Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk takes part in the 5th European Catholic-Orthodox Forum in Paris



On 9-12 January 2017, the 5th European Catholic-Orthodox Forum on 'Europe Facing Today a Fear of Terrorism Challenged by Fundamentalism and the Value of Human Person and Religious Freedom' took place in Paris, bringing together representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches of the European region and the Catholic Council of the European Episcopal Conferences. Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Gennadios of Sassima (Patriarchate of Constantinople) and the Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, *Péter Cardinal Erdő*, acted as co-chairs of the meeting.

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, represented the Russian Orthodox Church at the forum. Among its participants was also Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR vice-chairman.

Discussed at the meeting was the situation of religious communities in Europe in the context of challenges facing the European society today, as well as such topics as human dignity and religious freedom, problems of fundamentalism and terrorism, and the role of the state and church communities

in maintaining stability and solidarity within society.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk delivered an address on 'The Violation of Religious Rights and Freedoms: Intolerance, Discrimination and Persecution,' noting in particular that the forum took place against the background of progress attained in Orthodox-Catholic relations**.** As the DECR chairman emphasized, an important event was the meeting between Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis in Havana on February 12, 2016, that opened a new page in the history of Orthodox-Catholic interaction. According to Metropolitan Hilarion, the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church achieved a notable success at its 14th plenary session by adopting an important document – 'Conciliarity and Primacy in the First Millennium: On the Path to a Common Understanding for Ministering to Church Unity.'

His Eminence reminded the participants in the forum that the meeting in Havana resulted in the adoption of the Joint Declaration "which reflected a common vision of global issues that concern our Churches and all of humanity." The representative of the Russian Orthodox Church said, in particular, "The Pope and the Patriarch, who had earlier touched upon the topics in the declaration, in Havana spoke with one voice. And this voice was heard. We are clearly aware of the need for joints efforts for a consolidated response to the challenges of modern-day life, including the persecution of Christians living in the Middle East, the secularization of western society, the violation of believers' rights, the crisis of family and other traditional values, and the undermining of morality in both private and public life."

In his address, Metropolitan Hilarion also dwelt on the rights and freedoms of Christian communities in Europe, Middle East, Africa and Ukraine.

***

The 1st European Catholic-Orthodox Forum was held in 2008, initiated by the Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, *Péter Cardinal Erdő,* and Bishop Hilarion of Vienna and Austria (now Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations).

Discussed at the previous meetings that took place in Trento, on Rhodes, in Lisbon and in Minsk, were various issues, including family, church-state relations, economic crises, poverty, religion and multiculturalism.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/48802/