



## **Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Ambassador of Malta to Russia**

On 25 January 2019, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR) met with H.E. Pierre Clive Agius, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Malta to the Russian Federation.

They were joined at the meeting by Archpriest Sergy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries, and Ms Alisa Fateyeva, assistant to the Ambassador.

Metropolitan Hilarion warmly greeted the guests at the Synodal department in charge of foreign relations of the Russian Church. Ambassador Agius thanked him for the meeting and told him about his career as a diplomat and his work in Moscow.

Metropolitan Hilarion shared his reminiscences of his visit to Malta in 2004 and his participation in an international conference, noted good relations between people living in Malta and Russia who have common Christian heritage, told the guests about Orthodox presence in Malta and about rebirth of the Church in Russia where the number of churches and monasteries has increased manifold in the past thirty years.

The DECR chairman briefed Ambassador Agius on the situation in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the attempts of the Ukrainian authorities to exert pressure on it and acts of force taken by the nationalists against clergymen and lay persons.

Another topic of conversation was dire situation of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa, and many conflicts in the world, including military ones. Participants were equally in the opinion that there is no alternative to peaceful co-existence and good-neighbourly relations between nations.