



## **Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosts annual Christmas dinner with participation of official church representatives**

On January 27, 2017, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the traditional annual Christmas dinner at its Receptions House.

Among the guests from the Church there were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far abroad, Hieromonk Stephan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, and Rev. Dmitry Safonov, DECR secretary for interreligious relations.

The foreign ministry was represented by G. Karasin, state secretary and deputy foreign minister; O. Vasnetsov, director for relations with the federation constituent members, parliament and public associations (DSPO); A. Rudenko, director of the 2<sup>nd</sup> department for CIS countries; R. Romanov, head of a DSPO department; M. Melekh, DSPO first secretary, and I. Korostelyov, DSPO second secretary.

During the dinner, which was held in a warm atmosphere, the hosts and the guests discussed matters of mutual concern. After the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion and Mr. Karasin exchanged tokens of the meeting. The DECR chairman also presented gifts to other participants in the dinner from the ministry.

*DECR Communication Service*