



## Head of the Coptic Church begins his visit to Russia



May 22, 2017 – His Holiness Tawadros II, the Coptic Patriarch, has arrived in Moscow. His Holiness's visit is made on the occasion of his winning the prize of the International Public Foundation of the Unity of Orthodox Nations.

At Domodedovo airport the high guest was welcomed by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Russia Mohammed El-Badri, the President of the Unity of Orthodox Nations Foundation V. Alekseyev, the DECR protocol section head Hegumen Feofan (Lukyanov), the DECR secretary for inter-Christian Relations Hieromonk Stephan Igumnov, the second secretary of the Egyptian embassy Mohammed Raafat, representative of the Coptic Church in Russia Hieromonk Thomas Ava Mina, and DECR staff member Ph. Champion.

During his trip His Holiness Tawadros II is accompanied by a delegation of the Coptic Church including Metropolitan Serapion of Los Angeles, cochairman of the Bilateral Commission for Dialogue between

the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church; Metropolitan Kirolos of Milan; Bishop Angelos, Patriarchal Exarch in Great Britain; Bishop Gabriel of Austria; Bishop Makar of Ash-Sharqiyah; Bishop Pavly, Patriarchal Vicar in Alexandria; Rev. Angelos Ishaak, personal secretary of the Coptic Patriarch; Mr. Michael Abdelmalek, staff member of the Coptic Cultural Centre in Cairo; and Ms. Ereny Wagdi, a staff member of the Diocese of Austria.

Welcoming the high guest, Metropolitan Hilarion expressed hope that the visit will be held in a positive key and become a new landmark in the history of relations between the Russian Orthodox and the Coptic Churches.

The sides noted a considerable intensification of bilateral contacts after the first visit of the head of the Coptic Church to Russia in October – November 2014 and his meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

They also discussed a number of specific aspects of inter-church cooperation.

Patriarch Tawadros II will stay in Moscow till May 25, 2017. As part of the visit, he will meet with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on May 23, when he will be presented with the prize of the Unity of Orthodox Nations Foundation. On May 24, the head of the Coptic Church will attend the celebration to be held on the occasion of Patriarch's Kirill name day.

*DECR Communication Service*

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