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“Eleos-Ukraine” NGO

NGO

All actors • Ukraine

The [NGO “Eleos-Ukraine”](#); director – priest Serhiy Dmytriev; active since 2014.

Official position/functions regarding the conflict

“Eleos-Ukraine” officially represents the Synodal Department of Social Service of the OCU, which is headed by the Archbishop of the Donetsk-Mariupol Diocese Serhiy Horobtsov.

This organization aims at solving social problems and developing a social service “based on democratic values without discrimination,” as well as at creating a network of representative offices throughout Ukraine. It publicly supports the position of the OCU, and it involves Metropolitan Epifaniy in its activities while emphasizing its readiness to cooperate with secular organizations. The head of the organization, Dmytriev, has demonstrated a distinctly pro-Ukrainian position since his transition from the ranks of priests of the UOC (MP) in Kherson to the UOC KP in Kyiv.

Interests in the region of the conflict

Since 2014, the organization has been actively pursuing a leading role in the field of social service in dynamic cooperation with secular initiatives that deal with the consequences of the

conflict. [“Eleos-Ukraine” is currently represented in eight regions](#). Its leaders are interested in expanding its network in all regions of Ukraine where the OCU is represented in order to strengthen its position and to work with the local population. In fact, “Eleos” can be called the “Orthodox Caritas” of Ukraine, which is interested in closer cooperation with non-religious groups and donor foundations.

In the future, the organization sees itself as the leader in many social spheres, with an emphasis on healthcare and work with the aftermath of the conflict through cultural projects and initiatives of memory preservation.

Activity regarding the conflict

Since mid-2014, the leader of the organization has been an active military chaplain at the 30th Separate Mechanized Brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. At first, he was involved in humanitarian support for the military and their families. In 2016, the organization switched from humanitarian service and direct assistance to victims of the conflict (for example, to internally displaced persons) to the development of medical and cultural projects. [Among its most famous initiatives have been: the “House of Mercy” for elderly people in the east \(on the non-controlled territory\), projects for the prevention of HIV/AIDS with the participation of religious organizations, “Books to the East” campaign, the TeenClub youth hub, the theater of veterans, and icon painting plein-airs.](#)

Also, priest Serhiy Dmytriev publicly promotes the narrative of the Russian-Ukrainian war through historical projects. For example, “Eleos-Ukraine” initiated the creation of the Wall of Memory beside the St. Michael’s Cathedral in Kyiv; it consists of portraits of the Ukrainian soldiers who have been killed since the summer of 2014. Thanks to this project, the square in front of the cathedral has become a place for various public actions related to the conflict (including those by the families of the victims).

The leader of the organization is also a representative of the Social Service Commission of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, where he has lobbied for the document in support of medical ministry, Peacebuilding Strategy, and other documents together with the former vice-president of Caritas Ukraine, the Greek Catholic priest Andriy Nahirnyak.

In 2020, Serhiy Dmytriev became one of the initiators of the creation of the Council of Medical Chaplains of Ukraine. This Council has lobbied for the access of ministers of different denominations to medical institutions, with an emphasis on palliative care. Earlier, [the “House of Martha and Mary”](#) was opened for spiritual and psychological assistance at one of the isolation hospitals with the aim of developing hospices.