

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001581/25
to the Commission
Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR)
(21 April 2025)**

Subject: Preservation of Indo-Greek sites in Pakistan

Following the campaigns of Alexander the Great, Greek influence spread to parts of present-day Pakistan and northern India. The Indo-Greek kingdoms (c. 180 BC — 10 AD) established Greek settlements and cultural monuments, reflecting the cultural cross-pollination between Greece and India.

In 2015, the Dawn newspaper reported on the deteriorating condition of the Bazira (Barikot) archaeological site in Swat (Pakistan), an ancient city associated with Alexander the Great and the Indo-Greek period. Despite its importance, the site suffered from inadequate protection measures. Similarly, The Express Tribune reported in 2010 that the ancient seat of the Gandhara civilisation in Swat was in poor condition due to neglect by the authorities, especially after vandalism by religious extremists. A 2016 article in The Diplomat described how Pakistan's 2,000-year-old historical treasures, including those from the Indo-Greek period, are under threat from religious extremists and smugglers. The lack of adequate protection and preservation measures has exacerbated the situation. The US has supported 35 cultural heritage preservation projects across Pakistan, contributing over USD 8.4 million.

In light of the above:

1. How does the Commission monitor Pakistan's compliance with international standards for the protection of Indo-Greek culture, in view of the country's assessment for GSP+ status?
2. In which bilateral meetings has the Commission raised the issue with the Government of Pakistan and in what way?

Submitted: 21.4.2025

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(17 June 2025)**

The High Representative/Vice-President appreciates the interest of the Honourable Member in this important matter and acknowledges the cultural significance of these historical sites.

The EU is aware of the challenges faced by Pakistan in protecting its cultural heritage, including the Indo-Greek sites, and the efforts made by the international community to support their preservation.

The EU is committed to promoting the protection of cultural heritage in the context of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) monitoring under the GSP ⁽¹⁾.

The EU is aware of an ongoing project aiming at preserving the Bazira site (reports of the project can be found in the news outlet quoted by the Honourable Member) ⁽²⁾.

Nevertheless, if additional evidence appears, the EU will be ready to further inquire and to discuss this issue with the Pakistani authorities in the appropriate fora.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/978/oj/eng>, [https://gsphub.eu/conventions/International%20Covenant%20on%20Economic,%20Social%20and%20Cultural%20Rights%20\(1976\)](https://gsphub.eu/conventions/International%20Covenant%20on%20Economic,%20Social%20and%20Cultural%20Rights%20(1976)), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/cesr.pdf>.
⁽²⁾ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1869913>, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1725863>.