



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **Degree of Doctor honoris causa is conferred on His Holiness Patriarch Kirill**

On 14 November 2014, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, currently on the irenical visit to the Serbian Orthodox Church, and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia visited the University of Belgrade.

The ceremony of awarding His Holiness Patriarch Kirill took place in the conference hall.

Rector of the University, Academician Vladimir Bumbaširević, greeted His Holiness and announced the Academic Board's decision to confer the degree of Doctor *honoris causa* on the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. *Gaudeamus*

was sung.

Attending the ceremony were members of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church accompanying His Holiness on the visit, hierarchs and clerics of the Serbian Patriarchate, ambassadors of Bulgaria, Greece and the Holy See, representatives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and faculty and students of the University of Belgrade.

His Holiness expressed his gratitude for the honour and delivered his doctoral address in which he spoke about the centuries-long history of relations between the Serbian and Russian people, underscoring 'strong links of fraternal love, one Orthodox faith and common spiritual and moral values.'

"I am confident that it is especially important to develop and strengthen the relations between our peoples in today's difficult international situation. The solid foundation of these relations lies not only in the affinity of our history and culture, but also in the shared views on many problems and challenges.' Among these problems he mentioned the active de-Christianization of European society and the rejection of fundamental Christian values in people's lives and activities.

As we see the process of secularization, denial of the absolute Truth, removal of the very concept of sin from public consciousness, we have to say with regret that many European countries have given up their Christian identity and begun to support the standards which run contrary to the commandments of the Gospel.

'Freedom cannot be seen in isolation from responsibility before God, the neighbours and man himself. Likewise, the rights cannot exist without responsibility, including the moral one.

'Man is free to choose between good and evil, and the Lord is calling us to choose good, defying fashion, the spirit of the age, political correctness, or standards of the secular world.'