



## Metropolitan Hilarion meets with the President of Montenegro

[gallery]On 20 July 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with Mr. Filip Vujanović, President of the Republic of Montenegro, at the State Reception Palace in Podgorica.

They were joined in the meeting by Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and Primorje; A. Nesterenko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Montenegro; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; D. Malyshev, advisor of the OAO MPCK Holding director general; and other members of the delegation.

Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that any state is strong by its unity. This is true for the Church as well. However, the unity of the Church is special as it transcends state boundaries, and one should remember about it in particular when talking about the shaping of church-state relations in the newly independent countries.

The DECR chairman noted that the Moscow Patriarchate has always been a true friend of the people of Montenegro. The Russian Orthodox Church does not interfere into the internal affairs of the Serbian Orthodox Church and of the Republic of Montenegro, but is willing to share its experience of cultivating church-state relations in the newly independent states in the post-Soviet space.

The President of Montenegro highly appreciated the care of the Russian Orthodox Church for the current problems of the young state and said that the Russian Orthodox Church was a great church because it upholds great ideas. He added that the experience of the Russian Church could be useful for the solution of topical problems of the Orthodox Church in Montenegro.

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia Metropolitan Hilarion congratulated President Vujanović on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of political relations between Russian and Montenegro and presented him with a folding icon made in the workshops of the Moscow Patriarchate.