Moscow Patriarchate representative attends presentation of annual report on freedom of religion in the world



On June 3, 2015, the European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance (EP Intergroup on FoRB & RT) presented its first Annual Report on the 'State of Freedom of Religion or Belief' at the European Parliament in Brussels.
Opening the meeting, Peter van Dalen, Co-President of the EP Intergroup on FoRB & RT, report said in particular: ‘Today is a milestone for the Intergroup since its upgrade by the European Parliament Conference of Presidents. With the presentation of our report, we hope to shed some more light on the violation of this fundamental right and stand up for the many millions of people who are bullied, discriminated, persecuted and even killed because of their religion or belief’.

The report gives a survey of glaring violations of freedom of faith in various countries of the world outside the European Union. It focuses on the situation of Christians and religious minorities in ‘the

unsafe states of Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and Somalia'. The authors' special concern is caused by manifestations of violence towards believers in holy places and in the territory of churches. The closing chapter is devoted to the European Parliament's initiatives in protecting believers, with specific recommendations given to the European External Action Service and the EU member states for enhancing the effectiveness of their efforts in the defense of religious freedoms.

Among the opinions voiced in the discussion was the need to oppose violations of religious freedom in Europe as manifested in the attempts to exclude any expression of faith or religious belief from the sphere of public life.

The forum was attended by ten European parliamentarians, over one hundred political and public figures, representatives of religious communities, experts and journalists. Among them was the acting representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to European international organizations in Brussels, Archpriest Dimitry Sizonenko.

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