



International Conference

RELIGION AND WAR IN UKRAINE

The Political, the Public, and the Possible

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Telus 134 - Telus International Centre
University of Alberta
11104 87 Ave NW - Edmonton

In person and online.
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Session: The Orthodox Impasse, Part I

9:15AM MST, March 15, 2024

The labyrinth of politics, the mystery of faith: addressing Ukraine's Orthodox situation in state policy

Olena Bohdan, expert in religious and ethnic affairs, democratization and well-being studies

This paper explores challenges that Ukraine faces in its Orthodox situation and discusses policies that might address these challenges effectively from a good governance perspective, with respect for the rule of law and human rights, while taking into consideration the tragic context of the attempted Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It explicates factors behind the complexity of the current Orthodox situation and shows that crucial factors are beyond religion: they are rooted in a number of secular problems, and therefore constructive policy solutions must address issues both within the religious sphere and beyond it.

Dr. Olena Bohdan is an expert in religious and ethnic affairs, democratization and well-being studies. She has taught social science courses in top Ukrainian universities for 15 years, mainly at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which is also her alma mater for BA and PhD degrees in sociology. Olena Bohdan has extensive experience with civil society and government sectors. She served as the Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience from 2020 to 2022, having launched this agency in 2020 and directed it into a fully operational central government body despite the challenges of pandemic and Russian full-scale attack on Ukraine. During 2021–2022, Dr. Bohdan served as the Vice-Chair at the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (elected twice by secret ballot of member states).