



Recommendation 2280 (2024)¹

Countering the erasure of cultural identity in war and peace

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 2558 \(2024\)](#) “Countering the erasure of cultural identity in war and peace” and underlines that the right to take part in cultural life and the right of access to, and enjoyment of, both tangible and intangible cultural heritage are pivotal to the system of human rights and fundamental to individual and collective cultural identity.

2. The Assembly welcomes the adoption of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine as a first step towards an international compensation mechanism. Within this framework, it is crucial to accurately record damages to cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure in Ukraine, and to establish comprehensive lists of looted objects and artefacts that were taken from museums and archaeological sites, including from Crimea since 2014. The Assembly urges member States parties to the enlarged partial agreement to take adequate measures in this respect.

3. The Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine “Resilience, Recovery and Reconstruction” (2023-2026) provides the necessary framework to accompany the process of reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine. The Assembly calls on the Committee of Ministers to consider in this context the proposals for action to counter the erasure of cultural identity that are outlined in its [Resolution 2558 \(2024\)](#); to integrate in the action plan targeted actions in the areas of education, promotion of democratic culture, and history education; and to support cultural heritage, vitality and cultural exchanges through specific implementation projects.

4. Referring to the commitment made in 2023 at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe to strengthen co-operation with Belarusian human rights defenders, democratic forces, free media and independent civil society, the Assembly underlines the importance of developing projects to assist the diaspora from Belarus in preserving its identity and language through projects supporting cultural vitality and cultural exchange. It asks that the Committee of Ministers secure appropriate resources for this aim, either through the ordinary budget or via targeted extrabudgetary contributions.

5. Finally, the Assembly considers that the international legal framework concerning the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict should be enhanced. In this respect, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers initiate a collaborative process with the United Nations, the European Union and other relevant organisations to develop legal and policy responses to new forms of erasure of cultural identity, taking into account existing Council of Europe conventions and other international treaties, seeking in particular to:

5.1. enhance and consolidate the recognition of cultural cleansing or erasure, deliberate or systematic destruction of cultural heritage and looting of cultural property as human rights violations, crimes against humanity and/or war crimes for the purposes of their prosecution and counteracting such illegal acts, and to determine the role that a policy of cultural erasure has as one of the inherent elements of the intent to destroy a national or any other protected group when committing genocide;

5.2. establish more robust pre-emptive protective mechanisms for both tangible and intangible cultural heritage;

1. *Assembly debate* on 26 June 2024 (19th and 20th sittings) (see Doc. 16003, report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Ms Yevheniia Kravchuk). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 26 June 2024 (20th sitting).



5.3. provide for deterring sanctions and reparations for military destruction which is not demonstrated to be justified by an “imperative military necessity”, and for other violations against cultural heritage.