# DECR representative takes part in OSCE conference on freedom of religion



On 22-23 June 2017, a conference on combatting intolerance and discrimination against Christians took place at the OSCE Hofburg Congress Centre in Vienna, Austria. The meeting was organized by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The participants in the conference discussed various problems pertaining to the freedom of religion and belief in the OSCE region. The forum was opened by Mr. Michael Georg Link, director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

The conference brought together representatives of the OSCE participating states, religious communities and non-governmental organizations. Among the speakers was Rev. Dimitry Safonov, head of the Secretariat for Interreligious Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External

Church Relations, secretary of the Interreligious Council of Russia, who told in his address how the interfaith cooperation is carried out in the activities of the Interreligious Council of Russia.

Bishop Viktor of Baryshevka, head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's Representation to the international organizations, spoke in his address of the anti-church nature of the bills Nos. 4128 and 4511, proposed for consideration to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. He pointed out to the facts of seizures of churches and persecution of the faithful of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Bishop Viktor of Baryshevka called upon the OSCE to assist in returning the church property that had been illegally seized. The same issue was raised by Archpriest Nikolai Danilevich, vice-chairman of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's Department for External Church Relations.

*DECR Communication Service*

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