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Doc. 16267
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Protecting cultural heritage from risk of damage

Reply to Written question[1]: Written question No. 799 (Doc. 16214)
Committee of Ministers

1. In reply to the Honourable Member's question, the Committee of Ministers has received information from the Spanish authorities recalling that Spain has ratified the Council of Europe conventions on cultural heritage, as well as the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This international framework has been implemented at the national level through a variety of heritage management instruments, which are used by different levels of the Spanish administration, as well as by other public and private entities.

2. As regards the mural paintings at the Monastery of Sijena (Huesca, Aragon), Spain indicates that the administration ensures the protection and preservation of cultural assets, while respecting the competences of the State and the Autonomous Communities. Accordingly, these paintings have been granted the maximum legal protection as cultural assets.

3. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers was informed that a ruling by the Civil Chamber of the Spanish Supreme Court of 27 May 2025 upheld a judgment of the Provincial Court of Huesca, requiring the National Art Museum of Catalonia (MNAC) to return the Sijena mural paintings to their place of origin, while establishing guarantees for the protection of this property. In order to comply with this court ruling, a technical working group will be set up to assess and carry out all the necessary steps to reinstate the mural paintings.

4. In this context, the Committee of Ministers also notes that the Community of Aragon has been invited to join this technical group and work together with the experts appointed by the MNAC, which has an outstanding record in the custody, conservation and accessibility of paintings.

1. Adopted at the 1538th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (24 September 2025).