



## Resolution 808 (1983)<sup>1</sup>

# Return of works of art

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having noted the reports of its Committee on Culture and Education on the movement and return of art objects ([Doc. 5110](#) and [Doc. 5111](#)) ;
2. Aware of the imbalance that exists at world level in the distribution of cultural property, a disproportionate amount of which is concentrated in major collections in Europe and North America ;
3. Particularly concerned at the lack of representative national collections in certain countries, and recognising the reasonableness of the wish of these countries to recover their cultural heritage ;
4. Wishing to encourage all moves to co-operate in the negotiated return of certain items of cultural property to their country of origin ;
5. Supporting in particular the work of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee to help identify representative items missing from national collections and provide a satisfactory basis for their return and display ;
6. Noting that the displacement of cultural property, whether from its place of origin or through its return, or for preservation, must be viewed as a historical act ;
7. Noting also the cultural value of art collections containing pieces from other countries in permitting broader access by scholars and the general public to the diversity of cultural traditions ;
8. Stressing the unity of the European cultural heritage within a historical context of the frequent movement of individual art objects
9. Believing that claims for the return of cultural property within the European cultural area must be considered differently from claims for the return of property outside this area,
10. Calls on the governments of member states to recognise that the European cultural heritage belongs to all Europeans, and to ensure that the diversity of this heritage remains easily accessible in each country ;
11. Asks member governments to co-operate fully on a bilateral basis, and where appropriate through the mechanisms provided by UNESCO, for the return of certain cultural property to countries outside the European area.

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1. Assembly debate on 3 October 1983 (19th Sitting) (see [Doc. 5111](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education). Text adopted by the Assembly on 3 October 1983 (20th Sitting).

