



Patriarch Kirill sends a letter to Council of Europe Secretary General

On November 8, 2011, the Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland received the Russian Orthodox Church Representative in Strasbourg Hegumen Philip (Riabykh).

Father Philip handed over to Mr Jagland a letter from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, informing him of the appointment of Father Philip as Russian Orthodox Church Representative at the Council of Europe.

In his letter, His Holiness stressed that 'the Russian Orthodox Church gives a high value to the level of the relations, a testimony to which are regular meetings between leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Council of Europe and their joint participation in discussions held in various formats on topical issues of pan-European significance'.

In addition, the Primate of the Russian Church noted the positive dynamics in the development of the religious dimension in inter-cultural dialogue conducted in the Council of Europe and expressed support for new steps taken by this organization in this area. His Holiness wrote,

"We were gratified by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Recommendation 1962 (2011) of April 12, 2011 'On the Religious Dimension of Inter-Cultural Dialogue' calling 'to establish to this end a place for dialogue, a workspace for the Council of Europe and high-level representatives of religions and of non-denominational organisations, in order to place existing relations on a stable and formally recognised platform' (17.2). We are confident that this document will become a good platform for continuing the fruitful dialogue of religious communities and the Council of Europe.

"The Russian Orthodox Church considers it important to hold annual consultations with traditional religious organizations under the aegis of the Committee of Ministers. The initiative made by the Group of Prominent Leaders to set up a standing mechanism of dialogue between the Council of Europe and religious communities also appears to be called-for.

"Clearly, the ultimate goal of these efforts, which 'is to achieve a greater unity between the members of the Council of Europe' (Statute of the Council of Europe, Article 1), is impossible to achieve without taking into account the spiritual and moral ideals on which the human society is built. For most Europeans, these ideals are associated with Christianity. I believe the Russian Orthodox Church

Representative in Strasbourg will be able to make a weighty contribution to this and other initiatives of the Council of Europe which meet with a lively response of Orthodox Christians in our continent”.

The CE Secretary General, on his part, expressed satisfaction with the meeting and stressed that he attached a great importance to the development of the religious dimension in inter-cultural dialogue and to the participation of the Moscow Patriarchate representatives in annual consultations held on this subject on the initiative of the CE Committee of Ministers.

Father Philip also informed the CE Secretary General about the work of the ROC Strasbourg Representation whose primary mission is to inform the Council of Europe about stands taken by the Church on socially significant issues. He also conveyed to the CE Secretary General the ROC Representation’s document ‘A Contribution to the Public Discussion on the Report by the Group of Prominent Leaders of the Council of Europe ‘ Living Together – Diversity and Freedom in the 21st Century Europe’.

ROC Strasbourg Representation website/DECR Communication Service

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/54972/>