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What to think about the recent developments in the 40 years old dispute between Greece and the U.K. on the return of the Parthenon Sculptures from London? Stubborn arrogance from British side? Certainly a lack of seriousness as the U.K. government changed its policy several times in less than a week and a sign of desperation from the British Museum to find new arguments in favour for keeping the Sculptures.

UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) announced on Tuesday May 17 that Greek Minister of Culture and Sports Dr Lina Mendoni had accepted at the end of April an invitation from the British Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Lord Stephen Parkinson, for bilateral talks on the issue, and that a meeting will be organized in due course. This announcement was considered by some as a milestone, as for the first time the U.K. government accepted to engage into a formal dialogue, something which certainly is a step forward in the dispute.

On May 18, during the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the ICPRCP, the British representative not only contested the validity of the Decision taken by the Committee during its previous Session concerning the Parthenon Sculptures, but the Deputy Director of the British Museum Dr Jonathan Williams passionately argued that most of the sculptures taken by Lord Elgin were collected from the debris surrounding the building. Both statements are incorrect: the Decision was taken by consensus and there exists plenty of historical evidence from witnesses and in letters written in those days that most of the sculptures were brutally removed from the Parthenon, a fact abundantly proven by traces on the artefacts themselves. This argument, just like a former statement by the Director of the British Museum Dr Hartmut Fischer, who said that in fact Lord Elgin made a creative act by removing the sculptures and saved them from destruction, shows how desperate the British Museum is to justify its attitude.

On the same day a spokesperson of the British Minister of Culture Nadine Doris, declared to TA NEA, that the British government maintains its stance on the Sculptures. This statement was later on that day confirmed by a source at the office of the British PM. For UNESCO's ICPRCP the issue is clearly an intergovernmental matter, a fact the British government apparently refuses to acknowledge. One may wonder what's the meaning to engage into talks if the other party is not willing to listen to your arguments and rejects any decision-making power in the matter.

The Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports Dr Mendoni repeated in a press release on May 20 that she is ready for a honest and bona fide dialogue with the U.K. Furthermore, in a statement to The Guardian on May 22, she pointed out that "the years, Greek authorities and the international scientific community have demonstrated with unshakeable arguments the true events surrounding the removal of the Parthenon Sculptures."

The latest statement from the U.K., for the time being, came on May 23 when Downing Street announced that there will be no dialogue with Greece on the Sculptures and that the Museum Act of 1963 will not be changed.

Under the increasing pressure to return the Parthenon Sculptures and the absence of international support for its stand, the U.K showed a lack of a consistent coherent policy this week. By criticizing and not respecting the ICPRCP's procedures one may also ask why the U.K. has still a representative in the UNESCO's Committee?

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