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Bulgarian Orthodox Church deletes controversial opinion on National Strategy for the Child from website

/ Επικαιρότητα



A controversial opinion purported to be from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod urging a ban on terminations of pregnancy, for religion to be a compulsory subject in schools, no sex education, and opposing the full ban on corporal punishment in schools, has been deleted from the church's official website.

The opinion, posted in response to the Bulgarian government's draft National Strategy for the Child 2019-2030, had not been voted by the Holy Synod, nor approved by the church's Patriarch Neofit, nor signed by the Metropolitans, Bulgarian National Television (BNT) reported.

It had been sent for posting on the website by Gavriil, the Metropolitan of Lovech, BNT said.

After it appeared on the website on February 8, the opinion – widely covered in the

Bulgarian media – caused extensive negative reaction on social networks.

Specialist church news website Dveri said that the opinion had not been considered and approved by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's governing body, but was an initiative of the Synod's cultural and educational department headed by Metropolitan Gavriil.

Dveri quoted a statement by Naum, the Metropolitan of Rousse, who said that the document had not been officially discussed by the Holy Synod.

"The 'opinion' binding the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Holy Synod as an institution was a project personally created by Ms Dessislava Panayotova, an associate of the cultural and education department of the Synodal office…that does not mean that the Holy Synod will accept it unhesitatingly and unambiguously," Naum said.

"The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as a nutritionist of Bulgarians and moral values in the Bulgarian family, always will promote ethical norms in education, but will not tolerate in any way violence against children, in whatever form, especially if it is linked to so-called 'religious education and training'," he said.

Issues related to termination of pregnancy and children at risk are issues for future profound reflection in Bulgarian society "addressing appropriate reflections on God's will, the dignity of the mother, as well as the significance of each specific case, related to domestic violence and violence specifically against women," Naum's statement said.

"All other topics concerning the education and upbringing of Bulgarian children should be discussed by relevant educators and specialists, who also have the view of theological science, thus defining the most accurate and correct approach for future recommendations on the issues raised," the statement said.

(Source: The Sofia Globe)