

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002043/25
to the Commission
Nikos Pappas (The Left)
(21 May 2025)**

Subject: Protecting cultural monuments from indirect commercialisation

The recent drone show organised by a sports goods company, using the Acropolis as a backdrop without prior authorisation from the Greek authorities, highlighted serious legislative and institutional gaps in relation with the indirect commercial use of cultural heritage sites. The Acropolis, a symbol of European identity and a Unesco World Heritage Site, was indirectly used for promotional purposes, provoking political backlash and legal action in response. There have been similar cases in other Member States (involving the statue of David and the Vitruvian Man in Italy, and the image of the Eiffel Tower in France), highlighting the need for European regulation.

Regulation (EU) 2021/818 establishing the Creative Europe programme safeguards cultural heritage by preventing its uncontrolled commercialisation. However, it does not establish a unified legal framework for the commercial use of cultural images or symbols.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following:

1. How does it view these incidents in the light of the need to maintain the protection of the EU's cultural monuments, especially when commercial operators are involved?
2. Will it propose or support the adoption of a common European legal framework to regulate the depiction, reproduction or commercial use of images of cultural monuments, particularly in cases of indirect exploitation?
3. How can it help to ensure that European cultural principles and values as set out in European law are not compromised in such cases?

Submitted: 21.5.2025

**Answer given by Mr Micallef on behalf of the European Commission
(30 September 2025)**

The Commission supports the preservation of cultural heritage in Europe through its funding programmes and dedicated actions such as the European Heritage Awards, the European Heritage Days and the European Heritage Label.

Additionally, the EU has contributed to the construction of the new Acropolis Museum, to the restoration of Acropolis Monuments and to the accessibility of the Acropolis Museum collections through support for digitisation.

These EU-funded projects have significantly contributed to preserving Greece's cultural heritage and making it accessible to a wider audience, aligning with broader EU objectives of promoting cultural tourism, social cohesion, and preservation of shared European heritage.

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

The EU also facilitates the exchange of information and good practices between Member States on issues of mutual interest including on complementary sources of funding for cultural heritage, which are crucial to ensuring the sector's long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, Directive (EU) 2001/29 ⁽¹⁾ grants rightsholders exclusive rights to authorise or prohibit the reproduction of their works, which is crucial in protecting cultural heritage from unauthorised commercial exploitation.

It also provides an optional exception or limitation for the use of works, such as works of architecture or sculpture, made to be located permanently in public places.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society, OJ L 167, pp. 10-19.

Directive (EU) 2019/790 ⁽²⁾ also clarifies that the circulation of faithful reproductions of works in the public domain, when the term of protection of a work of visual art has expired, contributes to the promotion and access to culture and cultural heritage.

⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC, OJ L 130, pp. 92-125 (Text with EEA relevance).