

UOCC Delegation to the Ecumenical Patriarchate

ISTANBUL, TURKEY – On February 14, 2015, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada delegation held its final day of meetings at the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul, Turkey. The UOCC delegation met with the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the Holy and Sacred Patriarchal Synod.

The meeting was chaired by His Eminence Metropolitan Meliton, with the participation of His Eminence Metropolitan Yurij, Primate of the UOCC, His Eminence Metropolitan Sotirios of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada, and His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel along with other members of the UOCC delegation.

The meeting discussed the three broad issues raised by the UOCC: The UOCC's relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the UOCC's vision and mission in Canada and the UOCC's desire for an ecclesiastical resolution by the Patriarch of Constantinople to recognize Ukraine's unrecognized Ukrainian Orthodox Churches.



Administrative centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul, Turkey



Ukrainian Orthodox Church delegation meets His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in his office at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Turkey.

With respect to the UOCC's relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the proposals advanced by the UOCC regarding the issue of the Title of Bishop of Toronto were discussed at length. Major progress was made to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution that will be addressed by the Sobor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada to be held in July 2015.

Another topic of extensive discussion with the Synodal Committee and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was the ecclesiastical position of the unrecognized Orthodox Churches in Ukraine, as well as the war in Ukraine. The delegation commended the Ecumenical Patriarch for advocating a call for Russia to respect international law and a return to peace in Ukraine in the joint declaration during the recent visit of His Holiness Pope Francis I to



Consistory Board member Vasyl Balan (*left*), and Chancellor of the UOCC, Rt. Rev. Protopresbyter Victor Lakusta (*right*) during the committee meeting session.

Constantinople.

The Ecumenical Patriarch expressed his gratitude for the UOCC's forthcoming visit to Ukraine to commemorate the tragedy on the Maidan in Kyiv a year ago.

His All Holiness asked the delegation to convey his love, prayers and concern to the Ukrainian people. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew requested Metropolitan Yuriy and the

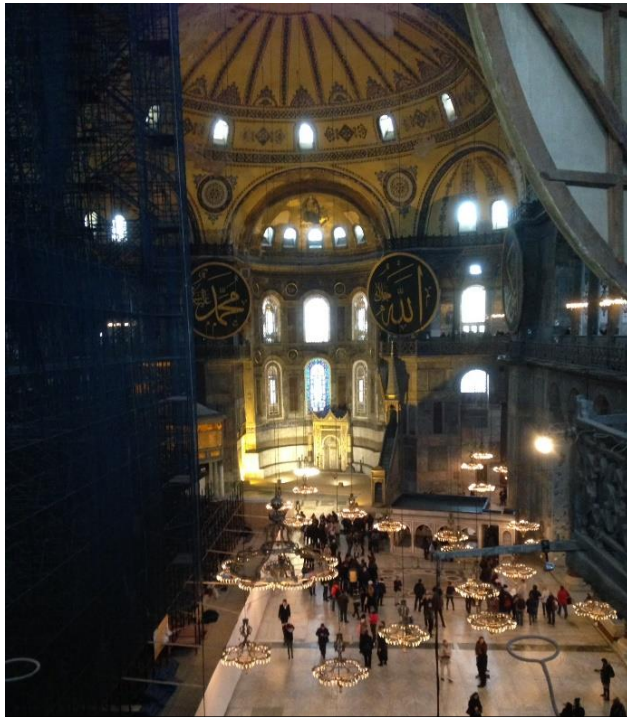


Bishop Andriy (*left*), Bishop Ilarion (*centre*) and Metropolitan Yurj (*right*) attend working session of the UOCC delegation.

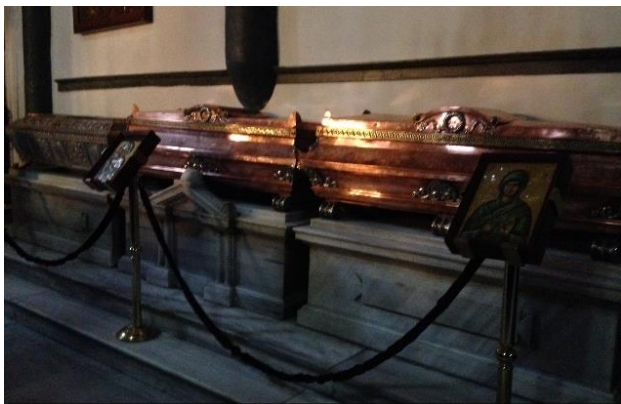
UOCC to assist the Ecumenical Patriarchate in continuing to facilitate a resolution to the crisis of church unity in Ukraine and to continue to promote Orthodox unity in the world.

Presentation of gifts between His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Eminence Metropolitan Yuriy.





Interior of the Hagia Sophia cathedral in Istanbul, Turkey which is a museum today. To the left is seen scaffolding. The UN World Heritage began restorations in 1993.



The Patriarchal church of St. George Ecumenical Patriarchate holds artifacts and relics. These include the relics of St. Euphemia the Great Martyr (4th C), St. Theophano the Empress (9th C), Solomone, mother of the Maccabees.

The delegation commences the Ukraine part of its visit on February 16, 2015. It is planning meetings with various church leaders and government officials in the capital of Kyiv, Ukraine.

Finally, the Ecumenical Patriarch gave his blessing for Sobor 2015, the Ecumenical Patriarch's participation in the celebration of the UOCC's centennial in 2018 and facilitating a Canadian tour of the relics of St. Andrew the First-called Apostle which are kept in the St. Andrew's cathedral in Patras, Greece. St. Andrew is the Patron Saint of Ukraine. His All Holiness agreed to be Patron of the second academic Symposium on Ukrainian Orthodoxy that is planned to take place in Kyiv, Ukraine in October 2015.

*-UOCC Delegation members
Dr. Peter M. Kondra
and Mr. Vasyl' Balan
February 14, 2015*