

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002338/25
to the Commission
Ioan-Rareş Bogdan (PPE)
(11 June 2025)**

Subject: Situation surrounding the oldest Christian monastery in the world

A court order issued on 28 May 2025 by the Egyptian High Court concerning St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai has sparked significant reactions in the press and among the public.

According to reports, the Egyptian authorities are to close down the 15-centuries-old site, confiscate the monastery's assets and expel the monks.

At the same time, the veracity of that information has been disputed, and news of the monastery's closure has been claimed to be false.

1. What information does the Commission have on this court order?
2. What steps has the Commission taken, or does it plan to take, to protect the interests of Orthodox Christians in the face of the decision by the Egyptian High Court concerning St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai?

Submitted: 11.6.2025

**Question for written answer E-002347/25
to the Commission
Emmanouil Kefalogiannis (PPE)
(11 June 2025)**

Subject: Confiscation of the Monastery of St Catherine of Sinai by Egyptian authorities

The Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, the oldest functioning Christian monastery in the world, is facing the risk of confiscation following a decision by an Egyptian court, provoking strong reactions at the international level.

The decision essentially assigns the Monastery to the Egyptian state, depriving it of the ownership status that has been in force since the Monastery was founded, some 1 500 years ago, by the Byzantine emperor Justinian.

In a statement, the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos condemned the specific decision 'unequivocally', expressing 'immense sadness' and 'legitimate anger' over the matter. At the same time, he has called for the mobilisation of every Greek and international authority, as 'the property of the Monastery is being seized and confiscated, and this spiritual Beacon of Orthodoxy and Hellenism is now facing an existential threat'.

What actions does the Commission intend to take so that the oldest Christian monastery can continue its uninterrupted spiritual function and its property is not confiscated?

Submitted: 11.6.2025

**Question for written answer E-002379/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vangelis Meimarakis (PPE)
(12 June 2025)**

Subject: Protection of the ownership status and privileges of the Holy Monastery of St Catherine of Mount Sinai

As the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will have already been informed, the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr Nikitas Kaklamanis, wrote to the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the developments concerning the Holy Monastery of St Catherine of Mount Sinai.

In his letter, he states, among other things, that Egypt, on the basis of the 1972 Unesco Convention to which it has acceded, has an international obligation, towards all, to fully respect the character and active functioning of the Holy Monastery of St Catherine of Sinai as a World Heritage Site constituting a centre of Orthodox spirituality, allowing it free use of all of its assets — without exception — from 2002 or before.

In light of the above, and taking into account the sensitive nature of this issue, will the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) take initiatives in this regard — which we call on her to do — and inform us of the measures that the Commission intends to take to safeguard the ownership status of the monastery?

Submitted: 12.6.2025

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(17 July 2025)

The EU is aware of and continues to monitor the recent developments in Egypt after the Ismailia Court of Appeals issued a ruling linked to the legal status of Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai.

In a meeting called by the Arab Republic of Egypt's Foreign Ministry on 30 May 2025, the Egyptian authorities assured the Ambassadors of the Member States and the EU Head of Delegation in Cairo that the Egyptian government remains fully committed to preserving the monastery's religious, historical and spiritual status, adding that the current status of the area around Saint Catherine's is untouchable. They reaffirmed that the monks' access to the site will not be affected by the court ruling.

The EU welcomes the commitments of the governments of Greece and Egypt to work together towards safeguarding the rights of Saint Catherine's Monastery.

While continuing to follow the situation closely, the EU will await the result of the discussions between the Egyptian and Greek authorities, insisting on the necessity to preserve the monastery's religious, historical and spiritual status, in accordance with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage Convention ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage convention website, Saint Catherine's Monastery: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954/>.