



The St. Petersburg Russian-German forum's working group 'Churches in Europe' meet in Hamburg



The Churches in Europe working group of the Russian-German forum of civil societies 'St. Petersburg Forum's met for its regular session on May 30-31, 2015, in Hamburg.

The event was attended by representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, including Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR) and cochair of the working group, Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far-abroad, Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), pro-rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute for Post-Graduate Studies, Father Anthony Borisov, pro-rector of Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary, V. Kipshidze, deputy head of the Department for the Church's Relations with Society (DCRSMM) and the Mass Media, Father Iliya Kosykh, head of the DECR Communication Service, O. Pshenitsyn of the DCRSMM, O. Kalimullin, a DECR consultant, V. Rulinsky, press secretary of the Synodal Department for Charity and Social Service, and S. Ochkanov of the DECR secretariat for the far-abroad. Among the attendees were also Archpriest Sergiy Baburin, rector of the church of St. John of Kronstadt in Hamburg, and Father

Dionysius Idewein of the same church.

Participants from the German side included Dr. Johannes Eldemann, cochair of the working group and director of the Institute of Ecumenics, Ms. Katarina Wanenbruk, work with refugees, Bonn secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference; Dr. Martin Illert, representative of the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, Ms. Martina Severin-Kaiser, representative of the St Peter Cathedral in Hamburg, Dr. Andreas Fisch, representative of the Kommende Social Institute in Paderborn, Dr. Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven, representative of the Institute of Theology and Peace in Hamburg; Dr. Burkhard Konrad, coordinator of the work with refugees in Hamburg; Pastor Frank Lotichius, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany; Dr. Frank Ronge, head of the Faith and Education department under the secretariat of the German Conference of Catholic Bishops; Dr. Reinhard Flogaus, privatdozent of the Humboldt University in Berlin; Zenta Zuern, prelate priest, Evangelical Lutheran Church; and Dirk Stelter, representative of the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hannover.

The meeting was co-chaired by Archimandrite Philaret and Dr. Eldemann.

The meeting heard reports by O. Kalimullin on 'Russia: Migration Today and an Experience of the Russian Orthodox Church's Response to Migration Challenges'; V. Rulinsky on 'The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Reception of Refugees from Ukraine'; O. Pshenitsyn on 'Cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Federal Migration Service'; Andreas Fisch on 'Between Humanity and Tiredness. Reception of Refugees in Germany and the Role of the Church'; Katherina Wanenbruk on the current initiatives of the German Bishops' Conference in settling the problem of refugees; Ms. Martina Severin-Kaiser on 'Evangelical-Orthodox Cooperation in the Context of Migration to Germany Since 1945'.

The discussion focused on the approaches taken by churches in Russia and Germany to the solution of the problem of migrants from various parts of the world. The ROC representatives shared their experience of the work with refugees from eastern Ukraine and migrant who come to Russia from Central Asia countries. Representatives of German churches spoke about the aid given to refugees from the Middle East for adaptation. Special attention was given to the problem of foreign citizens' social integration in a host country.

During their stay in Germany, Russian church representatives visited the Russian Orthodox church of St. John of Kronstadt in Hamburg. The rector of the church, Archpriest Sergey Baburin, took the guest on a tour of the church and showed them 'the parish spiritual and cultural center 'Tschaikowsky-Haus'.

St. Petersburg Dialogue is a forum of the civil societies in Russia and Germany. Established in 2001 on the initiative of President Putin and Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, it is called to promote mutual understanding between Germany and Russia and further development of bilateral cooperation in all spheres of society. The number of the participants in the St. Petersburg Dialogue is from 100 to 150 people from each side.

The Churches in Europe working group is the youngest body in the structure of the St. Petersburg Dialogue. It met for the first time in 2007 in Wiesbaden. The working group included representatives of Christian confessions in Russia and Germany. The group holds regular meetings alternately in Russia and Germany.

DECR Communication Service

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/49438/>