

DLMPEs' Professor and IES' Director Pavlo Smytsnyuk took part in 3rd Ecumenical Church Day in Germany (online)

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On the occasion of the 3rd Ecumenical Church Day in Germany the Konrad Adenauer Foundation organized a series of events for German and international religious representatives for the exchange on current relevant topics related to the practices of religion, responsibility for freedom, security and well-being of societies.

On May 14th, during panel «Dialogue between churches, society and politics», Pavlo Smytsnyuk mentioned:

?In Ukraine, the state and the churches try to work in partnership, which respects independence of each actor. We can speak on mutual support, but also of some areas of ambiguity. I would like illustrate this by citing three cases. First, the churches' contribution to the state and society. Maidan was a moment, when the churches spoke with one voice against injustice coming from the state. Today, in the context of war, when not enough attention is given to the population in the East of the country, or to the internally displaced persons?the churches help with their proactive and generous support. Moreover, churches invite to reconciliation even when the latter remains unpopular in Ukrainian society. Second, the state's beneficial influence upon churches. Covid-19 pandemics has challenged the churches to be more responsible. Most Catholic and Orthodox communities were very prudent. But certain churches behaved as an ?enfant terrible?: denying the dangers of the virus, promoting a magical approach to the sacraments, etc. In this moment, the state played a positive role, calling the churches to become more responsible. Third, a case, in which there was a risk of ambiguity in relationship between church and state. The creation of the new Orthodox Church came about as a blessing to many Ukrainians, whose ecclesial structures lacked canonicity. The Catholics and the Protestants received a new partner for ecumenical dialogue. However, the fact that this Church was created with the support of the state, left many churches and individuals alarmed. They felt that there was a risk of a de facto state

church. It seems that these fears have not materialised. The whole situation, however, pointed out that both Ukrainian state and churches should be careful in protecting the legitimate separation of the church and state?.

Participants: Hermann Gröhe Member of the Synod of the EKD, Member of the German Parliament Prelate Dr. Karl Jüsten Head of the Commissariat of the German Bishops - Catholic Office in Berlin, Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Spasenovski Professor at the Faculty of Law ?Iustinianus Primus? and former Member of Parliament in North Macedonia Moderation: Patricia Ehret Advisor for Churches and Religious Communities at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

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