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Deliberate destruction and illegal trafficking of cultural heritage

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Paolo CORSINI and other members of the Assembly

A part of our “World Heritage” is being ravaged and ruined. Recent ravages by Daesh in the Museum of Mosul, in the ancient cities of Nimrud and Hatra and in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Palmyra are just appalling examples in a sadly long list of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage worldwide.

Remnants of destroyed sites and artefacts are sold and enter the chain of illicit trafficking. The latter represents a third source of revenue for international terrorism, following arms and drug trafficking. Moreover, international trafficking of stolen cultural goods is feeding organised crime. European States have a key role to play in spurring a co-ordinated response to this threat.

Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2057 (2015) and Recommendation 2071 (2015) on “Cultural heritage in crisis and post-crisis situation” already raised the issue of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage, trafficking and looting of cultural property.

The Assembly welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to carry out the work for the preservation of cultural heritage in the spirit of the Namur Call (April 2015), where Parties to the European Cultural Convention called for the urgent preservation of cultural heritage deliberately destroyed in conflicts and asked for the initiation of legal instruments to firmly condemn such acts.

The Assembly should support the drafting of a new Council of Europe criminal law convention to combat illicit trafficking of cultural property and it should encourage national parliaments in member States and also non-member States concerned to sign and ratify this timely legal instrument. The upcoming European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 represents a window of opportunity to launch the new Convention.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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SOC: Socialist Group
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