



## **Metropolitan Hilarion concludes his working visit to Greece**

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On December 24, 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, together with His Beatitude Hieronymus, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, attended a concert in the Herodion amphitheatre in Athens. The concert was organized by the Greek Orthodox Church with the support of the St. Gregory the Theologian Charity.

Before the concert, Metropolitan Hilarion presented Mr. Constantine Mechainidzidis, a Greek cultural and public figure, with a high church award, the Order of St. Seraphim of Sarov (III Degree) in recognition of his services for the development of relations between the Orthodox peoples of Greece and Russia.

Leading Greek choirs and orchestras performed music by Metropolitan Hilarion and Mikis Theodorakis, an outstanding Greek composer, who was present at the concert together with over five thousand people. All the proceeds from the concert will be used by the Greek Orthodox Church to help those who suffer from drug, alcohol and other dependencies.

After the concert, Archbishop Hieronymus warmly thanked Metropolitan Hilarion for coming, noting the special role that the cooperation between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Greek Church plays at a time of an acute economic crisis experienced by Greece. Archbishop Hieronymus expressed hope that the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to Greece planned to take place in 2013 will become an important landmark in the development of relations between the two sister Churches.

During his visit to Greece, Metropolitan Hilarion had two working meetings with Archbishop Hieronymus. On September 23, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy at Agia Sophia in Psychico, Athens. On September

24, he met with Minister of Development, Competitiveness, Transportation and Networks K. Hatzidakis, Defence Minister P. Panagiotopoulos and Minister of Education, Religion, Culture and Sports K. Arvanitopoulos.

Early in the morning on September 25, Metropolitan Hilarion flew out to Kiev for the 19<sup>th</sup> International Assumption Readings.

*DECR Communication Service*

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