

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-005067/25  
to the Commission  
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)  
(23 December 2025)**

*Subject:* Protection of cultural and religious heritage in Himarë and Albania's accession process

On 18 December 2025, Albania's Ministry of Culture reportedly organised a public event in the village of Vuno in Himarë, with the aim of restoring the church of Saint Spyridon and converting it into a museum, a fact that has caused strong reactions in the local Greek community, given that the site is a place of worship, historical memory and part of the identity of the region <sup>(1)</sup>, <sup>(2)</sup>, <sup>(3)</sup>.

According to reports, concerns are being expressed about the change of use and alteration of the historical nature of the monument, without the substantive consent of the local community. The protection of cultural and religious heritage, as well as respect for the rights of minorities, are fundamental criteria in the context of the accession process of candidate countries to the European Union. <sup>(4)</sup>

In view of the above:

1. How does the Commission assess this incident in relation to Albania's obligations to protect the cultural and religious heritage of minority communities?
2. Does the Commission intend to hold such incidents on Albania's file and take them into account during annual progress reports in the context of its accession process? <sup>(5)</sup>
3. How is it ensured that decisions concerning monuments of particular cultural and religious significance are taken with transparency and the effective participation of local communities?

Submitted: 23.12.2025

**Answer given by Ms Kos on behalf of the European Commission  
(27 April 2026)**

In the context of the accession process, the Commission closely monitors developments and progress on the respect and protection of fundamental rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, as well as in the area of culture.

The Commission consistently engages with the national authorities in this regard, recalling the importance of due process and meaningful and inclusive consultation with relevant stakeholders.

While the annual progress report generally does not single out specific incidents, developments in all areas of the negotiations are taken into account when assessing progress during the reporting period.

In its 2025 Enlargement Report <sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission recommended that Albania adopts the implementing legislation for the Law on cultural heritage and museums. This is also part of the closing benchmark criteria for the negotiating chapter on education and culture.

Albania has reiterated its commitment to making progress in the fields of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and culture both in reforms and in practice. The Commission will continue to assess progress in this regard every step of way.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parapolitika.gr/politiki/article/1656312/beleris-i-nea-proklisi-tis-kuvernisis-rama-enadion-tis-ethnikis-tautotitas-ton-katoikon-tis-heimarras/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ekklesiaonline.gr/nea/mpeleris-katangelli-rama-prospathi-na-metatrepsi-ekklesia-se-mousio-gia-tous-armperesides/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://spzh.eu/en/amp-news/89777-albanian-authorities-turn-an-orthodox-church-into-a-museum>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

<sup>5</sup> Related questions E-001733/2024, E-001754/2024, E-000340/2025

<sup>(1)</sup> 2025 Enlargement Report, Albania, [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/fe9138b7-90fe-4277-a12c-3a03f6d1957f\\_en?filename=albania-report-2025.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/fe9138b7-90fe-4277-a12c-3a03f6d1957f_en?filename=albania-report-2025.pdf).