



Patriarch Kirill meets with president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, on 16 March 2011 at his working residence in Chisty Pereulok.

They discussed major areas of cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, especially the issues considered by the two Churches' Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue. Since its establishment in 1979 this commission has become the main platform for Orthodox-Catholic dialogue because, among other things, its work involves representatives of all the Local Orthodox Churches. The commission agreed on several documents concerning the teaching on the Sacraments and sacramental nature of the Church.

As was noted that even if there are theological differences the both Churches can already now come into close cooperation in areas where their positions coincide, namely, defence of traditional Christian values in Europe, advocacy of the Christian position in the socio-economic sphere and in the ethics of scientific research and bioethics. This is the basis on which it is possible to develop cooperation in international organizations, such as the UN, OSCE, and the EU structures.

Patriarch Kirill and Cardinal Koch also discussed the problem of Christianophobia which has affected not only the regions where Christians are subjects to open persecution but also the European countries with their age-old Christian tradition. In January and February 2011, the European Parliament and the European Union Committee of Foreign Ministers recognized the existence of this problem, and Orthodox and Catholic hierarchs spoke on various platforms setting forth their common stands concerning the discrimination against Christians.

Concerning the propaganda of liberal views in no way linked with traditional morality, Cardinal Koch expressed satisfaction at the fact that the Pope Benedict and Patriarch Kirill have a shared position on this problem and underscored that these shared views help to further inter-church cooperation.

Patriarch Kirill said he respected the position taken by Pope Benedict who defends the Christian tradition in spite of sometime sharp criticism from liberal circles.

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