



## **DECR chairman meets with new Apostolic Nuncio in Russia**



On October 21, 2016, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations (DECR), met with the new Apostolic Nuncio in Russia, Archbishop Celestino Migliore.

The DECR chairman welcomed the nuncio, wishing him God's help and success in his important diplomatic mission in Russia. He also noted that in recent years the Department developed very constructive relations with the Apostolic Nunciature in Moscow and personally with its former leaders, Archbishops Antonio Mennini and Ivan Jurkovic. Archbishop C. Migliore, in his turn, stressed the willingness to develop the fruitful cooperation that began between the two external church relations departments.

They discussed a wide range of issues concerning today's international policies and bilateral relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop Migliore gave a high value to the historic meeting that took place on February 12 in Havana between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis of Rome, which was met with a great response in the

world.

Metropolitan Hilarion also spoke about the central point of the meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis, namely, the disastrous situation of Christians in the Middle East. The both hierarchs expressed the conviction of the need for countries opposing terrorism to unite efforts as one coalition. In this situation, the role of Christian Churches coming out with peace initiatives should be more active.

The nuncio showed interest in the experience of peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Russia. Metropolitan Hilarion gave his guest some positive examples of interaction between representatives of the Church and Islamic communities, including in the framework of the Interreligious Council in Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion shared with his guest the Russian Orthodox Church supreme authority's concern for the continued conflict in Ukraine and expressed appreciation of the well-considered stand taken by Pope Francis and the Vatican on the situation in that country. They agreed that the Churches should act as peace mediators between the conflicting sides rather than side with a particular party of the conflict.

In conclusion of the talk, which was held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, Metropolitan Hilarion introduced his staff members who participated in the meeting, namely, Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), a DECR vice-chairman, Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), secretary for inter-Christian relations, and Rev. Alexis Dikarev. The Apostolic Nuncio was accompanied by Msgr. Andrzej Józwowicz, first counsellor of the Nunciature.

*DECR Communication Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/49087/>