

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001544/24
to the Commission
Susanna Ceccardi (Pfe)
(22 August 2024)**

Subject: Recognition of Vespa as a symbol of European artistic value

The Vespa, a Piaggio scooter model that was patented on 23 April 1946, is an example of excellence in European design and a globally recognised quintessential Italian product. A cultural and historic icon, the Vespa has been displayed in prestigious museums such as the Triennale di Milano design museum and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Its economic value, which in 2022 Interbrand estimated to be EUR 1 079 million⁽¹⁾, reflects the importance of the brand to the Italian manufacturing industry and the global economy.

In the last decade, Piaggio has produced and sold more than 1.6 million Vespas, including the new electric version presented at the 2023 Milan Motorcycle Show (EICMA). Vespa has not only inspired millions of people, but also contributed to a number of economic sectors, from design to fashion and tourism.

In the light of the above, Italy has put forward a proposal for a law to officially recognise the Vespa as a symbol of national artistic value.

Can the Commission, therefore, answer the following questions:

1. Does it intend to support the recognition of national symbols of cultural value such as the Vespa?
2. What additional steps does it intend to take to protect internationally renowned European symbols of industrial and cultural heritage?

Submitted: 23.8.2024

**Answer given by Ms Ivanova on behalf of the European Commission
(26 November 2024)**

While the protection of cultural heritage, including industrial heritage, is primarily the responsibility of Member States, the Commission recognises the importance of preserving European cultural heritage.

Under Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, action by the EU is limited to encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting and supplementing their action, with a view to conserving and safeguarding cultural heritage of European significance.

The Creative Europe programme has co-funded cooperation projects focusing on the preservation and promotion of industrial design, such as Textile Heritage Inspiring Creatives⁽¹⁾.

A number of other mechanisms are available to protect industrial and cultural heritage.

For instance, under the recast Directive on the legal protection of designs⁽²⁾, Member States have the possibility to introduce a ground for non-registrability or invalidity of an industrial design if a design contains elements belonging to cultural heritage that are of national interest.

Furthermore, as from 1 December 2025, certain craft and industrial products will be eligible for geographical indication protection (provided they comply with the necessary requirements).

Geographical indication protection for craft and industrial products at EU level have been established by Regulation (EU) 2023/2411⁽³⁾, which aims to improve awareness as regards the authenticity of products and safeguard cultural heritage⁽⁴⁾.

¹ <https://www.piaggiogroup.com/en/archive/press-releases/vespa-one-billion-euro-brand>

⁽¹⁾ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/projects/search/details/595936-CREA-1-2018-1-IT-CULT-COOP3>

⁽²⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12714-2023-ADD-1/en/pdf>

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2411>

⁽⁴⁾ Geographical indications for craft and industrial products — European Commission (https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/strategy/intellectual-property/geographical-indications-craft-and-industrial-products_en) Geographical Indications — EUIPO (<https://www.euiipo.europa.eu/en/gi-hub>).