



## **Russian Orthodox Church representative takes part in general meeting of Russian Federation Commission for UNESCO**

The Russian Federation Commission for UNESCO held a general meeting on 23 March 2011 at the Mansion of the Russian Foreign Ministry in Moscow. The meeting was chaired by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The Russian Orthodox Church was represented, with the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk as head of the Department for External Church Relations, by Hegumen Philip (Riabykh), the newly-appointed representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in Strasbourg.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Lavrov said that 'persistent efforts should be made to democratize the functioning of the High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures set up under the UNESCO secretary general and to pose more substantially the problem of establishing contacts between UNESCO and the Russian Orthodox Church with the aim to enrich the content of inter-cultural dialogue'. He pointed to the importance of the agreement signed by Russia and UNESCO for the participation of the Russian Government in financing the work to restore Orthodox holy places in Kosovo, Serbia, within the broad international campaign for protecting Orthodox monuments belonging to the world cultural heritage in that region.

Mr. Dzasokhov, vice-chairman of the commission, spoke of the importance of the Interreligious Summit held last April in Baku in observance of the UNESCO Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and the proposals made by the Religious Leaders Group in Partnership with UNESCO for the development of this group.

*DECR Communication Service*