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To to preserve religious freedom, sanitary measures must be taken with the utmost discernment: Patriarchate's Spokesperson



The spokesman of the Romanian Patriarchate Vasile Bănescu reacted to the decision by which the National Committee for Emergency Situations (CNSU) announced that organizing events on religious holidays is allowed only with the participation of those who live or reside in that specific locality.

The measure was motivated by the fact that the risk of infection would be very high when pilgrims travel from one locality to another using transport such as coaches.

Sanitary measures must be taken with the utmost discernment

“We understand, of course, that the new measures of the authorities are justified exclusively by the alarming increase in the number of COVID patients, the necessary prevention and reduction of diseases that may lead or have already led to the overcrowding of ICU in hospitals,” said Vasile Bănescu.

“From the perspective of preserving intangible freedoms, such as fundamental religious freedom, we believe that measures supported by medical reasons with

public impact must be taken with maximum discernment and careful goodwill so that they do not lead to the impairment of these freedoms, the opposition and disturbance of faithful people who constitute the overwhelming majority of Romanian society.”

“Measures that are strictly necessary must be honestly justified by obvious health reasons, as well as by unequivocal evidence of compliance or non-compliance with certain rules in certain places or institutions.”

“Churches are by their nature spaces of decency, cleanliness and order, not of disorder. Of course, the strict rules regarding hygiene, wearing a mask at certain times and keeping a distance of 1.5 m between people are also required in liturgical spaces and must be strictly observed. Which, in the whole period so far, has been done in an exemplary way by all the religious denominations in Romania.”

The spokesman of the Patriarchate reminded that the Romanian Orthodox Church “has been and remains involved in an unprecedented way and without a term of comparison, including in charity, through the consistent help offered to people made vulnerable by the pandemic, but also to many hospitals in Romania.”

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