

Patriarch Says Church-State Ties Closer in Europe and U.S. Than Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Patriarch Kirill said that cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state was not as close as in many European countries and the U.S.

The leader of the Russian church said the German government collects taxes for the church, the French president appoints bishops in Alsace-Lorraine, the British monarch is also the head of the church, and the Greek state rules the church.

"Even in the U.S., presidents swear on the Bible," Patriarch Kirill told Romfea.gr, a Greek website dedicated to Orthodoxy.

In contrast, he said, the relationship between church and state in Russia is based on mutual trust and respect, and "the church does not meddle in state affairs and vice versa."

Since 2009, when Patriarch Kirill was enthroned, the Russian Orthodox Church came under

intense public criticism over alleged corruption and its ties with the state.

Last year, members of the female punk band Pussy Riot staged a profanity-laced performance in Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral that they said was motivated by close ties between the church and President Vladimir Putin's Kremlin.

Prosecutors charged three band members with hooliganism motivated by religious hatred. Two musicians are now serving two-year prison terms, while a third got a suspended sentence.

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