Metropolitan Hilarion meets with the Lithuanian Seim speaker

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On January 11th, 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, currently in Lithuania with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and at the invitation of the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Lithuania, met with the speaker of the Lithuanian Seim, Irena Degutene at the building of the Parliament in Vilnius.

They were joined in the meeting by Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius of Kaunas, Bishop Gintaras Grušas, secretary general of the Episcopal Conference and military ordinary for Lithuania; Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania; archpriest Vladimir Seliavko, secretary of the Diocese of Vilnius and Lithuania of the Russian Orthodox Church; hieromonk Ioann (Guaita), a staff member of DECR secretariat for Inter-Christian relations, and hierodeacon Ioann (Kopeikin), assistant to the DECR chairman.

Ms Degutene thanked Metropolitan Hilarion on behalf of the Lithuanian Republic for maintaining firm stand during events of 13 January 1990.

The need for conference like the most recent one in Kaunas was noted. Metropolitan Hilarion said, 'We discussed common problems for Lithuania, Russia and the majority of the EU countries. Our common position on family problems reflects the fact that the state authorities of our countries and the traditional Churches of Lithuania and Russia share the same moral and family values.'

The DECR chairman underscored that after 20 years of independence, state authorities and public circles of Lithuania and Russia should turn a new page in their good-neighbourly relations and added that all healthy forces should raise their common voice in upholding traditional values in Europe.

Speaker Degutene mentioned the danger of placing human rights above the time-honoured human values and noted the importance of making the position of the Church on family problems known in society, as the ruining of family runs contrary to nature and God.

Press conference was held after the meeting. Metropolitan Hilarion, Archbishop Tamkevičius, and Speaker Degutene answered questions of the journalists.

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