# Patriarch Kirill meets with Germany's ambassador to Russia

On July 20, 2017, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Germany to the Russian Federation, Baron Rüdiger von Fritsch-Seerhausen, at the Peredelkino patriarchal residence.

They discussed, among other things, the religious and humanitarian situation in Ukraine in connection of Patriarch Kirill's letter to Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel of May 16, 2017.

The sides pointed to the inadmissibility of adopting laws that introduce discriminatory measures with regard to particular religious organizations, in particular, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The German ambassador gave a high value to the peacemaking efforts made by the Orthodox Church during the civic conflict in Ukraine.

The talk, which was held in a spirit of mutual understanding and constructiveness, was also attended by Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, and Mr. Mr. Jan Kantorczyk, head of the German embassy department for culture.

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This May, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent letters to the heads of the Normandy Four states, Primates of Local Orthodox Churches, Pope Francis of Rome, UN Secretary General and General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, pointing to the anti-church nature of Bills Nos. 4128 and 4511, which were to be considered by the Ukrainian Supreme Rada.

The bills provoked a sharp reaction in society and were negatively assessed by Ukrainian religious leaders, secular experts and human rights advocates. Hundreds of signatures were collected against these legislative initiatives within only a few days in various regions of Ukraine.

Assessing the proposed bills, the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, in his reply to the letter, stressed that they were anti-church bills.

Patriarch John of Antioch, on his part, condemned the attempts to adopt in the Ukrainian Supreme Rada the laws directed against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem expressed support for the canonical Church.

His Holiness Irenaeus, Patriarch of Serbia, described the proposed amendments to the Ukrainian legislation as discriminative towards the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church stated that the anti-church bills proposed for consideration in the Ukrainian Supreme Rada threatened the fragile interreligious accord in Ukraine.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia called to withdraw Bills No. 4128 and No. 4511 from consideration.

The Holy See expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in connection with the attempts to adopt anti-church laws in Ukraine.

The World Council of Churches expressed a deep concern.

On May 18, 2017, when Bill No. 4128 and Bill No. 4511 were to be put to vote, thousands-strong vigil took place at the Supreme Rada walls, led by Metropolitan Onufriy of Kiev and All Ukraine. That day the consideration of the anti-church amendments to the Ukrainian legislation did not take place.

*DECR Communication Service*

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