His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with members of the Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union



On 8 October 2017, after the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Holy Dormition of the Lavra of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with participants in the off-site session of the Committee of Representatives of the Orthodox Churches to the European Union (CROCEU), held in Moscow on October 6.

The meeting which took place in the Patriarchal chamber was attended by the following CROCEU members: Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium, Exarch of the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Patriarchate of Constantinople); Metropolitan Athanasios of Achaia (Church of Greece); Bishop Porfyrios of Naples (Church of Cyprus); Archimandrite Aimilianos (Bogiannu) (Patriarchate of Constantinople); Archimandrite Atanas (Sultanov) (Bulgarian Church); Hegumen Philip (Ryabykh) (Moscow Patriarchate); Archpriest Sorin Selaru (Romanian Church); Archpriest Georgios Lekkas

(Church of Greece); Rev. George Valku (Romanian Church); and Hieromonk Nektarios (Ioannou) (Church of Cyprus).

Taking part in the meeting were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Deacon Andrei Titushkin of the DECR Secretariat for Far-Abroad Countries; and Hierodeacon Grigory (Sokolov) of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Orthodox Relations.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church cordially greeted the hierarchs and priests who represent the interests of the Orthodox Church to the international organizations in Brussels.

As His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted, these days the Local Orthodox Churches are formulating their common position in the dialogue with the European institutions, and it deserves support and appreciation. "We know that the process of forming this Orthodox representation was not quite easy. Yet, by God's mercy, today there is a high level of understanding of how we should work together in our interaction with the European institutions," His Holiness said, "We, as the one Orthodox Church, have common views, and we need to represent our interests together."

At the same time each of the CROCEU members also represents his own Church, which is rooted in its own cultural and political context, and therefore some differences may arise, because the situation differs in various European countries, His Holiness emphasized. Besides, he continued, some countries, in which the Orthodox Church is present, are the EU members, while the others are not. However, according to His Holiness, these differences do not diminish the importance of the shared Orthodox witness in the interactions with the European institutions.

"It is completely obvious that the major problem that worries Europe is the threat of terrorism and extremism. Yet, for us, Orthodox Christians, it is not the only problem that causes concern in the European context. No matter whether the countries wherein we are present are members of the European Union or not, we all belong to the European civilization. Therefore, the processes taking place in Europe cannot but cause concern of those Churches, whose peoples are not the EU members," the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said.

For instance, among such alarming problems is moral relativism in Europe, His Holiness added, noting that the social and personal morality of the European people will determine their future as a civilization.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill shared with the participants in the meeting his reflections on the origins of terrorism, emphasizing that the phenomenon of terrorism is linked, among other things, to the radical secularization of the life of the Western society.

To conclude the meeting, the Primate of the Russian Church noted the necessity to promote close cooperation between all constructive forces with the view of opposing terrorism.

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