

Table of Contents

- ***Estonia approves law obligating Orthodox Church to sever relations with Moscow Patriarchate***
-

Estonia approves law obligating Orthodox Church to sever relations with Moscow Patriarchate

[Interfax](#) (09.04.2025) - The Estonian parliament on Wednesday approved in the third and final reading changes to the law on churches and parishes that obligate the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (previously the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate) to sever relations with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Sixty MPs voted for the amendments, and 13 voted against them. The Estonian parliament has 101 MPs.

"A church, a parish or a monastery operating in Estonia cannot be guided in their activities by a person or an association that has significant influence and are located in a foreign state [...] if they pose a threat to Estonia's security, constitutional system or public order," the document said.

"A person who is not allowed to live or stay in Estonia cannot be a clergyman or a board member of a religious association," it said.

Churches and communities have been given two months from the entry into force of the law to bring their charters, board compositions or activities into compliance with the law.

Metropolitan Eugene of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is a citizen of Russia.

The bill on the changes is regarded as targeted primarily against the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church. It was initiated by the government, which, along with the parliament, which had adopted a special statement, demanded that the former Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate sever relations with the Russian Orthodox Church and change its charter and name, threatening to declare the church outside the law. The authorities linked their demand to the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church supports the Russian special military operation in Ukraine.

In 2024, the Estonian Interior Ministry declined to prolong the permanent residence permit of Metropolitan Eugene of Tallinn and All Estonia, the head of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, and he had to leave the country.

In March 2025, the Tartu county court approved the new name of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church. The court decision is final and has taken legal force.

The Interior Ministry earlier denied the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate a new version of the charter and registration under a new name. The church contested the ministry's decision in court.

Belgium silently continues to finance the Russian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate despite Russia's war on Ukraine

HRWF (10.04.2025) - Despite the weaponizing of the Russian Orthodox Church/ Moscow Patriarchate by President Vladimir Putin in his war against Ukraine, Belgium silently continues to finance the Russian Orthodox Church.

Belgium finances a number of state-recognized religions and Orthodoxy has been one of them since 1985. A wide range of Orthodox Churches are present on the Belgian territory and the Russian Orthodox Church is one of them.

The Russian Orthodox Church in Belgium (ROC/ Belgium) is fully associated with the Moscow Patriarchate which has endorsed Putin's decision to invade Ukraine and has called his "special operation" a "holy war."

While Patriarch Kirill in Moscow was blessing the war and encouraging Russian citizens to express their patriotism by joining the army, the ROC in Belgium kept silent about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, about the crimes against humanity perpetrated in Bucha and other places, about the deportation of Ukrainian children in Russia and many other war crimes.

However, in June last, high-level clerics of the ROC in Belgium were invited to and participated in the celebration of [Russia's Day at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Brussels](#): the rector of the Church of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos in Brussels, priest Adrian Alaoui and his wife; the rector of the Sainte-Juste-Anne church in Laeken (Brussels), the priest Andrei Popa and his wife; the cleric of Saint-Nicolas Cathedral in Brussels, priest Alexandre Motorny; priest Andrey Krayushkin, cleric of the Holy Trinity Church in Brussels, and his wife; The secretary of the Belgian diocese, Archpriest Pavel Nedosekin, with his wife. One can imagine the content of the official speeches in Russia's embassy.

On this occasion, an article and [photos](#) were posted on the website of the ROC in Belgium.

It seems Belgium prefers to turn a blind eye to this situation and to silently go on financing the ROC in Belgium despite Brussels being a strategic place with all its international organizations.