

# Advancing the Dialogue and Peace-Mediation

Group report, June 2019

## **1. An executive summary on the projects course and results of approx. three to six sentences.**

Our group worked on the topic of Advancing the Dialogue and Peace-Mediation. The group consisted of Ukrainian, Russian, Moldovan and Georgian fellows, working on a research paper, specifically, the role of the church in the peace promotion in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Russia. The main objective was to understand the abilities and limits of church to be an important actor in promoting peace and to analyse current role of the Orthodox church as a peacekeeper in the above-mentioned countries. We identified and analysed the official position and the reaction of churches on current geopolitical, internal and external affairs.

Through group work we developed an outline and a plan resulted in individually written papers. With the support of our supervisor Andreas Umland, we published an article about Georgian Orthodox Church and Ukrainian Autocephaly and other thematic articles are under peer-review and will be published later on in July. During the reporting moment three draft articles are prepared.

## **2. The original tasks and aims of the project, as mentioned in your project plans, and the participants of the project.**

The main objective was to understand the abilities and limits of church to be an important actor in promoting peace and to analyse current condition of church as a peacekeeper in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Russia.

The specific objectives of the project were the following:

1. To analyse the official position and action of the church regarding hate speech, discrimination against LGBT, religious and ethnic minorities, as well as its relationship with far-right groups, the frozen and current geopolitical conflicts;
2. To analyse official relations and actions between and within different churches in each of the countries.

### **Our team:**

1. Borovkova Christine (covering the Russian Orthodox church)
2. Chapidze Tamar (covering the Georgian Orthodox Church)
3. Karelska Christine (covering Ukrainian Orthodox Churches)
4. Kolotvin Pavlo (covering Ukrainian Orthodox Churches)
5. Pociumban Anastasia (covering the Moldovan Church)

## **3. A brief description on the challenges, implementation and possible changes of the project.**

We encountered the following challenges:

1. Time management - since many of the team members are busy with full time work and/or the other activities alongside the DSC fellowship programme we faced the problems related to deadlines and we did not have enough time for reviewing each other's paperwork and give comments. One of the changes we could have done is to agree on more realistic deadlines and better organise our time. Choice of the topic - all the team members were interested in the topic, however we had different views on the technique, style, methods and the specific topics of the research. We included all the suggestions, yet the structure of the final papers is quite different in each of the cases.
2. Lack of face-to face discussions - It would be useful if the working sessions include more time for discussions and writing, as after the intensive two days-workshops we were already tired and could not manage to focus on the paper itself. Interactive discussions with speakers on the

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related topic- during working sessions, we didn't have speakers and/or thematic workshop closely related to our research topic to feed in our research.

3. Peer review - it would be more motivating to have some incentives to get the papers earlier for the peer review, temporary discussions on the group on work progress with other fellows and their feedback would be useful.

## **4. A summary of the fulfilled tasks and achieved aims specifying:**

### **4.a - To which degree was the original aim achieved?**

Our original aim is almost achieved, we have two published articles and the draft papers covering the countries, but at the reporting moment we do not have one joint publication as it was initially planned. .

### **4.b - Which contributions were made by each group member?**

Christine Karelska - researched on Ukraine

Christine Borovkova - worked on the Russian Orthodox Church, conducted interviews with Ukrainian priests and peace mediation experts in Ukraine, together with the supervisor Andreas Umland worked on article devoted to the Russian Orthodox Church's position about the Ukrainian Tomos

Pavel Kolotvin - conducted interviews on Ukraine

Tamar Chapidze - together with the supervisor Andreas Umland published an article about Georgian church; is working on a piece about Georgian orthodox church

Anastasia Pociumban - researched and prepared a draft paper focused on Moldova

### **4.c - What are outcomes relevant for the group members?**

1. Improved knowledge on the topic - about Orthodox churches in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Russia, their roles in social-political processes and attitudes to current affairs
2. Better understanding of the role of church in societies of the researched countries
3. Discussions and exchange on different viewpoints

### **4.d - What are the project's outcomes for the public?**

1. Article on the issue of Ukrainian Autocephaly from side of the Georgian Orthodox church published in English, Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian languages contributed to the hot issue and brought understanding of the issue to wider public
2. In countries where Orthodox religion is the main religion, church is could play a role of a peace promoter, however it often polarises societies and manipulates with religious feelings. Our upcoming project publications will contribute to higher awareness on the role of church and show how church often incites conflict.

