



## Delegation of Russian Orthodox Church continues its visit to Bulgaria

On 25 February 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, head of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation currently taking part in the celebration of election and enthronement of the new Patriarch of Bulgaria, participated in the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia.

Celebrating were His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos of New Justiniana and All Cyprus and His Beatitude Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia together with the heads of delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches attending the festivities. Praying at the service were members of the delegations and many laymen who gathered to greet their Primate with his election.

Bishop Naum of Stobi, general secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, read out the Message of Patriarch and the Synod to clergy and laity about the decision of the Patriarchal Electoral Church and People's Council.

His Holiness addressed the worshippers with exhortation about unity and conciliarity of the Holy Church. As to the tasks of his ministry, the Primate of the Bulgarian Patriarchate stated his determination to keep the purity of Orthodox faith, to further the living unity in Christ of all members of the Church, to protect the integrity of Orthodoxy in the world, and to strengthen and improve pan-Orthodox cooperation. His Holiness Neophyte concluded his speech with a quotation from the Gospel: 'Brothers and sisters, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you' (2 Cor 13:11).

After the Divine service, His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria gave a reception at the residence of the Holy Synod. That same day, a dinner in honour of the delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches was given at Sofia Hotel.