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Balanced approach to the rescuing of archaeological finds from development projects

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Messrs Legendre and O'Hara and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. The archaeological heritage throughout Europe is threatened by development projects.
2. This has always been the case. It is however taking on a new dimension with large-scale mining projects as in Rosia Montana (Romania), dam construction projects as in Allianoi and Hasankeyf (Turkey), or the installations for the Olympic Games in historic sites such as Marathon and Markopoulo (Greece). There are also many industrial projects on agricultural land.
3. The archaeological heritage is an irreplaceable asset; it may be excavated (analysed, recorded and perhaps preserved); but it may also be left untouched.
4. The problem stems from the difficulty of assessing in advance the importance of the archaeological heritage in a particular situation and of modifying development plans in the light of the significance of what may come to light. It is an economic as well as cultural problem. It can also be a political question. The challenge is to find the right balance between cultural value and economic gain and to determine who should pay the price.
5. It may be the case that responsible economic development of a site is the best way to assure the funding of the retrieval of the archaeological record and thereby save it from loss.
6. Local interests may be more vulnerable to pressure and should be balanced in a wider perspective. This is where the national authorities and the international community, including the responsible NGOs, have a role to play.
7. The Council of Europe has already adopted certain principles relevant to this subject in the Valletta Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and to the notion of sustainable use of cultural resources in the Faro Convention. It is not clear how such principles are put into practice.
8. The Parliamentary Assembly therefore calls now on the Committee of Ministers for examination of the problem of rescue archaeology on the basis of case studies and with the involvement of archaeologists, art-historians, and other relevant specialists, of developers, of local and national government authorities and of NGOs.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group