



Department  
for Culture,  
Media & Sport

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5 June 2025

Alberto Costa MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

INT2025/05677/DC

Dear Alberto,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 May 2025. I am happy for the opportunity to clarify any potential for misunderstanding that may have arisen concerning the length of time the Parthenon Sculptures may be permitted to go on loan.

The British Museum has an Open Individual Export Licence, (as referred to in the statutory guidance on export licensing), which allows the museum to send objects on loan, up to a maximum time period of three years. It is a condition of the licence that the object is not exported if the exporter has any reason to suspect that the authorities of the country of destination will not permit the return of the object within three years.

Alternatively, the British Museum could apply for a temporary export licence. As set out in the statutory guidance and the Arts Council Procedures for Exporters 2024, a temporary licence will normally be issued for a term of up to three years. It is possible to apply for one extension of an existing temporary licence, which again will not normally exceed three years.

The Statutory Guidance on export licensing, and the Arts Council's Procedures for Exporters guidance, can be found here.

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/export-licensing#t-in-page-nav-3>

I do not see any reason why the record for the debate needs to be amended, however, to ensure clarity, I will place a copy of this letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Chris Bryant MP  
Minister for Creative Industries, Arts and Tourism

