



## **DECR chairman meets with Greece's foreign minister**

[gallery]

On December 12, 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, during his stay in Athens, visited the Greece's foreign ministry to meet with its head, Mr. Stavros Dimas.

Welcoming the DECR chairman, the minister expressed deep respect for the Russian Orthodox Church and her Primate, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. He asserted that he always honoured the three manifestations of the spirit of historical Russia: Russian Orthodoxy, Russian literature and Russian music and for this reason he was especially pleased to receive His Eminence Hilarion whose efforts and creative work embraced these three spheres.

Mr. Dimas and Metropolitan Hilarion also discussed the worsening situation of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. In this connection, Metropolitan Hilarion told Mr. Dimas about the efforts the Russian Orthodox Church took to draw the attention of the international public to this problem. He mentioned in particular the conference on Freedom of Faith: The Problem of Discrimination and Persecution against Christians organized by the DECR on November 30 – December 1, 2011, in Moscow.

In discussing the current critical situation in some European countries, especially Greece, the DECR chairman noted that this crisis was caused by not only economic but also moral factors. The interrelation of these factors is vividly shown in the book by Patriarch Kirill "Freedom and Responsibility" the Greek version of which has come out in Greece. Metropolitan Hilarion presented the minister with a copy of this book.

Participating in the meeting were also Archimandrite Maximos (Panphilis), secretariat of the Greek Orthodox Church's Holy Synod, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, and Fr. Ioann (Kopeikin), secretary to the DECR chairman.

*DECR Communication Service*