



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.SHDM.DEL/13/17

27 June 2017

ENGLISH only

Reply by the Delegation of Ukraine to the Statement of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting “Freedom of Religion or Belief: Issues, Opportunities, and the Specific Challenges of Combatting Anti-Semitism and Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, Muslims and members of other Religions”, Session 2
(Vienna, 23 June 2017)

**Mr Moderator,
Distinguished participants,**

According to the independent reports of the OSCE, the UN and the Council of Europe representatives and missions, which visited my country in recent years amidst ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, the overwhelming majority of religious communities in Ukraine describe harmonious inter-faith relations and conditions of non-discrimination allowing everyone to profess and practice, alone or in community with others, the religion or belief of his or her choice, as well as having the right not to profess any religion. The Government of Ukraine continues to closely cooperate with international organizations to further strengthen the environment conducive to religious freedoms.

There were no serious incidents on religious grounds in Ukraine. The incidents that happened are investigated. Some registered cases had a provocative nature and were used for anti-Ukrainian propaganda purposes. The unfounded allegations about religious discrimination in Ukraine were artificially fueled by the Russian propaganda and the Russian media aiming at intentionally twisting the reality and inciting inter-religious enmity.

Today's allegations by the Russian delegation about the so-called persecutions of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate are unfounded and follow the same pattern. Moreover, it is not within the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia to decide which Orthodox denomination is canonic and introduce such notions in the OSCE debate.

Ukraine is a democratic country and any citizen or any organization, including the religious ones, can use available remedies and protect their rights in court.

Ukrainian parliamentary tradition provides possibilities to Ukraine's citizens and organizations but not the foreign state to be involved and affect the legislative process.

I thank you.