



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church attend Prime Minister Putin's meeting with leaders of traditional religious communities in Russia**

[gallery]

On 8 February 2012, presidential nominee Vladimir Putin, currently Russian Prime Minister, met with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and with leaders of traditional religious communities in Russia. The meeting, initiated by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, took place at the official Patriarchal residence in St. Daniel's Monastery.

As was reported, on February 1<sup>st</sup>, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill invited Vladimir Putin to meet with religious leaders and discuss socio-political life in the country.

The Prime Minister delivered an opening address. He was followed by the Patriarch.

Taking part in the meeting were Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Yevgeniy of Vereya, chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church; archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-State Relations; Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department; Pandido Hambo Lama Damba Ayuseyev, head of the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia; Mufti Ismail Berdiev, chairman of the Coordination Centre of Muslims of the North Caucasus; Alexander Boroda, chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia; Mufti Ravil Gainutdin, chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia; Bishop Ezras Nersesian, head of the Novo-Nakhichevan and Russian diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Rev. Igor Kowalewski, general secretary of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Russia; Metropolitan Korniliy of Moscow and All Russia, Primate of the Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church; Berel Lazar, chief rabbi of Russia (Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia); Mufti Muhammad Rakhimov, chairman of the Russian Association of Islamic Accord, chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Stavropol Territory; Sergey Ryakhovskiy, chairman of the Russian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith; Vasiliy Stolyar, vice-president of the Euro-Asia division of the Seventh Day Adventist Church; Mufti Talgat Tajuddin, chairman of the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia; Mufti Ildus Hazrat Faizov, chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna spoke about the Synaxis of the New Martyrs and

Confessors of Russia celebrated on February 5<sup>th</sup>. He noted that nowadays the Church lives in the real religious freedom.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk thanked Vladimir Putin for attention to the life of compatriots abroad and to parishes of the Russian Orthodox abroad that play an important part in consolidating people who have come there from Russia.

“One of the major tasks of our Church is “the gathering of Holy Russia”, as His Holiness put it. It is not fortuitous that he often visits Ukraine and other countries of near abroad. We understand that the stronger Russia is, the more attractive it is for its neighbours, and we appreciate any success in Russia’s rapprochement with these countries,” the DECR chairman said.

Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin thinks that interconnection between social processes and religious life is becoming more effective. “Many religious believers with strong civic motivation need support... in upbringing the true young patriots able to take an active part on social life.”

Vladimir Legoida proposed to invite representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional religious communities to the elaboration of a concept of public TV. Prime Minister Putin remarked that the involvement of religious organizations and of the Russian Orthodox Church in the first place, in establishing public TV, is increasingly in demand.

Religious leaders who took the floor highly appreciated the role that the Russian Orthodox Church plays in different social and educational projects and noted the importance of joint initiatives of religious associations under the auspices of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In conclusion of the meeting His Holiness Patriarch Kirill thanked Vladimir Putin and expressed his appreciation of the seriousness of discussion during which opinions were exchanged on the high level of accord on the development of spiritual, ethical, cultural, educational and other most important spheres of life of our state.”

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