



Patriarch Kirill receives Germany's ambassador to Moscow



April 20, 2015 – His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia received Germany's ambassador to Russia Mr. Rudiger von Fritsch-Seerhausen.

Greeting the guest, Patriarch Kirill noted that the Russian Orthodox Church had long-standing good relations with the German people and Germany's authorities. He stressed the importance of contacts between Christian communities in Russia and Germany for developing relations between the two countries. His Holiness recalled the history of relations between the Russian Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany, which began in 1952 when Pastor Martin Niemoller came to the country for the first time.

The dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany was very important for overcoming the consequences of World War II and difficult relations between the two

countries. His Holiness said that the dialogue, which had lasted for 60 years, helped Russians and Germans to better understand each other and mentioned a plan to hold another meeting of the dialogue in the coming autumn in Munich and to devote it to the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Patriarch Kirill also spoke of the Russian diaspora in Germany. Today, there are about four million people connected with Russia live in Germany. Many of them have successfully integrated themselves in the German society and also became parishioners of the ROC churches in Germany.

Speaking in response, the German ambassador stressed the role of Christianity as the roots of the both countries. 'Christians play an enormous role in our state when the task is to promote peace. You were quite right in pointing to the important of the Church in the reconciliation after World War II, during which the Germans had inflicted so much suffering on the people of the Soviet Union', he said.

Christian communities, he said, showed 'how important is the role of Christians when silence appears to prevail in politics'. It was agreed that today's world confronts so many dangerous challenges that Christians should again think over their witness before the society.

Mr. von Fritsch-Seerhausen noted the importance of such discussions and contacts formats and the St Petersburg Dialogue with its working group 'Churches in Europe'. When he had informed the Conference of Catholic Bishops in German about his forthcoming meeting with Patriarch Kirill, 'this information was taken very positively', he said.

As far as the Russian diaspora is concerned, the ambassador said there is a very great number of people with Russian roots living in Germany. Incidentally, his Lutheran great grandfather lived in the Russian Empire. 'It demonstrates once again the history of tolerance of this great country', the ambassador stated, adding that there is also a very large Orthodox community in German today.

In conclusion, the sides exchanged tokens of the meeting.

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