The 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference begins its sessions



On October 12, 2015, the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference began its sessions at the Orthodox Center of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Chambesy near Geneva. It is chaired by Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Patriarchate of Constantinople.

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), greeted the participants on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and conveyed to them wishes of success in their work.

On the instruction of Patriarch Kirill, Metropolitan Hilarion expressed the Russian Orthodox Church's special concern for the situation in the Middle East, where the raging terrorism threatens the very

existence of the Christian community, and called to joint efforts to ensure that our brothers and sisters in the Middle East could feel safe.

The DECR chairman informed the conference about the results reached by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church which had considered draft conciliar documents and sent its response to the secretariat for preparing a Holy and Great Council.

On the instruction of Patriarch Kirill, Metropolitan Hilarion expressed the Russian Orthodox Church's deep concern over the anti-canonical actions made by hierarchs of the Patriarchate of Constantinople's Ukrainian church structures in the USA and Canada as they arrive in Ukraine allegedly on behalf to the Patriarch of Constantinople without informing about it the canonical Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, come into contact with the schismatics, declare the alleged readiness of the Patriarchate of Constantinople to grant autocephaly to the schismatics, challenge the Patriarchate of Constantinople's universally recognized canonical acts of the past centuries, accept with honour the persons defrocked and excommunicated from the Church, letting them 'celebrate' in their churches and praying together with them. 'We ask the Patriarchate of Constantinople to give an assessment to these anti-canonical actions and oblige these hierarchs to stop such actions destroying our pan-Orthodox unity', Metropolitan Hilarion stated.

In conclusion, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation expressed hope that, despite the existing difficulties, the participants in the Conference will be able, in the spirit of fraternal unanimity and cooperation, to prepare the Pan-Orthodox Council at a time when Orthodoxy needs it so much.

The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church also included Archbishop Mark of Berlin-German and Great Britain (Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia), Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Archimandrite Prof. Irinei (Steenberg) of the ROCOR diocese of Western America, and the Rev. Anatoly Churyakov, acting as an interpreter.

The other Local Orthodox Churches are represented by the delegations consisting of:

Metropolitan Emmanuel of France; archimandrite Bartholomaios (Samaras), protopresbyter Georgios Tsetsis, archimandrite Prodromos (Xenakis) – *Patriarchate of Constantinople;*

Metropolitan Sergios of the Cape of Good Hope, Metropolitan Ieronymos of Mwanza, archimandrite Nikolaos (Ioannidis) – *Patriarchate of Alexandria;*

Metropolitan Damaskinos of São Paolo and All Brazil; Metropolitan Basilius of Akkar; Mr. George Ghandour – *Patriarchate of Antioch;*

Metropolitan Hysychios of Kapitolias, archbishop Aristarchos of Konstantina, Prof. Theodoros Yiagou – *Patriarchate of Jerusalem;*

Metropolitan Gerasime of Zugdidi and Tsaiši, Metropolitan Andrea of Gorij and Aten, protopresbyter Georgi Zviadadze, monk Anthimoz (Javakhishvili) – *Patriarchate of Georgia;*

Metropolitan Amfilohije of Crna Gora and Primorje; Bishop Irinej of Bačka; archpriest Gajo Gajić – *Patriarchate of Serbia;*

Metropolitan Nifon of *Târgovişte, archpriest Viorel Ioniţa – Romanian Patriarchate;*

Metropolitan Joan of Varna and Veliky Preslav, Dr. Dimitar Arnaudov – *Bulgarian Patriarchate*;

Metropolitan Georgios of Paphos, Bishop Christophoros of Karpasia – *Orthodox Church of Cyprus*;

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristerion; Metropolitan Ignatios of Dimitrias and Almyros, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Messinia – *Orthodox Church of Greece*;

Metropolitan Joan of *Korça, Metropolitan Demetrios of Girokastra, Mr. Pyrros Kondylis – Albanian Orthodox Church;*

Bishop Jerzy of Siemiatycze, archpriest Andrzej Kuzma – *Polish Orthodox Church*;

Archbishop Juraj of Michalovce and *Košice, Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky), archpriest Milan Gerka – Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia.*

DECR Communication Service

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