

## Archbishop Yevstraty (Zoria), Representative to the European Institutions, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate

Dear participants!

I am happy to inform you of the excellent example of many years of fruitful cooperation between Churches and religious organizations in Ukraine.

For more than 20 years, the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations has existed as a non-state voluntary informal association of 18 churches and religious organizations. Our council includes the Orthodox Churches of the Kyiv and Moscow Patriarchates, Catholics of the Byzantine and Latin rites, Protestants of different denominations - Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists, Lutherans, Reformed Christians, Evangelicals and others, representatives of the Jewish and Muslim communities. We represent about 90% of all religious communities in Ukraine.

Our council works on the basis of equality of all participants, all decisions are taken by consensus. The chairmanship of the council passes to the next confession on the principle of rotation once every six months.

Our council is a perfect example of the possibility that not only peaceful coexistence is possible, but also the fruitful cooperation of various Christian denominations, as well as Christians, Muslims and Jews. And this cooperation exists even in spite of the fact that some members of the Council can have complex relations among themselves (for example, our Church and the Church of the Moscow Patriarchate).

We do not discuss the teaching of faith, the practice of worship or other internal and theological issues, as well as conflicts between council members.

The work of the council is focused on four areas:

1. Interaction between faiths in those issues that are of common interest.
2. Interaction of the religious community with society as a whole.
3. Interaction with the state and its institutions.
4. The international cooperation.

Unfortunately, due to the dramatic events in and around Ukraine, due to Russian military aggression against our country, negative news is often heard about Ukraine.

An example of the existence and fruitful work of our Council is the proof of the deep traditions of religious tolerance of Ukrainian society, the openness of various denominations to dialogue. We are ready to expand cooperation and to share positive work experience.

Thank you for attention.