



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Surrender of the principle of consensus in the pre-Council process can bring about disorders in world Orthodoxy

A process of preparation for the Pan-Orthodox Council launched fifty years ago has become brisker, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia noted in his report delivered at the meeting of the Moscow Diocesan Assembly.

All Local Orthodox Churches, which take part in the preparation, have got agreement on the ten topics of the Council out of ten. According to His Holiness, the advance is unthinkable without preliminary agreement that ought to be reached at the Pan-Orthodox pre-Council meetings; the principle of taking decisions unanimously or by consensus is fixed in the rules.

Last February, however, the particulars of one of the outstanding topics were not agreed upon. This is the topic of autocephaly. Representatives of certain Local Churches cast doubt on the expedience of the principle of consensus in the pre-Council process and posed a question of its replacement by the majority principle.

“We are told that the principle of consensus was not always used in the epoch of Ecumenical Councils, – His Holiness continued. – At that time, the imperial power was the instrument of keeping church unity, but there is no such a mechanism at present. The Local Churches live and work in different countries and under specific conditions. If we do not take into account their opinion, it would be difficult to take decisions at the future Council by all, and this may provoke disorders.”

“We have held consultations with other Local Churches, and it transpired that they were equally concerned,” His Holiness said and reminded the audience of the meeting of the Primates and representatives of the seven Local Orthodox Churches that took place at the Moscow Kremlin on 21 November 2011.

“All participants in the meeting spoke up for upholding the principle of consensus both in the pre-Council process and at the Council,” the Primate of the Russian Church underscored.