

Letter from Bishop Pietro Parolin, President of Bishop's Conferences of Europe in relation to Ukraine.



NOTES ON UKRAINE

Ukraine is a large country in Eastern Europe bordered by Russia, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova.

Ukraine is currently in territorial dispute with Russia over the Crimean peninsula.

The country (including Crimea) is home to 45.4 million people, 77.8% of whom are Ukrainians by ethnicity, followed by a sizeable minority of Russians (17.3%) as well as Romanians/Moldovans, Belarusians, Crimean Tatars and Hungarians. The dominant religion in the country is Eastern Orthodoxy. Second, by the number of followers, is the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church which practises a similar liturgical and spiritual tradition as Eastern Orthodoxy and is in communion with the Holy See. Additionally, there are 863 Latin Rite Catholic communities and 474 clergy members serving approximately one million Latin Rite Catholics in Ukraine, consisting mainly of ethnic Poles and Hungarians who live predominantly in the western regions of the country. Protestants in Ukraine form around 2.19 per cent of the

population. There are about 500,000 Muslims in Ukraine and about 300,000 of them are Crimean Tatars. The Jewish population is a tiny fraction of what it was before World War II.