First meeting of representatives of Russian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church in Italy as part of Russian-Italian Civil Society Dialogue-Forum takes place in Moscow



The meeting was held at ‘Danilovskaya’ hotel in Moscow on 21 February 2017.

Among those taking part in it were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Administration for Institutions Abroad; Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church’s relations with society and mass media; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov) DECR vice-chairman; Very Rev. Sergy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries; hieromonk Stefan Igumnov, DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations; Rev. Alexy Dikarev, a staff member of the same secretariat;

The Italian side was represented by Mons. Ambrogio Spreafico, Bishop of Frosione-Veroli-Ferentino

and chairman of the IEC Commission for the Evangelization of Peoples and Cooperation between Churches; Mons. Antonio Raspanti, Bishop of Acireale; Prof. Lorenzo Ornaghi, rector of the Postgraduate School of Economics and International Relations and editor of *Vita e Pensiero* journal; Fr Antonio Ammirati in charge of the IEC TV; Fr Cristiano Begetta, head of the IEC Department for Ecumenism and Dialogue; first secretary and press attaché of the Embassy of the Italian Republic to the Russian Federation; and Fr Paolo Costa, secretary of Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco.

The meeting opened by the address of Metropolitan Hilarion. He noted that civil society dialogue was an important method of strengthening relationships between people in different countries and continued to say: “The Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Italy occupy a significant place in the social structure of our countries; great is their role in the formation of the institute of family and marriage, education and charity. The establishment of our working group was an expected event, and we will discuss problems topical for both Churches... Today’s meeting is dedicated to the issues of arts an instrument of consolidating our accord and mutual understanding among nations.”

Discussion of the reports revealed topical issues to be discussed in future. The sides agreed to hold meetings of the working group on a regular basis.

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