Bishops' Council has adopted several resolutions on inter-Orthodox cooperation

In the resolutions adopted by the Sacred Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church on February 5, 2013, there are some points concerning cooperation between Local Orthodox Churches.

The Council pointed to the special importance of visits made by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Bulgaria and to the Orthodox Churches of Cyprus and Poland, as well as visits made to our Church by the Primates of the Orthodox Churches of Alexandria, Jerusalem, Georgia, Greece, Poland and the Czech Lands and Slovakia.

The Council approved the results of the conference that took place between primates and representatives of Local Orthodox Churches on November 21, 2011, at the Patriarchal residence in the Moscow Kremlin. The conference was attended by Primates of the Orthodox Churches of Russia, Georgia, Poland and the Czech Lands and Slovakia, as well as official representatives of the Orthodox Churches of Antioch, Romania and Bulgaria. The Bishops' Council supported the conviction shared by all the participants in the conference that 'all the decisions made both in the course of preparations for a Pan-Orthodox Church and during the Council itself should be made only by consensus of all the Orthodox Churches, not by a majority vote' (Par. 60).

The resolutions of the Bishops' Council also stress that it is inadmissible to ignore the attitude of the clergy and faithful to the prospects of convening a Pan-Orthodox Council. It was underscored as important that Local Orthodox Churches should preliminarily reach an agreement on the procedure and agenda of the Pan-Orthodox Council, the principles to guide its formation, the protocol of its divine services and sessions as well as its draft documents. According to the Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs, in preparations for the future Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, special concern should be given for the purity of Orthodox doctrine and a broad discussion on its draft resolutions. The bishops stressed the need 'for the presidium of the Pan-Orthodox Council to consist of primates of all the Local Orthodox Churches' and for the episcopate of Local Churches to be represented at the Council as fully as possible' (Par. 61).

The Bishops' Council also expressed concern over the dramatic aggravation of the situation of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. They approved the efforts made by the Patriarch and the Synod to support Christians in the Middle East who are subjected to suppression on religious grounds as the political situation in the region is destabilized. 'The vanishing of Christianity in the lands where it has existed for two millennia and where the main events of the Holy History took place would become a spiritual and historical tragedy', the Council stresses in its resolution (Par. 62).

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