



Orthodox Council in Crete will not consider Ukrainian parliament's message

ATHENS, June 20. /TASS/. The Ukrainian parliament's message to Patriarch Bartholomew I, of Constantinople, containing a request for recognizing the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as autocephalous will not be considered by Orthodox Council in Crete, opening today, Archbishop Job, of Telmessos, who represents the Patriarchate of Constantinople at the Council, told the press service of the Synodal Information and Enlightenment Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate in an interview.

"The Ukrainian issue is not on the Council's agenda and the agenda cannot be changed," Archbishop Job said, adding that the Ukrainian parliament's message was being discussed at length on the sidelines of the Council.

He explained that the Ukrainian parliament's message became known from mess media reports.

"When Patriarch Bartholomew I has an official request, it will be discussed on the basis of the proper official procedures – through the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, just as any other major issue," the website quotes Archbishop Job as saying.

Preparations for the Council, originally conceived as a pan-Orthodox, lasted (with certain pauses) for more than half a century. The heads of the 14 local churches meeting in Crete today represent a smaller part of the Orthodox world. The Bulgarian church, the Patriarchate of Antioch (Syria), and the Georgian and Russian Orthodox Churches have refused to participate in the Council on the conditions proposed by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Daily meetings under the chairmanship of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I will be held till June 25.

On June 16, the Ukrainian parliament asked Patriarch Bartholomew to grant autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. The resolution was carried by a 238 majority vote (while the required minimum is 226 votes). The Ukrainian parliament wants the act of 1686 (on the transfer of the Kiev metropolitan to the Moscow Patriarchate) to be declared void for it allegedly violated the holy canons of the Orthodox Church. There has been no response from the Ecumenical Patriarch yet.