

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002563/26
to the Commission
Jorge Buxadé Villalba (Pfe)
(22 June 2026)**

Subject: Sacred art under attack — fraud, plagiarism and unfair competition from outside the EU

Since the Middle Ages, Spanish artisans have passed down techniques of embroidery, goldsmithing, carving, restoration and painting from one generation to the next, and these traditions are still preserved in many Spanish cities. These are trades that continue to generate employment and cultural wealth, dedicating their magnificent works to the devotion of the faithful and to our Christian identity.

Spanish sacred art is one of the world's richest historical and artistic heritages; the Seville Trade Association for Sacred Art has condemned the growing influx of products from Pakistan and India that are being sold on the EU market, evading customs controls and the payment of duties, and committing fraud through the misappropriation of images and designs.

In light of the above:

1. Is the Commission going to take measures to protect those Spanish artisans who, through their work, preserve and enrich traditions, against commercial interference from third countries whose sole aim, moreover, is to undermine our Christian identity and everything associated with it?
2. How does the Commission account for the fact that products from third countries are entering the single market via international couriers, thereby circumventing customs controls and duties?
3. Will the Commission investigate these organised networks from third countries?

Submitted: 22.6.2026

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(4 September 2026)**

The Commission is seriously invested in the protection of EU traditional crafts products. Among others, the EU recently adopted the regulation on the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products ⁽¹⁾ (CIGI Regulation) which establishes an EU wide system of protection for traditional names linked to a particular geographical area.

The directive on the Enforcement of intellectual property rights ⁽²⁾ complements this regime, setting a harmonised standard in the EU for the enforcement of all intellectual property rights, including CIGIs.

This enables preventing the unauthorised sale of products using a protected name without meeting the necessary requirements, including being manufactured outside the protected area.

Since the goods in question seem to be contemporary copies of European handicrafts, they are outside the scope of Regulation (EU) 2019/880 on the introduction and the import of cultural goods ⁽³⁾.

The Commission supports Member States through the EU customs risk management framework, cooperation mechanisms, customs information exchange and risk analysis, and works to strengthen the EU's capacity to combat customs fraud. Goods entering the EU are subject to customs legislation and controls including those carried by express or postal operators.

Where there are indications that organised networks are involved in customs fraud or the evasion of customs duties, it is for the competent customs and, where appropriate, law enforcement authorities of the Member States to investigate such cases.

In case of suspected fraud or other illegal activities affecting the EU budget, the Commission informs the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and, where applicable, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products and amending Regulations (EU) 2017/1001 and (EU) 2019/1753, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202302411.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2004/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the enforcement of intellectual property rights, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004L0048R\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32004L0048R(01)).

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32019R0880>.