



Boyko Borissov

Chairman

**TO
HIS DIVINE ALL-HOLINESS
MR. MR. BARTHOLOMEW I –
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE –
THE NEW ROME AND
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
FANAR, CONSTANTINOPLE**

**YOUR ALL-HOLINESS,
PANAGIOTATE, EFENDE KE DESPOTA,**

I am most respectfully addressing You with filial affection after the official correspondence between us related to the already held celebrations of the 130th Anniversary of the laying the foundation stone of The Iron Church of “St. Stephen” under the Bulgarian church parish board, which were worthily organized and carried out by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the 18th September 2022, when You presented and donated the Holy Book - Evangelium (Gospel) in Bulgarian language as a gift to this magnificent temple. This is a clear example of the ecumenical (universal) character of the Church of Constantinople! I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere apologies once again for my inability to visit You and the Ecumenical Patriarchate due to my commitments!

Therefore, in accordance with Your invitation, I will visit the Holy Center of the Orthodoxy for the celebrations on the occasion of the Thronal Feast of the Patriarchate, when Christians around the world commemorate the first-called of the Apostles - Saint Andrew, founder of the Church in



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ancient town Byzantium. On the eve of this holy day – on the 29th November 2022, I will be honoured and blessed to have an audience with You - the Ecumenical Patriarch, when exactly in this month 7 years ago the chaired by myself Council of Ministers proposed to the President of the Republic that the highest state honour of the Republic of Bulgaria - the Order "Stara planina" 1st class degree had to be awarded to You, and the next day (30th November 2022) due to firm commitments to the Bulgarian state institutions, I will not be able to take part as a regular practicing believing Christian in the Holy Divine Liturgy presided over by Your All-Holiness in Your Patriarchal Cathedral Church of "St. George".

This whole year 2022 is extremely connecting for us - the Bulgarians and the Mother-Church in Constantinople due to the completion of 175 years since the canonization of Saint Photius the Great, who was the enlightener in the Faith of both St. Knyaz Boris-Michail I - Baptiser of Bulgaria, but also of all of Bulgaria, and therefore, I firmly believe that even today he is the heavenly protector of the People of Bulgaria.

Your All-Holiness,

It is extremely important nowadays that we - the politicians – turn to the spiritual leaders for advices and talk precisely with them. You are universally accepted global spiritual leader. For more than three decades You have dedicated Your patriarchal serving to the common good.

After the end of the Cold War, You renewed and strengthened the relationship between the Orthodox Churches. You organized, convened, and held the centuries-awaited Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church in Crete in 2016, which witnessed in a new age the Gospel of Righteousness and opened the Church for dialogue with the modern world. Your mission and apostolate of love preach, but also put into practice the Covenant of Peace. This



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Holy work of Yours was particularly tangible in my mother country when the schism in the Bulgarian Church was overcome through Your canonical supra-jurisdictional role of conciliator at the Pan-Orthodox Council convened by You in Sofia in 1998. You always take care of the growth of the brotherhood and the arrangement of the affairs of the Zograf Monastery „Saint George“ in Holy Mount Athos, where, with Your blessing and permission, Bulgarians enter into spiritual ordination. You take canonical paternal care for the Orthodox Bulgarians in the Republic of Turkey by appointing as their spiritual shepherds the priests designated by the Bulgarian church boards. And now, thanks to Your goodwill, we Bulgarians also have an Archimandrite on Your Throne, which is a huge honour of a historical nature.

Except in Bulgaria, You always heal the spiritual wounds in the separate Orthodox churches, according to the covenants of peace and love given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Canons and the good of all people. You prophetically showed both condescension and courage. You granted the Orthodox Church of Ukraine autocephaly. Now - in the time of horror of the cruel and absolutely unprovoked war of the regime in Moscow against the Ukrainian people - only the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine is eleos-unction of solace, grace and godsend for the victims, sufferers and those persecuted by the fury of the war, which possessed the leadership of the Russian Federation. For the martyrs and for the heroes of Ukraine You are an intercessor before God for the victory of peace in this suffering country.

The three governments, led by me, made efforts and we achieved a lot for the accession of the countries of the Western Balkans to the European Union. The acceptance into Eucharistic communion in the Holy family of the Orthodox Churches, which You granted for the Christians from the Republic of North Macedonia, is a strong sign for us, the European politicians.



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Besides Your countless major historical merits as Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, You spare no effort for the cause of the unity of Christians all over the world. You put tremendous efforts into the interreligious dialogue, raise Your voice for human rights everywhere on planet Earth, fight for the religious freedom of every single person everywhere on the globe in unity with the institutions of international law, national governments, and all people of good will.

Your prophetic ministry to mankind is particularly manifested in Your devotion to the Creator through consecration to His creation. You are most powerful defender of the nature in this world and its guardian angel. The Green Patriarch, as the world rightly calls You, has elevated the issues of environmental protection and climate change to the highest leadership positions in our modern world without interruption for over 30 years. The European Parliament and the European Commission, as well as the UN bodies, even include the appeals of Your encyclicals in their priorities.

Your activities for mutual understanding between Science and Faith and their complementarity gave the necessary humility and comfort in the difficult time of the past COVID-19 pandemic. You reminded humanity, which had not experienced a universal global fear of an invisible virus for a long time, that: „Medicine is a gift from God“ and that faith requires trust.

The world, but particularly Europe, has more than once shown You as an example to follow in the treatment of the victims of wars and the people persecuted in military conflicts. The problems of today's humanity are not only pointed out, but also solved in your theological works, and in Your humanitarian activities You are courageous, compassionate, and self-sacrificing Apostle of Love like Saint Andrew, whose successor You are.



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For me, both as an Orthodox Christian and as President of the largest political party in Bulgaria - GERB, which belongs to the Christian-Democratic family of the European People's Party, it will be a great honour and privilege to personally receive Your blessing on the Thronal Feast at the Ecumenical Patriarchate - The Great Church of Christ.

In today's time of war, I pray all people and especially political leaders throughout the earth and especially those who are geographically in the places of suffering to understand with mind and heart the words of God spoken by Your mouth and namely: "It is in our power either to increase the pain inflicted on our world or to contribute to its healing. The choice is ours!" and You add that: "Human conflict may be inevitable in this world, but war and violence are not!"

I permit myself to make a request You to ascend Your sacred prayers to the Holy Trinity ascension for the permission of the nearly two and a half year long political crisis in my homeland, which causes a lot of problems to all my compatriots, and when I meet You, I also rely on Your advice.

With great respect I kiss Your Holy Patriarchal right-hand and remain a devoted spiritual son of Your All-Holiness:



BOYKO BORISSOV
/CHAIRMAN OF PP GERB/