



## **Commission for the preparation of the meeting of Primates of Local Orthodox Churches concludes its work**

On 5 March 2014, the commission for the preparation of the forthcoming meeting of the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches, chaired by Metropolitan John of Pergamon, continued its work at the Throne Hall of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Taking part in the commission was the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, which included Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; and deacon Anatoly Churiakov, a DECR staff member.

The members of the commission shared their opinions on a wide range of issues, including the preparation for the Pan-Orthodox Council.

Metropolitan Hilarion noted, in particular, the importance of the preparatory work, during which certain differences in the views of the Local Orthodox Churches should be taken into consideration. "The unity of the Holy Orthodox Church, which we have preserved over two thousand years, without any administrative instruments of unity, is such a precious heritage that first and foremost, we need to keep and strengthen it," Metropolitan Hilarion said. Following the decisions of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church made in 2013, the DECR chairman emphasized that the Pan-Orthodox Council should take decisions by consensus. "We should think not only about the success of the Council," Metropolitan Hilarion added, "but also about the acceptance of its results by the Local Orthodox Churches."

The preparatory commission resolved that the meeting of the Primates will be a consultative meeting. Each Primate will submit its results to the members of the Holy Synod of his respective Church for consideration.