



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Prime Minister of Bulgaria Boyko Borisov

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On 28 April 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov at the premises of the Council of Ministers.

Taking part in the meeting on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; hegumen Filipp (Vasiltsev), rector of the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church; and M. Kuksov, acting head of His Holiness's personal secretariat. The Bulgarian side was represented by Metropolitan Dometian of Vidin, Metropolitan Kyrill of Varna and Veliki Preslav; Gavriil of Loveč, Bishop Nahum of Stobi, and Mr. Emil Velinov, head of the Directorate for Religions at the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said: "Orthodoxy is not only customs and traditions, but also philosophy of life... Orthodox tradition is based on the Word of God and is always topical. Some people can understand it, and others cannot.

"Religious motivation should not be ousted by new "values", which are not linked with Christian tradition, but proclaim the autonomy of the human person and an ability to decide what is good and what is bad. This is erroneously called freedom and is very dangerous."

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill wished Prime Minister Borisov God's help in his work for the well-being of people. "The Orthodox Church has always united and inspired the Bulgarians even in solving the most difficult problems. There are such spheres of life, in which only high motivation can make people strong," the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church underscored.

The Prime Minister said that he shared the Patriarch's views, recalled the hard period of schism in the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and recalled his personal participation in its overcoming. He added that the people cherish deeply rooted Orthodox traditions and Orthodox faith. "We have built many new churches and restored hundreds of church buildings and monasteries during the last three years." Religious education was also discussed. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill told about the "Foundations of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics" now being taught in Russian secondary schools. The course offers a choice to the pupils to get acquainted with the traditional religions of Russia: Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism.