



DECR chairman greets participants in the 17th International Conference of the Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent greetings to the participants in the 17th International Conference of the Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations being held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, on 14-17 February 2011. The text is given below.

Dear participants in the 27th annual International Conference of the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations!

I cordially greet religious, political and public leaders who have gathered at the annual international conference sponsored by the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations with the assistance of Mr. Luka Bebić, speaker of the Croatian Parliament.

A remarkable event has taken place recently. On 20 January 2011, the European Parliament made an unprecedented move by adopting a resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion condemning murders and discrimination of Christians in various countries, in particular in Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and the Philippines. On 27 January 2011, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution that said: "...the majority of acts of religious violence are perpetrated against Christians" and that there were cases of the most brutal violence. It was for the first time that European parliamentarians spoke out in full voice on the problem that has been hushed up so far. Civil societies of the European countries should comprehend this fact.

The cases of Christianophobia, maybe not as radical as in the above-mentioned countries, often happen in Europe. For recent years, Christianity in Western Europe exists in the atmosphere of aggressive secularism. Christian believers encounter not only the deriding of their persuasions, but sometimes even direct discrimination. Recently, there has been a hypertrophied expression of tolerance and political correctness. People who openly profess the standards of traditional morals but suspected of religious propaganda are subjected to various sanctions, such as firing from work or public censure in the mass media.

The decisive moment has come for the Europeans to comprehend their civilization identity. The return to the European Christian tradition and culture depends on a new turn to faith as to a source of the

meaning of human life and the life of society, as a foundation of public and private morality.

I wish all the participants in the Forum fruitful work and invoke God's blessing upon it.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Chairman

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