Metropolitan Hilarion begins his visit to Bulgaria



On 9 October 2019, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), arrived in Bulgaria with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and at the invitation of the University of Veliko Tarnovo.

Accompanying Metropolitan Hilarion are Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; Rev. Dimitry Safonov, DECR secretary to inter-religious relations; Rev. Roman Ivanusa of the Moscow Church of the 'Joy to All Who Sorrows' icon of the Mother of God, and subdeaon Vyacheslav Li.

Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite were met at the Sofia airport by H. E. Anatoly Makarov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Bulgaria; Bishop Gerasim of Melnik, chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), rector of the Russian Orthodox metochion in Sofia.

His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria received the DECR chairman, who conveyed him fraternal greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, congratulated him with his upcoming birthday and presented him with a holy panagia. Their talk was held in a warm atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust.

That same day the DECR chairman accompanied by Bishop Gerasim visits metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Sofia and was welcomed by Archimandrite Vassian at the Church of St. Nicholas.

At the crypt, Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated a prayer service to St. Seraphim, Archbishop of Boguchary, deeply venerated in Bulgaria. The Russian Ambassador attended.

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