

## Major social issues continue to dominate attention by world's Orthodox Churches



Significant social concerns affecting modern society continue to garner the attention of Orthodox Churches around the world.

The ongoing crisis affecting the institution of the family in many countries, the serious problem of low birthrates – especially in western societies – challenges faced by young people and the use of the Internet, are issues on the agenda of several Holy Synods, including the Patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, Moscow and Bucharest, with the Ecumenical Patriarchate also announcing several initiatives over the recent period.

For instance, the agenda on this week's regular Church of Greece permanent Holy Synod will include the specter of a low birthrate in the country, youth unemployment, helping new families, single-family units as well as the possible negative effects from the now ever-present digital technologies.

The Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East's Holy Synod has been convening since last week, under the chairmanship of His Beatitude John X. The most important issue on the agenda of the specific Damascus-based Patriarchate is the continued persecution faced by Christians in the Middle East and the crisis affecting the institution of the family.

Still in the region, members of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa this week will consider the scourge of modern forms of slavery on the continent, as well as applications of modern technologies in African societies, along with environmental protection.

In Europe, both the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Romania have commenced coordinated action to overturn low birth rates in the countries.

As previously and prominently reported, the Georgian Orthodox Church aids families with three or more children, while its Catholicos-Patriarch, His Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II, has promised to baptize and act as the godparent of each third child born to a Georgian family.