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Rada passes bill on transition of communities from one church to another



Ukraine's Verkhovnaya Rada has passed a bill outlining a mechanism governing changes in subordination for religious communities.

The bill, which amends the laws on subordination of religious organizations and procedures of state registration of religious organizations with the status of legal entity, was supported by 229 MPs at a plenary session of the Verkhovnaya Rada on Thursday.

The bill is related to legal issues that might arise as communities go over from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate to the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which received a tomos in Constantinople.

The bill would have the state recognize the right of a religious community to change its subordination by registering a new edition of its charter or amending the current charter.

A decision on changing subordination would be made by the assembly of a religious community. Such an assembly would be called by its members.

A decision would have to be made by at least two-thirds of a quorum and would need to be signed by members of the religious community who supported it.

Changes in the subordination of religious communities would not affect the content of the right of ownership or other property rights of such communities.

Members who disagree with such a decision would have the right to create a new community and sign a contract on procedures for using the house of worship and property with the owner (user).

These changes would be made to the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations.

The Law on the State Registration of Legal Entities, Private Individual Entrepreneurs, and Public Entities would also be amended.

If signed by the president, the bill will take effect the day following its publication.

(Source: Interfax)