



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill takes part in the meeting of Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Church with the Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić

On 5 October 2013, the President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić, gave an official lunch at the Palace of Serbia in Belgrade for the Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches and representatives of the Catholic and Protestant Churches participating in the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill spoke at the meeting. He recalled the participation of President Nikolić in the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' and added: 'We thank God for an opportunity to be in Serbia for the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan. This memorable date is very meaningful and reminds us of the turning point in the history of Europe and of Christian civilization.'

The Primate of the Russian Church continued to say that the dazzling results achieved by the European nations with God's help would have been impossible without the Edict of Milan. 'The appeals to deny historical identity and the precious heritage received from our pious forefathers give rise to our concern. We worry about attempts to blot out from human consciousness the notions of sins, responsibility and reasonable self-restriction,' he said and added;

"We come forward against any discrimination in for the defence of human rights and dignity. We are convinced that rights and freedom cannot exist without responsibility before God and society.'

His Holiness noted that Serbia is giving a commendable example for many European countries as it upholds the unshakeable traditional values, including family values.

The Primate of the Russian Church mentioned the global financial crisis, which has become a serious trial for all European countries. He said that it has not only economic and political dimension, but also a moral one. Patriarch Kirill added that the crisis has been brought about by human greed, the lack of principles, and the cult of material wealth. He underscored that public, religious and political leaders, who are not indifferent to the future of European nations, should unite their efforts for holding back the crisis of personal and public morals and economic troubles.

As to the situation in Kosovo, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said: 'The hearts of the faithful of the Russian

Orthodox Church are filled with pain and grief at the suffering of our courageous Serbian brothers and sisters living in Kosovo and Metohia. The ancient holy sites and prayers offered up by the confessors of faith nowadays are preserving this region for the future of Serbia.' His Holiness is convinced that real guarantees of the defence of historical heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church and security of the Orthodox Serbs should be a priority in political dialogue about the future of Kosovo and Metohia.

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