



## **Annual Christmas dinner takes place at Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with participation of church officials**



On January 21, 2019, the annual Christmas dinner held was at the Reception House of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the invitation of leaders of the Russian foreign affairs department.

Among the guests from the Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, a DECR vice-chairman; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), a DECR vice-chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far abroad countries; and Rev. Dmitry Safonov, DECR secretary for interreligious relations.

From the Ministry of Foreign Relations, there were G. Karasin, state secretary and deputy minister of foreign affairs; S. Grigoryev, director of the division for relations with the Federation constituent regions, parliament and public organizations (DRPO); A. Rudenko, director of the second division for the CIS

countries; A. Sternik, director of the third division for the CIS countries; I. Mozgo, DRPO deputy director; M. Melekh, head of the DRPO department for relations with major Russia religious associations; and I. Korostelyov, DRPO first secretary.

During the dinner held in a warm atmosphere, topics of mutual concern were discussed. After the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion and Mr. Karasin exchanged souvenirs. The DECR chairman also presented gifts to other participants in the dinner from the ministry.

*DECR Communication Service*

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