



Meeting with participants in the St. Petersburg Dialogue youth forum at the DECR

On April 4, 2014, Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations secretary for the far-abroad countries, met with members of the St. Petersburg Dialogue youth forum's working groups on Churches in Europe and Civil Society and Science and Education – Workshop for the Future.

Welcoming the guests to the DECR, Father Sergiy spoke about the history of the department and its major areas of work, such as relations with Local Orthodox Churches, the Russian Orthodox Church's participation in preparing a Pan-Orthodox Council planned for 2016. He also spoke about contacts the Moscow Patriarchate maintains with Christian Churches in Europe, especially in Germany. He gave special attention to the present relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church and their theological component and cooperation in advocating Christian morality in society and protecting the traditional family and marriage.

Archpriest Sergiy highlighted principal differences existing between the Russian Orthodox Church and some Protestant Churches over the liberalization of moral teaching taking place in a number of Protestant communities.

Speaking about interreligious relations, he stressed the need to preserve the value of the family and marriage, to protect the human life from the moment of conception till natural death and to advocate the right of religion to be present in societal life as common positions held by traditional religions.

He also presented a German version of the Russian Orthodox Church's latest fundamental documents including "The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Social Concept" and "The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights", and presented the guests with copies of these editions. This publishing project was realized thanks to the support of the St. Petersburg Dialogue's coordinating committee/Russia.

After his speech, the DECR secretary for the far-abroad countries answered questions from his young guests.

