



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk begins his visit to Armenia**

On 11 December 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, arrived in Armenia at the invitation of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenia, and with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Meeting Metropolitan Hilarion at the Zvartnots international airport were bishops and clerics of the Armenian Apostolic Church, including head of the Inter-Church Relations Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin Bishop Ovakim, Bishop Mark of Gegarkuni, Bishop Ezras of the Novo-Nakhichevan and Russian diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, hieromonk Mkhitar (Grigorian) of the Etchmiadzin Monastery, head of the Information Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin Rev. Vagram Melikian, and secretary of the Inter-Church Relations Department deacon David Minasian. Among those meeting Metropolitan Hilarion were archpriest Arseniy Grigoriants, rector of the Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in Kanaker, and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Armenia, V. Kovalenko.

The DECR chairman and his companions proceeded to Holy Etchmiadzin – the residence of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenia, where His Holiness Karekin II received his high guest.

That same day the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church visited the Cathedral Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator and the museum of Holy Etchmiadzin.

The DECR chairman will stay in Armenia till December 14. The schedule of his visit includes meetings with His Holiness Karekin II and bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Church, visits to churches and monasteries, theological seminary near Lake Sevan, Youth Centre in Yerevan, laying of wreath at the

Armenian Genocide Memorial, a televised address, and meetings with the press.

Accompanying Metropolitan Hilarion are a DECR staff member hieromonk G. Guaita, and assistants to the DECR chairman, hierodeacon I. Kopeikin and L. Sevastianov.

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