

Question for written answer E-003212/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)

Subject: Legal status of the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai and Egypt's obligations regarding religious and cultural protection

According to a recent report, the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai is facing serious challenges to the historical, legal and institutional status under which it has operated for fifteen centuries^{1,2}. Judicial, administrative and political actions are said to be restricting the autonomy of the Monastery, the status of its property and the continuity of the monastic community.

The Monastery of St. Catherine is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the oldest functioning Christian monastic sites in the world³. At the same time, the EU and Egypt have upgraded their relations to a strategic and comprehensive partnership, which includes commitments to human rights, fundamental freedoms and respect for international obligations⁴.

In light of the above:

1. Has the Commission raised with the Egyptian authorities the issue of protecting the historical legal status and monastic continuity of the Monastery of St. Catherine?
2. How does the Commission assess the developments in the light of freedom of religion, the protection of Christian communities and Egypt's obligations as a State Party to UNESCO?
3. Will the Commission link the issue to the EU-Egypt political dialogue and European financial cooperation, requesting clear guarantees for the Monastery, its property and its community?

Submitted: 5.8.2026

¹ <https://www.copticsolidarity.org/2026/07/12/the-crisis-of-st-catherines-monastery-the-progressive-dismantling-of-a-fifteen-century-status-quo/>.

² <https://idicenter.org/article/ethiopias-judeo-christian-heritage-under-attack-part-2>.

³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/921/>.

⁴ https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-declaration-strategic-and-comprehensive-partnership-between-arab-republic-egypt-and-europe-2024-03-17_en.