

Media groups name change doesn't satisfy Vatican

Cindy Wooden Catholic News Service | Jul. 25, 2011

VATICAN CITY -- Two Vatican officials said the newly formed International Catholics Organization of the Media is simply a new name for a group that lost its official recognition as a Catholic organization.

Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and Archbishop Claudio Celli, president of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, issued a joint statement on the name change of the International Catholic Union of the Press.

The statement, posted on the social communications council's website July 21, said the new group has "misappropriated the intellectual, economic and historical patrimony" of the former International Catholic Union of the Press, known by its French initials, UCIP.

"After many decades of effective service to evangelization through print media," the statement said, UCIP "in recent years has experienced a progressive crisis management."

"The Holy See has repeatedly expressed to the authorities of UCIP its bewilderment at the unacceptable lack of transparency and accuracy in the management of this association, under the control of its secretary general. These facts led the Pontifical Council for the Laity on March 23 to revoke the canonical recognition of UCIP as a Catholic association," the statement said.

Cardinal Rylko and Archbishop Celli said UCIP's only reaction to the Vatican's move was to transform UCIP into the International Catholics Organization of the Media, keeping the UCIP logo and website.

The clerics said the councils of the laity and social communications were "studying new ways of forming an association of journalists who wish to remain in communion with the Catholic Church."

A statement emailed from the new organization July 25, said consultations were held in March and April among members who continued to pay their dues to UCIP.

"More than 75 percent of the voting members said a clear 'yes'" to changing the name and rewriting the statutes of the organization, the statement said.

A general assembly is scheduled for November to vote on new bylaws, it said.

Members chose the noun "Catholics" in the organization's title instead of the descriptive "Catholic," giving "the members greater autonomy," it said. The statement also said the organization is "preparing to establish a new relationship with the Holy See."

In the meantime, the Pontifical Council for the Laity has invited some Catholic journalists and communicators to the Vatican in late September to discuss the possibility of forming a new association recognized by the Vatican.

In a letter to invitees, Cardinal Rylko said, "the Catholic apostolate within the media continues to be a valid and most necessary mission."

"In today's global age, more than ever we strongly believe that journalists have a major role" to play in promoting the truth and informing consciences, he said. Catholic journalists "can be all the more effective if they are united in their efforts to permeate the media with the truth of the Gospel."

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