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Archbishop Yevstraty (Zoria), Representative to the European Institutions.  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Unfortunately, I must draw your attention to examples of discrimination and intolerance against Christians from other Christians.

Over the past 25 years, our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate has been constantly confronted with discrimination and intolerance by the Moscow Patriarchate. We do not have any difference in faith, dogma or ritual of worship. But our opponents deny us the very right to exist. Absolutely groundless and for political reasons, we are denied the very recognition of the fact that we are also Christians.

Through the media and in the sermons against us constantly put forward various groundless accusations. The Moscow Patriarchate uses its connections and influence to set up against us both other Orthodox Churches, as well as other Christians - Catholics and Protestants.

Despite all this opposition, carried out with the support of Russia and the former authorities of our country, for 25 years our Church has grown several times and became the largest religious organization. According to independent sociological surveys, more than 40% of Orthodox believers in Ukraine associate themselves with the Kyiv Patriarchate and only less than 20% associate with the Moscow Patriarchate. The rest call themselves "simply Orthodox," without specifying membership.

Sociological surveys record a strong trend - over the past five years the number of supporters of the Moscow Patriarchate has been constantly decreasing, and the number of supporters of the Kyiv Patriarchate is growing. The main reason for this is that the Church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine continues to spread the Russian neo-imperial ideology of the "Russian world" in society, which is the basis for Russia's current aggression against Ukraine. This causes a natural process of the departure of believers and their communities from one jurisdiction to another.

The fundamental position is that freedom of religion means the freedom to have, express and change one's faith or beliefs.

This also means the freedom for religious communities to choose to subordinate to the religious center to which they wish and not be discriminated against at the same time. To the realization of this right are directed that draft bills that are so loudly criticized by the Moscow Patriarchate and Russia, including here. In fact, this criticism means denying the possibility for believers and their communities to realize one of their basic rights - the right to freedom of choice and informed choice.

In these conditions, we urge the countries of the OSCE region, religious leaders and NGO's not to yield to propaganda, to check the facts.

Our Church is open for a constructive dialogue, including on the issues of the realization by the communities the freedom of choice. However, we are categorically against the speech of hatred and ultimatums, which are practiced by our opponents for the purpose of our complete elimination.

Thank you for attention.