Metropolitan Hilarion meets with members of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France

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On 17 February 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with the members of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France.

Metropolitan Emmanuel of France greeted the DECR chairman, who was accompanied by Bishop Nestor of Korsun, and said that Metropolitan Hilarion does not need an introduction, as he is well known to Orthodox bishops in France as "an ingenious theologian and as a man sensitive to the life of Orthodoxy at present." Metropolitan Emmanuel underscored that the Assembly he leads can serve as an example for assemblies in other countries. "We cooperate in the spirit of brotherhood. Cooperation among Orthodox bishops at the local level can be conducive to the preparation of the Pan-Orthodox Council and to common efforts made for harmonizing the life of Orthodox Christians in diaspora," he believes.

Metropolitan Hilarion's address to the members of the Assembly was followed by a talk during which he noted that the presence of Russian Orthodoxy in France has played a special historical role. For instance, St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, which was founded by the renowned Russian theologians, "has possible become the most important centre of the Orthodox theological thought in the 20th century."

Metropolitan Emmanuel hopes for the extension of cooperation among young theologians from the Local Orthodox Churches who live and study in France in witnessing about Orthodoxy. He noted a special role that the Russian Orthodox Seminary can play in it.

Metropolitan Emmanuel asked Metropolitan Hilarion to comment on the persecution against Christians in the Middle East and Africa. The DECR chairman stressed the need for a pan-Orthodox mechanism that would allow Christians to draw attention of the public and politicians to the problem, which was thoroughly considered during the meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to Syria and Lebanon.

Attending the meeting were Archbishop Gabriel of Komana, Patriarchate of Constantinople; Bishop Nestor of Korsun, Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Joseph of Western and Central Europe, Romanian Patriarchate; Bishop Mark, vicar of the Western and Central European Metropolia, Romanian Patriarchate; and Bishop Luke of Western Europe, Serbian Patriarchate.

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