

Ecumenical Patriarchate responds to Albanian Orthodox Church's letter concerning Ukrainian autocephaly



The issue of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's autocephaly generated an exchange of letters over the past week between the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, and the Archbishop of Tirana, Durres and All Albania, His Beatitude Anastasios.

On Saturday, the Ecumenical Patriarch's response to a previous correspondence by the Primate of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania fully documented the reasoning behind granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church, citing a series of references in epistles of the Holy Fathers, publicly affirmed legal documents (*sigillia*) and canonical provisions. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople's response was posted on its Patriarchate's official website.

The unexpected and uncharacteristic statements expressed by the Orthodox Church of Albania, among others, called for a Pan-Orthodox synod on the matter, to be convened by the Ecumenical Patriarch, and even disputed the canonicity of the ordination of His Beatitude Epiphanius, the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, as

the new Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Both texts, the response by the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the first letter by the head of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, are posted on the Orthodoxia news agency's webpages.