



Primates of Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin

On 23 January 2013, President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, at his Novo-Ogaryovo residence near Moscow, met with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and with His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II of All Georgia who had been awarded the IFUOCN prize “For Special Services in Strengthening Fraternal Ties between Orthodox Nations and Churches.”

Mr. Vladimir Putin greeted the Primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church and congratulated him on his eightieth birthday and the thirty-fifth anniversary of enthronement. The President said in particular: “Your Holiness, I am very glad to see you and greet you with your recently celebrated birthday, with the thirty-fifth anniversary of your patriarchal ministry, and now with the prize you received from the Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations.

“I would like to express my special gratitude to you for your endeavours to maintain humanitarian, spiritual and cultural contacts between our brotherly people in the present difficult circumstances. By “difficult” I mean inter-state relations between Russia and Georgia. Thank you very much. I am very glad to see you in Moscow. Welcome!”

His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya thanked the Russian President for congratulations, cordially greeted him on behalf of the Georgian Orthodox Church, and conveyed to him best regards from the Prime Minister of Georgia, Mr. Bidzina Ivanishvili who, Catholicos-Patriarch said, “is doing his best and what is necessary in order to mend relations with everybody.”

“I believe that the problems existing between us will be solved and we will remain brothers,” the Primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church concluded.