Primates and representatives of seven Local Orthodox Churches meet in the Moscow Kremlin

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On November 21, 2011, the Primates of the Russian, Georgian, Polish Orthodox Churches, of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia and representatives of the Church of Antioch, the Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches met at the patriarchal residence in the Moscow Kremlin. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia chaired the meeting.

Before the meeting the guests from the Local Orthodox Churches who came to Moscow for the celebrations marking the 65th birthday of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the Cathedral of Archangel Michael accompanied by Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; DECR staff members and the members of the delegations. That same day Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on the occasion of the patronal feast.
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His Holiness warmly welcomed the Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to the Patriarchal chambers consecrated earlier that day.

His Holiness told the guests about the consecration and emphasized that this day is a special one in the history of Patriarch's presence in this historic place of Russia. The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church added that the Kremlin had been the residence of Moscow Patriarchs in earlier centuries, mentioning that historical Patriarchal palace is nowadays occupied by the museum and that church events take place there occasionally, and continued to say: 'As the Patriarchal palace is not very comfortable to work, a decision was taken at the state level about a permanent residence for Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in the Kremlin. We have consecrated the residence in the morning.'

Participating in the meeting that took place at the Patriarchal chambers were:

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church;

His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos Patriarch of All Georgia Ilyia II and Metropolitan Gerasime of

Zugdidi and Tsaishi, chairman of the Foreign Department, on behalf of the Georgian Orthodox Church;

Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland and Archbishop Abel of Lublin and Chelm, on behalf of the Polish Orthodox Church;

His Beatitude Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia and Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice on behalf of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia;

Archbishop Nifon of Philippopolis on behalf of the Orthodox Church of Antioch;

Metropolitan Nifon of Târgovişte and deacon Eugen Rogoti acting as an interpreter on behalf of the Romanian Orthodox Church; and

Metropolitan Dometian of Vidin and Bishop Sioniy of Velic on behalf of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The minutes of the meeting were taken by archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary
for inter-Orthodox relations.

The participants in the meeting discussed the issues of stimulating the Church's mission and her social ministry in constructive cooperation with all healthy social forces.

They expressed solidarity with the Churches of the Middle East and North Africa: of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Cyprus, and expressed their sympathy with all Christians of the Middle East who suffer oppressions and in certain cases are subjected to direct persecution for the faith today, like Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo.

The communiqué was signed on the results of the meeting.

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