

**Question for written answer E-001662/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Catherine Griset (PfE)

Subject: The need to make sure religious buildings are safe

France's religious heritage watchdog (OPR) has reported that church fires have become increasingly common over the last few years. In the last six months there have been 13 fires in churches in France; there were 27 in 2023.

The OPR points out that most of the fires have been accidental, very often occurring during renovation work.

Whether accidental or the result of arson, these fires and the damage they cause are on the increase for a number of reasons:

- the fact that creaky wiring and old electrical appliances are in use makes renovation work riskier;
- there is a shortage of CCTV systems and equipment for intruder-detection, fire detection and, where applicable, fire extinction.

Investment in electrical systems and surveillance equipment is therefore required in order to cut the number of fires and help firefighters intervene more quickly.

Small municipalities, however, may well find it difficult to afford the equipment concerned, and they are not getting enough support from the government.

1. What steps would the Commission envisage to improve funding for the renovation of the electrics in religious buildings and the installation of surveillance equipment?
2. With particular reference to the ERDF and other EU funds, is it easy for small municipalities to access such funding? Could the bureaucracy involved in accessing it be reduced?

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