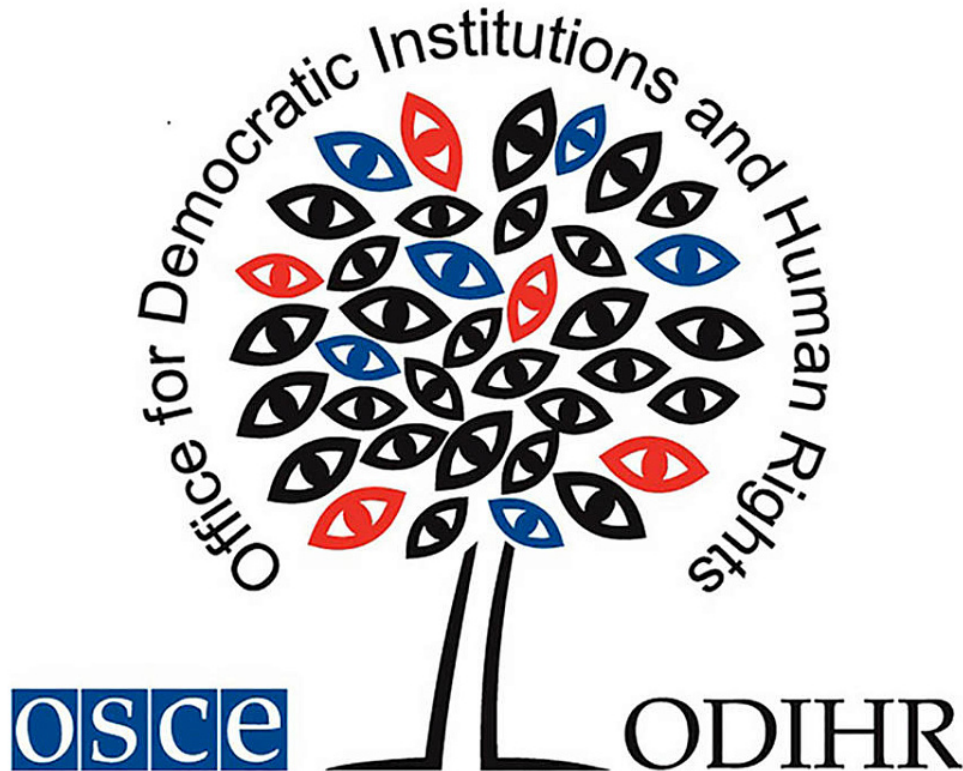




## The OSCE is monitoring the situation with the rights of believers in Ukraine.



**DECR Communication service, 16.05.2024**

Matteo Mecacci, the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has thanked His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Kirill for the information regarding the situation with the rights of believers in Ukraine which was outlined in the letter of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

As reported earlier, in April 2024, Patriarch Kirill sent messages to the Primate of Local Orthodox Churches and a number of religious leaders, as well as addressed representatives of international organizations. In his messages, His Holiness spoke about flagrant cases of persecution of hierarchs, clergy, and laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, including raids on the Holy Mountains Lavra of the Holy Dormition and the arrest of its abbot, Metropolitan Arseny of Svyatogorsk, about the imprisonment of Orthodox journalists accused of state treason for publications about violations of the rights of UOC believers, about the prohibition and blocking of news internet resources covering the religious policies of the authorities and the situation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. He also raised again the issue of the

ongoing preparation in the Ukrainian parliament for the second reading of bill No. 8371, the aim of which "is effectively to ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and to facilitate the process of seizing its churches and property, which the legislators themselves do not hide in their public statements."

In a response letter, dated from May 7th, the OSCE representative expressed hope for the continuation of dialogue. Matteo Mecacci also emphasized: "I can assure you that the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in accordance with its mandate, will continue to monitor events related to freedom of religion and belief, including in Ukraine."

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