Working group set up for discussing issues of strengthening church unity holds its session on the eve of celebrating 5th anniversary of the Act of Canonical Communion

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On 16 May 2012, the working group set up for discussing the issues of strengthening church unity, chaired by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, held its second session at the Department for External Church Relations with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and with the participation of Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, President of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR).

Taking part in the meeting were also Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain, first deputy President of the ROCOR's Synod of Bishops; Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe**;** Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad; archpriest Alexander Lebedev, secretary for inter-Orthodox relations of the ROCOR's Synod of Bishops; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; archpriest Serafim Gan, chancellor of the Synod of Bishops and personal secretary of the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; and archpriest Andrew Phillips, member of the Spiritual Court of the Berlin and Western Europe diocese.

The participants in the meeting discussed the programme of the celebration marking the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion, shared information on the implementation of the decisions made at the first session of the working group, and touched upon the issues of cooperation at local level in connection with the completion of the five-year transition period stipulated by the Addendum to the Act of Canonical Communion.

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