



## DECR representative takes part in international conference on interfaith dialogue



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On 8<sup>th</sup> April, a session on Interfaith Dialogue for the Sake of Peace and Cooperation took place in Minsk, Belarus, within the framework of the International Academic and Applied Research Conference entitled “Russia and the World: Dialogues – 2024.” The meeting was organized by the Russian National Research Institute for Communications Development and “Saints Cyril and Methodius Christian Educational Centre” International Public Association.

The conference brought together leaders and representatives of the traditional religions’ communities, statesmen, diplomats and experts from Russia and Belarus, as well as students of theological and secular educational institutions. With the blessing of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, participating in the meeting

was Priest Iliya Kashitsyn, DECR secretary for interfaith relations, executive secretary of the Interreligious Council of Russia.

In his speech delivered at the meeting, Rev. Iliya Kashitsyn focused on Russia's experience in interfaith cooperation in the context of the present-day challenges. He pointed out the importance of the religious factor in today's conflicts and its significant role in the global changes affecting the world order. The DECR representative also spoke about the history of the interfaith relations in Russia, having emphasised the key role His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' has been playing in the process for the last 30 years, along with his significant contribution to the dialogue between the traditional religions in the world.

Among the topics raised by the participants in the session were also cooperation between the Belarusian and Russian communities representing the traditional religions in these two countries; prospects of interfaith dialogue in Belarus; the role of Metropolitan Philaret (Vakhromeyev) of blessed memory, first Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, in creating the healthy religious and public environment in the country; the role of religion and religious values in today's multipolar world and in the dialogue between civilisations; attempts by the Patriarchate of Constantinople to interfere in the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church in the territories of modern-day Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania in the 20th and 21st centuries and its support for the early 20th century religious separatism in the form of Intermarium – a Polish concept that implied creating a buffer zone between the Baltic and the Black Seas in order to separate Russia from Western Europe; the Serbian Orthodox Church in the dialogue with Islam in the Balkans; the holy books of the Abrahamic religions in the context of interfaith relations and in view of the political factor's role in history, etc.

A lively discussion on the raised issues concluded the meeting.

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