

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-004817/25
to the Commission
Arkadiusz Mularczyk (ECR), Adam Bielan (ECR)
(4 December 2025)**

Subject: Commission action concerning the return to Poland of the ‘Gaude mater Polonia’ manuscript, which was looted by the Germans

We are asking the Commission to take steps to obtain information from Germany on progress made in the return of the oldest record of the Polish medieval hymn ‘Gaude mater Polonia’, which was looted in 1941.

The manuscript was found at the end of 2023 in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, among Polish collections looted during World War II. This find is of great importance for Poland’s culture and heritage.

Under EU law, in particular Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union, which emphasises, *inter alia*, the protection of the cultural heritage of the Member States, and the rules on combating the illicit trade in works of art and the return of cultural objects, Member States are required to cooperate for the purpose of restitution of stolen artefacts.

Furthermore, in line with the Commission’s communications on the protection of cultural heritage, it is necessary, *inter alia*, to facilitate a bilateral dialogue and to remove administrative barriers to the return of such works.

In light of the above,

1. Does the Commission have any information on the status of the procedure for the return of the looted manuscript, in particular information about when the German side intends to return it?
2. Will the Commission monitor compliance with EU commitments on cultural heritage in bilateral relations between Poland and Germany, and provide any relevant information?
3. What specific action does the Commission intend to take to implement these two points?

Submitted: 4.12.2025

**Answer given by Mr Micallef on behalf of the European Commission
(3 February 2026)**

The Commission does not have any information on the ‘Gaude mater Polonia’ manuscript held in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

The Commission regards the safeguarding of all forms of cultural heritage with great importance. Under Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, action by the EU focuses on encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting and supplementing their action.

While EU legal instruments do exist in the area of cultural goods, including the directive 2014/60/EU ⁽¹⁾ on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State, this directive applies only to cultural goods unlawfully removed after 1 January 1993. Therefore, since Directive 2014/60/EU does not apply to the issue in question, this is a bilateral issue between Poland and Germany.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2014/60/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 (Recast): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2014/60/oj/eng>.