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The term "diakonia" (from the Greek verb diakonein, to serve) refers to the Christian social service i.e. service of compassion and solidarity based on the Christian values (God's love) in form of benefaction and philanthropy to those in need. During the years, after the Third Preconciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1986, the concept was broadened to adopt more wider, holistic and transformative approach in order to make changes in the social relations and structures.

Diaconia in its ecumenical form, as formulated by WCC, requires justice. It is global (for all people) and cannot be separated from the society. It also strives for creation of long-term sustainable relations with powerful communities, capacity building and integrated assistance, rehabilitation, development and reconciliation.

This publication is in fact a preliminary research of the orthodox humanitarian and charity organizations, providing snapshot of the state of orthodox diakonias in the world (i.e. what is going on in this field on international level). The focus is placed on the work of world organizations inspired by or affiliated with orthodoxy, offering humanitarian aid and social services.

The survey deals with three types of organizations: official affiliates of the orthodox

organizations having mandate by the national churches or church municipalities (official social tools of national churches); recognized orthodox organizations, but not officially affiliated with the church and small-scale local initiatives (orthodox associations, etc.)

It is important to emphasize the difference between organizations having the role of advisory, coordination or financial bodies and/or organizations implementing activities. Donor or umbrella organizations are only responsible for financing, coordination and/or advising in the field of provision of services and programs that are offered by other bodies for implementation of activities (associations, agencies, etc.) The organizations that implement activities on their own have additional role of offering services and implementing programs.

Although all these organizations are of equal importance for the survey, it is useful to make this distinction because it may have implications and may help in providing explanation for several factors, such as the size and staff, geographical location, finances and existing partnerships.

Preliminary research includes data on the organizations selected according to the above listed criteria. The results are comparatively analyzed and presented: the purpose is to provide as accurate as possible (taking into consideration the quantity and quality of available data) global overview of the type of orthodox diaconal organizations and their work. This is a starting assessment of the development and current situation in the orthodox diaconia that may serve as a basis for further considerations on future prospects in the world. As such, this report is part of the permanent initiative and step forward towards the future development of orthodox diaconia.

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