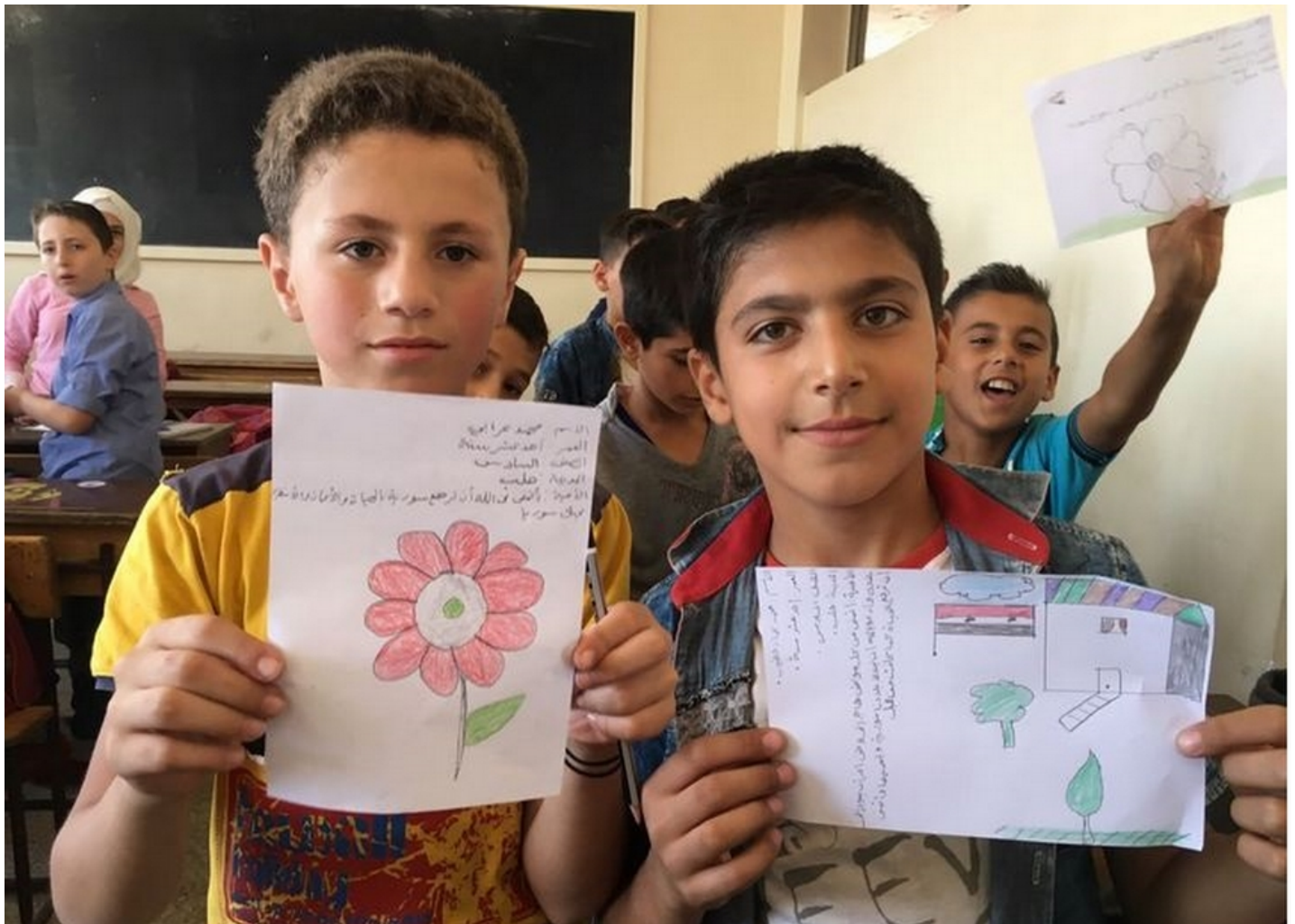




Hierarchs of the Oriental Churches convey Syrian children's peace messages to EU leaders and UN high commissioners



In early October 2016, as part of a campaign organized by the Christian Churches in more than two thousand public schools in Damask, Homs and other Syrian cities, schoolchildren wrote messages and made drawings calling the world community to stop the war in the country.

In Brussels on October 12, and in Geneva on October 13, the high-ranking hierarchs of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Melkite Church conveyed the Syrian children's messages to the European Union leaders and the UN high commissioners.

The idea of organizing such campaign was first discussed at the meetings between the leaders of the Syrian Churches and members of the Orthodox-Catholic delegation from Russia that visited Damask on April 7, 2016, at the instruction of the supreme authorities of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Roman

Catholic Church as the follow-up to some of the agreements reached during the meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Pope Francis in Havana.

The members of the abovementioned delegation, Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, and representatives of the *Kirche in Not* Foundation, priest Andrzej Halemba and Mr. P. Humeniuk, also arrived in Geneva on October 13 2016, to meet with the Syrian hierarchs. Among those present at the meeting was archpriest Mikhail Gundyayev, Russian Orthodox Church's representative to the World Council of Churches and international organizations in Geneva. The participants discussed prospects of inter-Christian cooperation aimed at supporting the needy Christians in the Middle East and other ethnic and confessional groups in the region.

DECR Communication Service

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