Italy's ambassador to Moscow thanks Moscow Patriarchate for support in getting the case of Lautsi reviewed

On June 22, 2011, a presentation of the Russian version of the book entitled *European Religious and Cultural Identity: the Issue of Crucifix* took place in the Italian embassy in Moscow. Italy's ambassador to Moscow Mr. Antonio Zanardi Landi thanked the Moscow Patriarchate for support in defending the right of Italian schools to place crucifixes in classrooms, *Interfax-Religion* has reported.

'We are grateful to the Russian Orthodox Church which has been our most important and decisive ally in getting the Strasbourg Court's decision reviewed', the ambassador said.

The European Court of Human Rights in its decision of November 3, 2009, banned to place crucifixes in Italian public schools in response to the action brought in by Ms. Soile Lautsi, an Italian citizen, who complained that Christian symbols in classrooms attended by her children prevent them from getting secular education.

The Italian Government appealed against the verdict. Italy was supported by Russia and some other countries. The criticism to which that decision was subjected by Prof. Carlo Cardia in his book was put in the basis of the review of the Court's initial judgement when in 2011 the Grand Chamber of the Strasbourg Court resolved that the presence of crucifixes in Italian schools did not contradict the European Convention on Human Rights.

The book by Prof. C. Cardia, a prominent theologian, is devoted to the problem of religious symbols' presence in the public space. The author cites legal documents and sets forth legislative arguments which can of benefit to all those who encounter violations of the right to religious self-expression.

'This book is a testimony to the fact the arguments put forward by those to advocate the presence of religion in a secular society become ever more convincing in face of the position whereby religion should withdraw from public life', Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, head of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations, said during the presentation.

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the book by Prof. Cardia has been translated into Russian and published in one thousand copies. It has a preface written by Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, as

well as introductions by Ambassador Landi and Mr. Adriano del Asta, director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Moscow.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/55478/