Metropolitan Hilarion meets with Columbian Deputy Foreign Minister

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On 11 March 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with H. E. Patti Londono Jaramillo, deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Colombia. They were joined in the meeting held at the DECR premises by Miguel Palacio, staff member of the DECER secretariat for far abroad countries; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Colombia to the Russian Federation, H. E. Diego José Tobón Echeverri, and director of the European Department of the Columbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alfonso Soria Mendoza.

Metropolitan Hilarion warmly greeted the guests and told them that Colombia occupies an important place in foreign affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church. The DECR chairman noted with appreciation an active participation of the Catholic Church of Colombia in public life of the country.

Metropolitan Hilarion added that the care for compatriots, who have come from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and other countries for which the Moscow Patriarchate holds pastoral responsibility, is a priority of the ministry of the Russian Church in Latin America. He also spoke about the situation of the Russian-speaking community in Colombia that numbers over one thousand people.

Deputy Minister Jaramillo thanked the DECR chairman for the meeting and told him about religious situation in Colombia. According to her, the Colombian society is religiously tolerant. She hopes for the extension of the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Colombia.

Deputy Minister Jaramillo invited Metropolitan Hilarion to visit Colombia. The invitation was accepted with gratitude.

Towards the end of the meeting, the participants exchanged presents.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/55903/