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Phanar publishes an official text of the Tomos for OCU



The Patriarchate of Constantinople has published the text of the Tomos on autocephaly of the newly-formed “independent” Ukrainian Church.

The document, which enshrines autocephalous status, was published on January 14 on the official website of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in three languages – Greek, English and Ukrainian.

The document says that the “independence” of the new church structure, “which is within the boundaries of the politically constituted and wholly independent State of Ukraine”, was bestowed by Constantinople “in the imperative concern of the Great Church of Christ within the Orthodox world for healing long standing schisms and divisions in the local Churches.”

The main provisions of the document are as follows:

– Constantinople called the new church structure “The Most Holy Church of Ukraine”: “We recognize and declare this Autocephalous Church, established within the boundaries of the sovereign territory of Ukraine by means of this signed Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos, as our spiritual daughter, and recommend that all

Orthodox Churches throughout the world acknowledge and commemorate it by the name “Most Holy Church of Ukraine” with its see in the historic city of Kyiv.”

– According to the Tomos, the most holy Church of Ukraine (as an independent autocephalous Church) recognizes as its head the Most Holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne: “We declare that the Autocephalous Church in Ukraine knows as its head the most holy Apostolic and Patriarchal Ecumenical Throne.”

– The OCU will not have permanent members of the Synod, they will change annually: “This Primate shall preside over the Holy Synod, annually comprised of Hierarchs invited by rotation and seniority from those serving within the geographical boundaries of Ukraine.”

– The Patriarchate of Constantinople does not allow any changes in the title of the head of the OCU: “ … having and recognizing as its First Hierarch in all church matters its presiding canonical Primate, who shall bear the title “His Beatitude Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine,” without any lawful addition or deletion to this title without permission from the Church of Constantinople.”

– The jurisdiction of the Most Holy Church of Ukraine is limited to the territory of Ukraine – the new church structure cannot ordain bishops or found parishes outside the state: “ … without being henceforth entitled to establish bishops or found extraterritorial altars in regions already lawfully dependent on the Ecumenical Throne, which bears canonical competence over the Diaspora … ”

– Constantinople reserves the right of the highest appeal: “ … while further preserving the right of all Hierarchs and other clergy to address petitions of appeal to the Ecumenical Patriarch, who bears the canonical responsibility of irrevocably passing judgment over matters related to bishops and other clergy in local Churches, in accordance with the sacred Canons 9 and 17 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon”, as well as the duty of the OCU to participate in inter-Orthodox meetings.

– The OCU cannot make holy myrrh for the sacraments of baptism and anointment on its own, but is obliged to receive it from Constantinople. According to theTomos, it is necessary for the manifestation of “spiritual unity”: “ … while commencing his irenic journey as customary from the First-Throne Church of Constantinople, wherefrom it will likewise receive the Holy Myron as affirmation of its spiritual unity with the latter.”

– The head of the Most Holy Church of Ukraine is obliged to coordinate all important

church issues with the Patriarchate of Constantinople: “In the case of major issues of ecclesiastical, doctrinal and canonical nature, His Beatitude the Metropolitan of Kiev and all Ukraine must, on behalf of the Holy Synod of his Church, address our most holy Patriarchal and Ecumenical Throne, seeking its authoritative opinion and conclusive support … ”

– The rights of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to Stavropegia and the Exarchate in Ukraine are also stated: “ … while the prerogatives of the Ecumenical Throne over the Exarchate and Sacred Stavropegial institutions in Ukraine shall be preserved unmitigated.”

– The Charter of the OCU has to comply with the provisions of this Tomos: “ … along with mandatory agreement in all matters on the regulations of the present Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos”, and only “on the basis of all the above and on the basis of these conditions, our Holy Great Church of Christ blesses and declares the Orthodox Church in Ukraine as Autocephalous.”

The document ends with the words that “this Patriarchal and Synodal Tome is issued for permanent protection, being recorded and signed in the Code of the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, delivered in an identical and accurate copy to His Beatitude Epifanios, the Primate of the Most Holy Church of Ukraine, and to His Excellency the President of Ukraine, Mr. Petro Poroshenko, for abiding verification and permanent confirmation.”

The full text of the Tomos can be read here.