Meeting of the Presidium of the Interreligious Council in Russia



On March 10, 2016, the Presidium of the Interreligious Council in Russia ICR) held its first meeting this year at the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies (CMI) in Moscow.

From the Russian Orthodox Church, the meeting was attended by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), and the Rev. Dimitry Safonov, head of the DECR section for interreligious contacts.

The Central Moslem Board in Russia was represented by its chairman Sheikh ul-Islam Mufti Talgat Tadjuddin and its representatives in Moscow, Mr. Sh. Kadyrgulov.

The Muslim Board of the Russian Federation was represented by its first vice-chairman Mr. D. Mukhetdinov and the head of its department for cooperation with state, public and religious organizations, Mr. Sh. Kashaf.

From the North Caucasus Muslim Coordinating Center the meeting was attended by its representative in Moscow, Mr. Sh. Pshikhachev.

Participating in the meeting from the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia were Russia's Chief Rabbi A. Shaevich and the representative of Moscow's Chief Rabbi for interreligious dialogue Michael Jedwabny. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Russia was represented by its public relations official, A. Glotser.

Among the participants was also the representative of the Buddhist Traditional Sangha in Russia, Sanzhai-Lama.

Present at the meeting were also members of the ICR patrons committee including Mr. N. Ismailov, founder of the Chrystal Protection company, and Mr. O. Blyudov of the PATM Holding and member of the Zhivi ('Live') charity.

There were also Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), CMI pro-rector for training, Mr. D. Shmonin, head of the CMI chair of pedagogics and theory of education, Mr. P. Lebedev, acting head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for church-society relations and mass media office for work with state structures, and Mr. S. Melnik of the ICR secretariat.

Addressing the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion pointed to the major areas of interreligious cooperation. 'The Interreligious Council in Russia has as one of its tasks to strengthen peace and accord among the traditional religious communities in our country', he pointed out, noting that the Russian model of interreligious accord is, to a great extent, an achievement of the religious leaders of the country. 'It is very important that, along with our own meetings, we should bring their content to our parishioners and the public at large', he said, adding that religious leaders 'should educate their parishioners for peace, accord and mutual understanding. He put a special emphasis on the joint efforts of religious communities in developing theological education and scholarship.

Then the participants were greeted by Mufti Talgat Tadjuddin, Rabbi A. Shaevich and Sanzhai-Lama.

The ICR unanimously approved the appointment of the Rev. Dimitry Safonov as executive secretary of the ICR. His name was put in nomination with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia as honorary chair of the ICR.

Among the matters discussed was the ICR's cooperation with the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe and concepts of several interreligious forums to be held by the ICR in 2016.

In conclusion of the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion presented Mr. N. Ismailov, member of the ICR patrons committee, with the medal commemorating the millennium of the repose of the Holy Prince Vladimir, awarded him by a Patriarchal decree.

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