

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001122/25
to the Commission
Loucas Fourlas (PPE)
(17 March 2025)**

Subject: Protecting Serbia's Christian heritage

According to information and photographic material that has come to my attention, the Hermitage of St. Peter in the Municipality of Prizren, which is part of the religious heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo, has been severely damaged. Despite having been declared a protected area, including by the Pristina authorities, a private company has begun excavation works for the construction of a road and this is affecting the foundations of the temple and the hermitage. The site has also suffered vandalism and other deterioration over time.

Given that the preservation of cultural and religious heritage in Kosovo is important for stability and reconciliation in the region, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Is it aware of the damage in question and the activities taking place at the Hermitage of St. Peter?
2. In the context of EU policy on the protection of cultural and religious heritage, what measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure the restoration and protection of the site?
3. Bearing in mind that the protection of cultural and religious heritage is a prerequisite for Kosovo's accession to the EU, does the Commission intend to raise this issue in talks with the Pristina authorities?

Submitted: 17.3.2025

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission
(19 May 2025)**

The Commission was made aware of the reported violations in the Special Protective Zone Hermitage of Saint Peter of Koriša in Prizren in early March 2025. Consequently, the Commission engaged in efforts to address the matter with various authorities and international partners, including in the framework of the Implementation and Monitoring Council which serves as a platform to solve disputes between the government of Kosovo ⁽¹⁾ and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

In this context, the EU Special Representative (EUSR)/EU Office in Kosovo has been in regular contact with the Serbian Orthodox Church. The EUSR in Kosovo/Head of Office also met the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, to raise this issue, on 10 March 2025.

It is essential that Kosovo central and local institutions fully comply with the provisions of the Law on Special Protective Zones.

The EU, through its EUSR/EU Office in Kosovo, remains ready to facilitate any dispute resolution between the Kosovo authorities and the Serbian Orthodox Church in the framework of the Implementation and Monitoring Council.

With the 2023 Agreement on the Path to Normalisation ⁽²⁾, Kosovo and Serbia agreed to formalise the status of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and afford a strong level of protection to the Serbian religious and cultural heritage sites. The EUSR for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue continues to work with both Kosovo and Serbia on the implementation of their respective obligations stemming from the Agreement.

⁽¹⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

⁽²⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/belgrade-pristina-dialogue-agreement-path-normalisation-between-kosovo-and-serbia_en.