



DECR chairman recounts his working trips of 2010

Metropolitan Hilarion told the journalists during press conference, held at the Department for External Church Relations, of his working trips made with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia in 2010.

"On October 3, I, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation, took part in the enthronement of the new Patriarch of Serbia, Irinej. According to tradition of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the enthronement was held at the Patriarchate of Peć in Kosovo and Metohia. The Primate of the Serbian Church was elected last spring; his first enthronement followed in Belgrade. However, it is considered a domestic event, whereas enthronement to the ancient see of the Serbian Patriarchs in Kosovo is considered as official enthronement.

"I visited Japan on October 9-13 and took part in the celebration of the 40th anniversary of canonization of St. Nicholas of Japan, an autonomous status of the Orthodox Church in Japan, and the establishment of the Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tokyo. I concelebrated Divine services with the Primate of the Japanese Autonomous Church, Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and All Japan. I visited churches of the Orthodox Church in Japan, met with bishops, clergy and laity, with Russian diplomats, and ambassadors or other official representatives of other countries, for instance, Ukraine, Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia.

"I left Tokyo for Georgia to take part in the celebration of the 1000th anniversary of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos and Patriarch of All Georgia Iliya II. Representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches attended the celebration that was followed by a festive reception at which I congratulated His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya on this remarkable events on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and read out his welcoming address in the Georgian language.

"I stayed at the Holy Mount Athos from October 22 to 29. His Holiness Patriarch and the Holy Synod gave me a blessing to visit Mt. Athos every year to meet with monks of the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon, as well as with the abbots and monks of other monasteries. I visited ten monasteries and four sketes, including the sketes of St. Andrew and St. Elijah built by Russian donators. I congratulated archimandrite Jeremiah, hegumen of St. Panteleimon's Monastery, on his 95th birthday, handed over a welcoming address to him and promised him to

come in five years to greet him with his 100th birthday.

Some days ago I returned from my trip to Ukraine. I visited seven dioceses of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: Donetsk, Severodonetsk, Kharkov, Poltava, Cherkassy, and Kiev. I met with hierarchs, clerics, and students of theological schools. May "St Matthew Passion" Oratorio was performed in all these cities. My tour was a kind of missionary one."

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