# DECR vice-chairman meets with delegation of Turkey's Presidency of Religious Affairs



On 1 October 2014, Archimandrite Philaret, vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, met with a delegation of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the DECR premises. The delegation is visiting Russia to follow up an agreement reached at the second meeting of the working group for the dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey, which took place on 8 April 2014.

The delegation included: Dr. Ali Osman Kurt, Associated Professor, vice-dean of the Faculty of Islamic Sciences of the Yildirim Beyazit University; Dr. Salih Yilmaz, Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Yildirim Beyazit University; Mr. Ömer Faruk Savuran, a staff member of the Presidency of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey; and Dr. Dursun Aygün, advisor for religious affairs of Turkey's Embassy in Russia, accompanied by his assistant, Mr. R. Yangichev.

Representing the Moscow Patriarchate at the meeting were Rev. Dimitry Safonov, head of the DECR

Sector for Interreligious Contacts, and Mr. Ilia Kashitsyn, DECR staff member.

The participants in the meeting noted that they had common views on a number of topical problems of today's world and shared their opinions on academic approaches to religious studies. Representatives of the Turkish academic circles told about various aspects of academic studies on Christianity in Turkey and of teaching history of religions at the Turkish universities.

Archimandrite Philaret informed the Turkish delegation of the position of the Russian Orthodox Church in regard to the persecution of Christians by extremists in the Middle East. The participants in the meeting emphasized the importance of taking joint actions to combat extremism and defend traditional moral values. Dr. Kurt told about the methodology of his history of religions course. Rev. Dimitry Safonov, in his turn, told about the course of religious studies that he has been teaching at the Faculty of Theology of the Moscow Theological Academy since 2003.

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