country’s EU commitments?

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¹ https://www.eas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/eu-and-kosovo-sign-agreement-first-ipa-iii-annual-financing-programme-kosovo-benefit-new-eur-6396_en?s=321

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-5-2003-2359-ASW_EN.html