



## **A meeting with delegation of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry held at the Department for External Church Relations**

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On February 20, 2012, Hegumen Philaret (Bulekov), a vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, met at the DECR with the director of the Strategic Planning Department of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, Mr Adam Szesztay. Participating in the meeting were also Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far abroad, Archpriest Nikolay Kim, a DECR consultant, and M. Palacio, a DECR staff member – from the DECR side, and Dr Bernadette Martin-John, SPD deputy director, Mr Ferenc Nagy-Rebek, minister of the Hungarian embassy in Moscow, Mr Laszlo Gonda and Ferenc Czombos of the SPD.

In the beginning of the talk, Fr. Philaret conveyed to Mr Szesztay best regards from Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations. He said that the DECR maintained broad contacts with diplomatic representations in Moscow, giving considerable attention to the development of contacts with the Hungarian embassy. He also pointed out that the Russian and Hungarian people are united by faithfulness to traditional values and welcomed the adoption of a new Constitution of Hungary which underscores the Christian roots of the country.

Fr. Philaret explained his guests the Russian Orthodox Church's vision of the spiritual and moral state of the European society and spoke on the Moscow Patriarchate's cooperation with other traditional religions and the efforts of the Russian Church for protecting Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.

Mr Szesztay, on his part, thanked Fr. Philaret for the opportunity to meet and expressed satisfaction with the fact that his official visit to Moscow began with a visit to a church diplomacy institution. He noted that the Hungarian foreign ministry attached importance to the strengthening of relations with religious communities in the country including Orthodox Churches. He stated his conviction that the cooperation between ecclesial and secular diplomacy in Russia was a model to emulate.

*DECR Communication Service*