



Center for Monitoring the Rights and Freedom of Orthodox Christians in Europe launches its website

On March 10, 2015, the Center for Monitoring the Rights and Freedom of Orthodox Christians in Europe has launched a website (**orthodoxrights.org**). The project has been initiated with the support of the Moscow Patriarchate Representation to the Council of Europe. The Center will monitor observance of the rights of believers belonging to various Local Orthodox Churches in 47 member states of the Council of Europe. The project operates in English.

The project participants are to collect, analyze and publish on a regular basis the information concerning violations of the rights and freedoms of Orthodox Christians in Europe and to issue annual reports. As a first experience, the Center publishes the 2014 report. This document is still far from being exhaustive but it lays parameters for a detailed report for 2015.

The site will also publish special reports on burning issues, For instance, in 2014 there were numerous violations of the rights of Orthodox faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). The authors of the site believed it necessary to single out these cases and drafted a special report on Ukraine for 2014, which is published on the site.

The project will also publish documents issued by Local Orthodox Churches on human rights. The major documents defining the methodological basis for the work of the site are 'The Basic Social Concept' and 'The Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights' adopted by the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000 and 2008 respectively. The site will publish analytical articles on the protection of the rights of Orthodox believers.

The results of the site's work will be presented to the Council of Europe bodies and to the European public at large. It will help to broaden and clarify an agenda for dialogue between Orthodox Churches and European international organizations and to present factual information to be used in various public discussions. Considering the fact that the Catholics and Protestants have worked in the field of protection of the rights of Christians in Europe for a long time, the project opens up new opportunities for cooperation with them on these problems, the site of the Strasbourg Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church reports.

