

RESPONSE TO MR ANDREI CIURCANU, REPORTER OF THE RISE PROJECT (ROMANIA)

The Ecumenical Patriarchate had no prior information on the issue you are asking about, and for which it does not have in-depth knowledge. However, in a general comment, it is known that the Holy Monasteries, wherever they may be, are places of total dedication to prayer and of withdrawal from social life and from the concerns that occupy people in the world. This is all the more true when we speak of Mount Athos, of which, recently, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew said that it holds a “unique place within Orthodox monasticism.” Accordingly, any involvement by any Athonite monk in matters alien to monastic life, particularly matters of a secular nature, is, in the first place, at odds with his choice to leave the world and dedicate himself wholly to prayer. For at his tonsure every monk renounces the world and the things of the world, and dedicates himself exclusively to the worship of God, to the liturgical life, to prayer, to fasting, and to his handiwork. Monasticism must in every case remain far from any direct or indirect involvement in politics and party-political activity, since such involvement is incompatible with its nature and with the Orthodox ethos. Any departure from this monastic ideal is condemned by the Sacred Canons and the tradition of the Orthodox Church.

The Church of Christ, like a caring mother, embraces all Her children. Mount Athos, an ancient part of the jurisdiction of the

supranational institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with more than a millennium of service to Orthodox monasticism, is a spiritual haven for all those Orthodox brethren of ours, from every corner of the globe, of differing origin and language, who wish to dedicate themselves wholly to prayer, and likewise for the thousands of pilgrims who wish to have the opportunity to share, even briefly, in this experience of monastic life in the Garden of the Mother of God.