His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greets participants and guests of the 25th annual Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has sent a message of greetings to the participants in the 25th annual Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, which takes place in the capital of Greece on June 25-30, 2018. Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, read it out at the session held at the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens. The text is given below.

Dear participants and guests of the Assembly:

I wholeheartedly greet all of you who have gathered in Athens today to take part in the 25th annual Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy.

Uniting parliamentarians from countries of the Orthodox tradition for a quarter of the century, The Assembly has become an important place for discussing various topical issues and for bringing witness about the Orthodox point of view on many challenges of modern times. People who have vested you with trust hope that you will contribute to the affirmation of Christian spiritual and moral values in the life of society and to the consolidation of pan-Orthodox unity.

Unfortunately, this unity is being jeopardized in Ukraine where the canonical Orthodox Church is facing unprecedented pressure and discrimination. However, despite all difficulties she is selflessly and wholeheartedly serving God and people. Our common task is to prevent a possible increase of pressure including that put on the influence of outside forces.

We should not remain indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters in faith, to the extermination of the ancient Christian communities in the Middle East many of which date back to the time of the apostles, and to the severe persecution of the followers of Jesus Christ wherever they live.

As before we have the most important mission to fulfil – to give our contemporaries an opportunity of hearing the Gospel news and to bring them the Divine Word about love, peace, forgiveness and mercy.

The Russian Orthodox Church has always supported the activities of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy, and I hope that our cooperation will continue to bring good fruits.

I invoke God’s blessing on you and wish you success in your work.

+ KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

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