Statement of the DECR Communication Service

concerning the decision of the Church of Scotland on a possible ordination of gay people in civil partnership and of the United Protestant Church of France on a possible blessing of the so called same-sex unions.

On May 16, 2015, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland allowed ordination of gay people in civil partnership and on May 21 voted to continue the study of this matter aimed at an extension of the adopted decision. On May 17, the Synod of the United Protestant Church of France allowed a possibility of blessing the so called same-sex unions.

These decisions of the Protestant Churches of Scotland and France have deeply disappointed the Russian Orthodox Church as they seem incompatible with norms of Christian morality

We state with profound grief that today we have new divisions in the Christian world not only on theological problems, but also on the moral issues.

The Russian Orthodox Church holds the firm position based on Holy Scriptures and has repeatedly declared that the mentioned innovations were inadmissible for moral teaching and thus is ought to reconsider a format of her relations with the churches and associations which trample upon the principles of traditional Christian morality. In 2003, the Russian Orthodox Church suspended contacts with the Episcopal Church in the USA because this Church consecrated an open homosexual as bishop. Similar reasons have brought about the severance of relations with the Church of Sweden in 2005 when it decided to bless the same-sex unions.

During last years we have kept attentive watch over debates in the Churches of Scotland and France. In 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent a letter to the leadership of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in which he expressed his anxiety and disappointment over a possibility of ordaining gay people and expressed hope that the consideration of this issue in future would be based on the apostolic tradition. Regrettably, these hopes have not been justified, and the words of warning have not been heard.

Guided by the resolutions of the Bishops' Council of 2008, saying that 'the future of relations with many Protestant communities depends on their faithfulness to the norms of Gospel and apostolic morality kept

by Christians over many centuries,' and of the Bishops' Council of 2013 saying that 'a dialogue with confessions which openly defy the Biblical moral norms is impossible,' the Department for External Church Relations does not see any prospects in maintaining official contacts with the Church of Scotland and with the United Protestant Church of France.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/50372/