**Question for written answer E-003600/2026**
**to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Strengthening EU measures to address thefts of cultural property in Member States

The robbery from the Villena Treasury on 27 August 2026 came at a time of growing concern over thefts of cultural property from museums in various European Member States. A recent Europol report warns of more aggressive methods targeting high-value objects.

Although the Union has instruments such as Directive (EU) 2014/60 on the return of unlawfully held cultural objects, Directive (EU) 2018/1673 on combating money laundering and Directive (EU) 2024/1260 on asset recovery and confiscation, there remain shortcomings in prevention, early warning and cooperation in response to acts of theft in the Union.

Does the Commission believe it necessary to review and strengthen the EU framework with a view to:

1. establishing minimum standards for risk assessment, identification and protection of cultural property, backed by EU funding, particularly for cash-strapped local and regional museums;

2. setting up a permanent European early-warning system, thereby improving cooperation between national authorities, Europol and INTERPOL;

3. more aggressively prosecuting these offences at European level as organised crime, not least the laundering and sale of stolen cultural heritage, including on online sales platforms, thus safeguarding the common cultural heritage of all European citizens?

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