



## **Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church meets with Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, Dr. Semjén**

On 11 March 2015, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Dr. Zsolt Semjén, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary.

They were joined in the meeting, which took place at the Patriarchal residence in Chisty lane, by archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department (DECR), and Mr. Árpád Erdei, chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Hungary in the Russian Federation.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill warmly greeted the guest and said: 'I am happy to meet with you, a theologically educated man, knowledgeable in the realities of Christianity. You have done a lot for your people and your state.'

His Holiness believes that the fact of Hungary's defending Christian values is very important. 'As the Russian Orthodox Church insists on the necessity of preserving a Christian dimension in the European culture, we appreciate and respect the position of Hungary,' he underscored.

Dr. Semjén expressed his joy over meeting with the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and conveyed him greetings from the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest. Dr. Semjén said that people in Hungary remembered the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, the then chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

The Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister emphasized: 'The truth is that we, Christians keep fighting. Many attacked us because of our Constitution as it begins with the word 'God' and because we fixed that marriage is the union of man and woman. Also, we uphold an idea that human life begins at conception and deserves respect and protection from that moment on.'

Dr. Semjén thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for support of this stand and of the efforts undertaken in Hungary for protecting traditional values in Europe, mentioned the encounters of the state leaders of Hungary with Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman, and with Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, administrator a.i. of the Budapest and Hungary diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church and underscored:

'We are proud of the agreement reached last year by the Republic of Hungary and the Russian Orthodox Church, which now enjoys the same historical status in the country as the Catholics Church.'

Also discussed were issues of common concern.

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