



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: It is important for us that the Council will be a factor of unity and unanimity**

*In his exclusive interview to Russia-24 TV channel Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations commented on the refusal of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to participate in the Pan-Orthodox Council due to open on 16 June 2016. Metropolitan Hilarion noted in particular:*

'Preparation for the Council has lasted fifty-five years. As it transpires, this preparation has not been concluded, as certain Churches express their dissatisfaction with the process of preparation. One Church, namely, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has already stated her refusal to participate in the Council. It may well be that the two more, the Antiochian and the Serbian Churches, will also renounce their participation.

'We proposed to the Patriarch of Constantinople to hold a Pre-Council conference to resolve all issues because of which the Churches are refusing to participate. If these issues will be resolved, the Council will take place. If they will not be resolved, then it would be better to postpone it.

'It is important for us that the Council will be a factor of unity and unanimity with no unpleasant surprises for the Orthodox Churches.

'Decisions at the Council should be taken by consensus which means unanimously, not simply by agreement on this or that statement or document of all those present. Consensus for us means that all Churches express agreement.

'If one, two or three Local Orthodox Churches are absent at the Council, it means no consensus. And what kind of legitimacy this Council will have? How its decisions will be perceived in the Church that renounced her participation not on technical, but on principal reasons?'