



## **Staff members of Synodal departments meet with Dr. Moushira Khattab, candidate to the post of UNESCO Director-General**



On 25 January 2017, staff members of the Synodal departments of the Russian Orthodox Church met with H. E. Dr. Moushira Khattab, Egypt's nominee for the post of the Director-General of UNESCO.

Taking part in the meeting were the Very. Revd. Sergiy Zvonarev, secretary for far abroad countries of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Mr. Vakhtang Kipshidze, deputy chairman of the Department for Church's relations with society and mass media; Mr. Philip Champion, a staff member of the DECR secretariat for inter-Christian relations; H.E. Mohamed El-Badri, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Russian Federation; Ambassador Nihad Abdul Latif, director of Dr. Khattab's campaign;

Mr. Amr Moursy, second secretary of the Embassy of Egypt in Moscow; and Mr. Omar Monieb, second secretary for Dr. Khattab's campaign.

Archpriest Zvonarev welcomed Dr. Khattab and those accompanying her on behalf of the DECR chairman, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, told the guests about the efforts of the Moscow Patriarchate undertaken for preserving the UNESCO world heritage sites used by the Russian Orthodox Church, such as the most famous in the world Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius, the Novodevichy convent and the Solovetsky monastery, and expressed his hope for the development of intercultural and interreligious dialogue at UNESCO and also the development of religious education.

Mr. Kipshidze shared his views on the significance of interreligious cooperation in modern society, and cooperation of the Church with the state in preserving Russian historical heritage.

Dr. Khattab expressed her thanks for the meeting and talk and noted the Russian experience of good-neighbourly relations and non-confrontational coexistence of traditional religious communities as an example of peace and respect. She also spoke of the Egyptian authorities' efforts devoted to opposing violence, enmity and hatred against persons on religious grounds.

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/48767/>