



## **“Rus’ and Mount Athos: Towards the Millennium of Russian Monasticism on the Holy Mount” discussed at Christmas Parliamentary Meetings**



On January 26, 2016, the 4<sup>th</sup> Christmas Parliamentary Meetings’ section on Rus’ and Mount Athos: Towards the Millennium of Russian Monasticism on the Holy Mount was held at the grand hall of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation.

The meeting took place as part of the theme ‘Tradition. Dialogue, External Relations’ considered by the 24<sup>th</sup> International Christmas Educational Readings. The section was co-chaired by Archbishop Feognost, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for monasteries and monastics; N. Fedorov, vice-chairman of the Federation Council; and S. Rybakov, vice-chairman of the Federation Council committee for science, education and culture.

A photo-exhibition on the Athonite Starets was displayed at the foyer of the grand hall. On display was also an Icon of Our Lady of Iveron made by the good hands of the creative workshop ‘Prikosnovenie’

(Touching). The Zhuravushka (Little Crane) children's choir sang folk songs.

In the beginning of their work, the section participants were shown a documentary 'A Journey to Mount Athos' authored by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), who speaks in the film about the historical sources of the Athonite monastic republic.

Speeches were made by A. Beglov, Presidential Envoy to the Central Federal Region and head of the Presidential working group for preparing the celebrations devoted to the millennium of the presence of Russians on Holy Mount Athos; P. Semenov, state secretary - deputy head of the Federation Council committee on issues of nationalities; D. Azarov, chairman of the Federation Council committee on federal order, regional policy, local self-government and affairs of the North, the Rev. Mikhail Asmus, a DECR adviser; Yu. Petrov, director of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Russian History; N. Lisovoy, vice-chairman of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society; V. Khotinenko, Russian People's Artist, film director; Ye. Nikiforov, editor-in-chief of the Radonezh Media Holding; and others.

The section was attended by Metropolitan Sergiy of Barnaul and the Altai; Bishop Feofilakt of Dmitrov, father superior of the St. Andrew Patriarchal Monastery; K. Kosachev, chairman of the Federation Council committee for international affairs; I. Lapshin, head of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishers international department; N. Gorkovenko, director of the Prikosnovenie creative workshop; as well as representatives of ROC dioceses and monasteries, parliament members, scholars, public figures, journalists, professors and students of Orthodox educational institutions. The section was supervised by Hierodeacon Roman (Kiselev) of the DECR secretariat for the far abroad.

It was stated that the spiritual legacy of Russian monasticism and the presence of those who came to Holy Mount Athos from historical Rus' occupy a special place in Russian history. Participants pointed to the influence it made on the country's education, science and culture and on the development of historical Russia-Athos relations.

There were also calls to all parties concerned to exert every effort to preserve and protect the unique place of Holy Mount Athos in the world, with its millennial traditions and special features of a monastic republic preserved since its inception.

The section on Old Russia and Mount Athos was the first event to be held in 2016 on the occasion of the millennium of the presence of Russian monks on Mount Athos. It is planned to hold during the year a series of church-public celebrations and science-culture events.

*DECR Communication Service*

