# DECR chairman congratulates His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria on the anniversary of his enthronement

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, has sent the congratulatory message to the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The text is given below.*

Your Holiness:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the 7th anniversary of your enthronement

You have been elected by the assembly of archpastors and lay people to the Bulgarian Patriarchal throne and as a worthy successor of your predecessors, the late lamented Patriarchs of Bulgaria, Maxim and Cyril, are taking care for keeping the centuries-long inheritance of Bulgarian Orthodoxy and for enhancement of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's standing in modern society 'so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere' (2 Thess 3:1).

You are known in Bulgaria and in the entire Orthodox world as a highly experienced church figure and composer, yet your God-loving flock holds you dear as a monk 'a hidden man of the heart' offering up prayers for those near and those afar in 'the ornament of meek and quiet spirit' (1 Pet 3:4) and by an example of your pious life inspiring people to grow in their daily keeping of the commandments.

Great is Your Holiness' contribution to the development of relations between our Churches and peoples of the same faith for whom they care. You have visited the Russian Orthodox Church many times as the Patriarch thus granting us the joy of common prayer with Your Holiness.

On this day, solemn for you and for the plenitude of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church saved by God, I prayerfully wish you the gracious strengthening of your bodily and spiritual powers and the inexhaustible God's aid for many and good years of peaceful and blessed Patriarchal ministry.

With respectful love in the Lord,

**+ Hilarion**

**Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman**

**Department for External Church Relations**

**Moscow Patriarchate**

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