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Visit of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, to the Ecumenical Patriarchate



“Constantinople will not interfere with the internal affairs of the Church of Ukraine. It is completely independent and self-reliant,” His All-Holiness emphasized, among other things, as he welcomed Mr. Zelensky

The President of Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Zelensky, paid a visit to the Seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the Phanar today, Thursday, August 8, and was received with the honors provided by the Patriarchal Protocol.

President Zelensky, who was accompanied by the Ambassador of Ukraine to Ankara, Mr. Andrii Sybiha, the Consul General of Ukraine in Istanbul, Mr. Oleksandr Gaman, and a large delegation of officials of the Presidency; arrived in the Chamber of the Throne, in the main building of the Patriarchal headquarters, where the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew awaited and welcomed him, in the presence of Hierarchs of the Throne.

The Ecumenical Patriarch held a private meeting with the President of Ukraine at the official Patriarchal Office for more than an hour.

“Your visit comes after the publication and promulgation of the *Tomos* of Autocephaly for the newly established Orthodox Church in Ukraine, which, we request, will always have your high protection and your support for the work that has already begun in Ukraine. We, from Constantinople, as we gave you baptism 1,031 years ago, so now we have given independence, the ability for your Church to carry out its work independently and unaffected by any outside intervention. Constantinople will not interfere with the internal affairs of the Church in Ukraine. She is completely independent and autocephalous. From here, from Constantinople, from the Phanar, she will only have high protection and our continued prayers for the success of her work,” he said, welcoming the Ukrainian President. “We send the blessing and love of the Mother of the Church of Constantinople, in the person of your dear Excellency, to the whole pious Ukrainian people.”

For his part, President Zelenskyy expressed his pleasure for the visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and for the honor of meeting with His All-Holiness.

The meeting was attended by Metropolitans Emmanuel of France and Amphilochios of Adrianoupolis, the Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod Archimandrite Joakim, and his undersecretary Deacon Gregorios, as well as Archimandrite Michael, Exarch of the Mother Church in Kiev. The Ukrainian delegation was represented by Mr. Vadym Prystaiko, the Deputy Director of the President’s Office; Andrii Yermak, the President’s Adviser; Andrii Sybiha, Ambassador to Ankara, and Oleksandr Gaman, Consul General in Istanbul.

Immediately afterwards, in the Chamber of the Throne, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew introduced the Hierarchs present to the President of Ukraine, and then Mr. Zelensky presented the members of his staff.

The President of Ukraine and his associates then sat to lunch at the Patriarchal Refectory.

Afterwards, the Ecumenical Patriarch accompanied the President of Ukraine to the Sacred Patriarchal Church of Saint George, where the President was briefed by the Patriarchal Exarch in Kiev, Archimandrite Michael, about its history and the sacred relics kept in it.

/ Source: goarch.org