



Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk arrives in Vienna to take part in Interreligious Conference on the problems of family

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On 5 December 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), arrived in Vienna with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to take part in the Interreligious Conference on the Family in Crisis. His Eminence leads a Moscow Patriarchate's delegation, consisting of archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries; archpriest Vladimir Tyschuk, rector of the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Vienna; hieromonk Dimitry (Pershin), chairman of the Commission on Bioethics of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs; deacon Dimitry Safonov, a DECR staff member; A. Komov, a representative of the World Congress of Families in Russia; Gleb Slobin, deputy director of the "Family Welfare" psychological service; and I. Protaschuk, a teacher of the highest qualification category.

Upon arrival in the capital of Austria, Metropolitan Hilarion visited the Cathedral of St. Nicholas of the Vienna and Austria diocese, which he led from 2003 to 2009.

That same day in the evening, Metropolitan Hilarion attended a reception given by the President of Austria Heinz Fischer in honour of the participants in the Conference.

Attending the reception were delegations of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Conference of European Rabbis, and the "Appeal of Conscience" Foundation with headquarters in New York, USA. In his address, President Fischer acknowledged the importance and timeliness of the Conference.

Metropolitan Hilarion warmly greeted the President and all those present and underscored the urgency of preserving traditional family in the contemporary world. He pointed out a danger of denying the traditional concept of family for the benefit of liberal standards. The DECR chairman believes that common protection of traditional family for the sake of the future is an urgent problem for the Conference to solve.

Speaking at the reception were also Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christof Schönborn; President of the "Appeal of Conscience" Foundation Rabbi Arthur Schneier; and President of Conference of European Rabbis, Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt.

During the reception, the DECR chairman had talks with the President of Austria Heinz Fischer, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, and Cardinal Cristof Schönborn.

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