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**In addition, please attach to this statement an appendix including:**

**- Photographs of your work**

Attached

**- Links in the WWW related to your project**

1. Publisher: New Eastern Europe [http://neweasterneurope.eu/2019/06/06/complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv/?fbclid=IwAR3N1TB32BY53OJDLu9e7Uvvdv\\_UdNZP7ozMWfhQhXifuJ5oXF\\_O7MOfIS4](http://neweasterneurope.eu/2019/06/06/complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv/?fbclid=IwAR3N1TB32BY53OJDLu9e7Uvvdv_UdNZP7ozMWfhQhXifuJ5oXF_O7MOfIS4)
2. Publisher: Netgazeti [http://netgazeti.ge/news/359295/?fbclid=IwAR2UZKZXq6JPTfVhp6-f3\\_2PE3S4wp9Dk1YQbK\\_NKpgbJDiupmdCmBv7Oul](http://netgazeti.ge/news/359295/?fbclid=IwAR2UZKZXq6JPTfVhp6-f3_2PE3S4wp9Dk1YQbK_NKpgbJDiupmdCmBv7Oul)
3. Publisher: Georgian Institute of Politics <http://gip.ge/ge/%E1%83%97%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90-%E1%83%99%E1%83%98%E1%83%94%E1%83%95%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%92%E1%83%9D/?fbclid=IwAR2meKukOqJccQOm767ovOPnA-Ut6Ms3ivo>
4. Publisher: ZN,UA [https://dt.ua/internal/dilemma-patriarha-306365\\_.html?fbclid=IwAR14RuzvG37rOE0ksMb1QggY11HYvroAzP\\_B-ad6ksE0uQYvPtmQYPccLUE](https://dt.ua/internal/dilemma-patriarha-306365_.html?fbclid=IwAR14RuzvG37rOE0ksMb1QggY11HYvroAzP_B-ad6ksE0uQYvPtmQYPccLUE)
5. Publisher: ZN,UA [https://zn.ua/internal/dilemma-patriarha-312566\\_.html?fbclid=IwAR3caoWmriYjL74dD4F7eklbXfJkv09wYaYLinYCCZ2KoydGR6pfsKD5b0s](https://zn.ua/internal/dilemma-patriarha-312566_.html?fbclid=IwAR3caoWmriYjL74dD4F7eklbXfJkv09wYaYLinYCCZ2KoydGR6pfsKD5b0s)
6. Publisher: 112 UA <https://112.international/opinion/complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv-37784.html>
7. Publisher: Kyiv Post [https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/tamar-chapidze-andreas-umland-complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv.html?fbclid=IwAR2\\_N80AM0bmtQbXMS5zIKwEK4\\_7iQU2sxxylkLkW39RQQiklaUgYgou7GJQ](https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/tamar-chapidze-andreas-umland-complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv.html?fbclid=IwAR2_N80AM0bmtQbXMS5zIKwEK4_7iQU2sxxylkLkW39RQQiklaUgYgou7GJQ)
8. Publisher: Atlantic Council <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/complications-in-tbilis-friendship-with-kyiv?fbclid=IwAR0cuCSHcbuP8djrFkil6kk63gY328npGLXrJcztvKnjVQgCRJAdd7xg7D8>
9. Publisher: Academia.edu

The upcoming publications will be provided later on.

**- Other material documenting your work.**

**5 interviews totalling 4,5 hours (Ukraine), 1 expert contacted (Russia), 2 experts contacted (Ukraine).**