



## Russian Duma speaker meets with Patriarch Irinej of Serbia



July 23, 2013 – Mr. Sergey Naryshkin, chairman of the Russian State Duma, met with His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, who is on an official visit to the Russian Orthodox Church.

Present at the meeting were Bishop Anthony of Moravici, Patriarch of Serbia's representative to the Moscow Patriarchate, Mr. S. Terzic, Serbian ambassador to Moscow, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, Archpriest Vitalij Tarasjev, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia's representative to the Patriarch See of Serbia, Mr. Ya. Nilov, chairman of the State Duma's committee for public and religious organizations, Mr. A. Romanovich, vice-chairman of the State Duma's committee for international affairs, and Mr. A. Khoshev of the DECR secretariat for inter-Orthodox relations.

Mr. Naryshkin warmly welcomed the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, noting the great importance of his visit to the Russian Orthodox Church. The discussion dealt with the condition of

Orthodox shrines and holy places and the Serbian population in Kosovo and Metochija and the approaching centenary of the beginning of World War I.

The sides noted the importance of the united efforts of Russian and Serbian scientists in studying and popularizing the history of World War I. Mr. Naryshkin thanked Patriarch Irinej for his care of the Russian necropolis in Belgrade, Europe's largest compact burial place of Russian soldiers who fought in the period from 1914-1918 for the freedom of the Yugoslavian peoples.

Patriarch Irinej spoke of the tragic situation of Orthodox believers who have remained in Kosovo and Metochija and who have been displaced to become refugees during the 1999 armed conflict and 2044 anti-Serbian pogroms. He thanked the Russian leaders for their support of Serbia's stand on the Kosovo problem and expressed hope for the achievement of a just settlement.

Mr. Naryshkin pointed to the significance of Orthodoxy and Slavic literature and culture which unite the Russian and Serbian people and wished his guest good impressions of his participation in the celebrations to be held on the occasion of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia in Moscow, Kiev and Minsk.

*DECR Communication Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/52451/>