

**Reply Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Working Session 6 “Working session 6: Tolerance and non-discrimination
I, including combating anti-Semitism, combating intolerance and discrimination
based on religion or belief, including against Christians, Muslims
and members of other religions” of the
2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

Mr. Moderator,

Distinguished participants,

We regret that official representatives of the Russian Federation as well as some religious and non-profit organizations, whose centers are located or financed by Russia, are trying to use religious problematic as a tool for reaching concrete political aims. That's why incorrect facts and systematic manipulation are the specific feature of this type of presentations.

Firstly, Ukraine doesn't have a problem of so-called seizure of churches of the Moscow Patriarchate. We have just realization on practice a right of any communities to change their canonical affiliation. This right is completely correlates with any international documents and recommendations.

Secondly, process of preparation and granting canonical autocephaly for the dominating majority of Orthodox followers in the country doesn't have any political involvement from the side of the Ukrainian government.

According to sociological surveys, number of people, that support obtaining the canonical autocephaly, in two times bigger than people who oppose this process.

This process is realizing exclusively according to the ecclesiastical procedures. Complete confirmation of that is supporting and leading it by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in general and Patriarch Bartholomew particularly.

Thirdly, despite a fact that the Moscow Patriarchate is a minority inside an Orthodox community, government constantly repeats its permanent position – all rights of followers who will decide to remain in a structure of the Russian Orthodox Church will be secured and guarantee.

So, aggressive opposition and unjustified accusation concerning a process of realization the idea of autocephaly it's just a form of including this aspect into the contemporary Russian hybrid war again Ukraine and Europe. In fact, this campaign presupposes not a securing the rights of religious organizations but realization of the pragmatic interests of one religious organization – Moscow Patriarchate, which constantly losing its positions.

I thank you.