

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Katerina Batzeli, Gérard Onesta, Vasco Graça Moura, Giovanni Berlinguer,
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on the need for concerted action at EU level to combat trafficking in cultural
goods and to return them to the Member States from which they have been
unlawfully removed

Lapse date: 2.4.2009

0107/2008

Written declaration on the need for concerted action at EU level to combat trafficking in cultural goods and to return them to the Member States from which they have been unlawfully removed

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the current Community legal framework is confined to the descriptive, providing for preventive checks on exports of cultural goods outside the EU without actively promoting the combating of trafficking in cultural goods and the systematic return of illegally exported national treasures to the Member States from which they have been removed,
- B. whereas there is a significant lack of concerted European action,
 1. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote a single strategy for combating the illegal trade in cultural goods with practical measures such as establishing a European symbol to denote cultural goods in transit, drawing up comprehensive public registers, creating a European database of stolen cultural goods, establishing an 'emergency plan' for coordination between the competent national authorities and Interpol, and drawing up legal provisions which leave no margin for a restricted limitation period in respect of the offence of trafficking in cultural goods;
 2. Calls on the Council and the Commission to take the lead in drawing up a legal framework at European and international level, by the end of 2010 at the latest, for the return of cultural goods which have been exported illegally from their country of origin, and to make this matter an immediate priority in EU external relations;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Council of Europe and the UN Secretary-General.