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On November 26 an old castle of Hernen (the Netherlands) hosted a conference "Church in Ukraine. The practice of faith, art, ecumenism and social responsibility".



The main speakers at the event were: Heleen Zorgdrager ? "The Churches in Ukraine: inter-church relations"; Fr. Roman Fihas ? "Social responsibility of the Churches in Ukraine. The Ecumenical Social Week "; Yuliya Hopenbrauers-Nahirnyak ? "The practice of faith and people's beliefs in Ukraine"; and Mariana Kavinska ? "Old and new Ukrainian icons". At the conference there was presented the religious life in Ukraine from different perspectives: the teachings and life of the Churches, social challenges in our country, the

people`s beliefs, iconography.



In his report Fr. Roman Fihas presented statistics of social problems that exist in Ukraine (alcoholism, drug addiction, AIDS, abortions). These statistics impressed the audience of the conference. The speaker stressed the important role of the Churches in overcoming the crisis phenomena in society: in which spheres the Churches and social organizations have begun to influence the challenges, what steps have been made to deal with social disasters in society. In his opinion, the improvement the situation requires greater mobilization of the Churches in public sphere, because, very often some of the Churches are struggling alone with certain negative phenomena and there is no inter-church cooperation.



Also Fr. Roman Fihas presented the Ecumenical Social Week, which for four years was held in Lviv. Organized by the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at the Catholic University, the Ecumenical Social Week is an example of a common reflections on social challenges. This is a forum for dialogue, discussions and common actions. Researcher of the Institute described the main activities and resolution of the ESW and its ecumenical specifics.

"Much have been already done, but more needs to be done ? we should together take responsibility for building more just society that can be build on the foundation of true Christian values" ? said Fr. Roman.



In total the event attracted over 50 participants. Among them were scientists, theologians, sociologists, people who were interested in Ukraine and executed social projects in our country.

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