

Orthodox chapel to be inaugurated inside Romania's Parliament on March 25



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The Romanian Parliament will have an Orthodox chapel that will be consecrated on March 25, on the feast of the Annunciation, the acting president of the Chamber of Deputies, Alfred Simonis, announced on Monday, the National Press Agency Agerpres reports.

Orthodox chapel inside the Parliament

"It is a space within the Parliament building. At my request, a memorandum was approved today by the Permanent Office of the Chamber of Deputies to identify that space. I asked the general secretary to identify a space that can have this purpose, as an Orthodox chapel, in the Parliament premises", said Alfred Simonis, according to Agerpres.

He noted that Romania is among the few countries in Europe that still does not have such a prayer space set up in the Parliament building. "I think we are the last Parliament, in Europe at least, that does not have such a space."

Regarding the chapel's functionality, the interim president of the Chamber of Deputies stated that the institution will coordinate with the Romanian Patriarchate regarding the liturgical program and the clerical staff that will serve it.

"I don't think a priest will be here permanently, but these are not issues related to the activity of the Chamber of Deputies. We will identify a space where people who want to pray and worship can do so. All Parliaments in the world have such a space. The Patriarchate establishes the church activity within this space", declared Alfred Simonis.

First intention to set up a chapel

Establishing a place of worship is an older initiative, and the first announcement was made last fall at an event marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament.

The President of the Senate, Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, described it as "incredible" that a room intended for prayer for parliamentarians and visitors to the People's House

had not been identified until then.

“In this large building, it is incredible that we have not been able to have a room where both MPs and those visiting Parliament can find a place to pray and where we can all think that we are here in the service of the people and the service of God”.

Dedicated to Saint Andrew, the Protector of Romania

The Orthodox chapel to be set up on the premises of the Romanian Parliament will be dedicated to Saint Andrew the First-Called Apostle, the Protector of Romania. The choice of this patron saint emphasizes the spiritual importance and historical symbolism associated with Saint Andrew in the national context.

This chapel will constitute a sacred place for prayer, bringing a high recognition of Orthodox values and traditions within the institutional framework of the Parliament.

It is worth mentioning that Saint Andrew is also the patron saint of the National Cathedral, thus underlining a deep connection between these two places of worship. The National Cathedral is being built in an area where the communist regime demolished or translated five churches to make way for the People's House building. These churches include “Alba Postăvari,” “Spira Veche,” “Izvorul Tămăduirii,” “Schitul Maicilor,” and “Mihai Vodă.”

The choice of Saint Andrew's patronage over the chapel inside the Romanian Parliament represents a manifestation of the national spiritual identity and the unity between state institutions and traditional religious values. Also, the Apostle Andrew is a common saint for several religious denominations.

The Patriarchate welcomes the decision with joy

The spokesperson of the Romanian Patriarchate, Vasile Bănescu, welcomed with joy the establishment of the Orthodox chapel on the premises of the Romanian Parliament.

“The existence of a sacred and liturgical space within the country's highest legislative forum belongs to the natural cooperation between the Romanian state and the religious denominations recognized by it, which is a given of democracy and a reality in all European states that respect religious freedom and its public manifestation,” Vasile Bănescu told Basilica.ro.

The Romanian Patriarchate's spokesman added that "the Archdiocese of Bucharest will be responsible for the coordination of the clerical staff assigned to serve in this chapel, as well as for the organization and smooth running of its liturgical program."

Photo: Chamber of Deputies

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