

Ukrainian Orthodox Church could gain autocephaly by end-July, Poroshenko says

Ukraine

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The Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kyiv Patriarchate is currently the world's largest Orthodox Church community without formal recognition, with several million members. Photo: President Poroshenko met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew during a recent official visit to Turkey

KYIV, June 5, 2018 - The synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of the Orthodox Christian church could reach its decision granting autocephaly, the equivalent of canonical status, to the Kyiv Patriarchate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the end of July, Concorde Capital advised clients based on a statement by Ukrainian President Poroshenko during a visit to Spain on June 3. Patriarch Bartholomew informed Poroshenko during his April 9 visit to Istanbul that autocephaly will be granted if the president's appeal is supported by Ukraine's parliament, as well as the nation's church hierarchy. Ukraine will commemorate the 1,030-year anniversary of the Kyiv-Rus state accepting Christianity on July 28. Concorde analyst Zenon Zawada added: "Normally in the 21st century, church politics don't have much of an effect on geopolitics. But what makes this situation unique is that the most attended church in Ukraine remains the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate. Among the arguments that Moscow Patriarchate members make against those belonging to the Kyiv Patriarchate is the latter is a non-canonical church that was formed without the Orthodox Church's approval. "If the Kyiv Patriarchate were to gain canonical status (an effort currently being led by Poroshenko), it could lead to many thousands of Ukrainians leaving the Moscow Patriarchate, which is not only loyal to Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, but also serves as a national network of Russophile politics and culture within Ukraine. Canonical status would set off an entire chain of events that would severely reduce Moscow's influence in Ukrainian spiritual life, affecting millions of Ukrainians. "So the granting of canonical status will deeply upset the Russian Orthodox faithful and prompt them to support the most aggressive plans of Putin, including expanded war in Ukraine and dissolution of Ukrainian statehood. Donbas terrorist leaders have repeatedly declared their intention of returning Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, to the Russian empire. Though such ambitions are unrealistic, Putin has appealed to this fringe imperialist element in the past."

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For more information, link here: www.concorde.ua Photo courtesy Ukraine Presidential Press Office