



## **DECR chairman attends meeting of Inter-Council Presence's commission for opposing and overcoming church schisms**

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The Inter-Council Presence's commission for opposing and overcoming church schisms took place on September 28, 2010, at the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Donetsk, Ukraine. It was chaired by His Beatitude Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine.

The meeting was attended by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, as vice-chairman of the commission; Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa and Izmail, Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod and Sary Oskol; Archbishop Mitrofan of Belya Tserkov and Boguslavsk, chancellor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Bishop Alexander of Pereyaslavl-Khmel'nisky; Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, as secretary of the commission; Archpriest Andrey Novikov, secretary of the Odessa diocesan administration; Archpriest Nikolay Tikhomirov, as representative of Metropolitan Alexander of Riga and All Latvia; Rev. Ioann Miroljubov, secretary of the commission for Old Belief parishes and cooperation with the Old Belief community; Deacon Maxim Plyakin, A. Maler, and Ms. E. Orlova.

Opening the meeting Metropolitan Vladimir outlined the priorities of the commission. Before moving to work on the documents drafted by the commission's working groups, he expressed hope that the work of the commission would help to bring the lost back to the saving fold of the Church and to overcome divisions which lead to destruction. He stressed that the work of the commission will be carried out in the spirit of the Gospel and in accordance with the traditions and canons of the Church.

Metropolitan Vladimir suggested that in considering the procedure for accepting those who come back to the Church, the commission should follow the theological approach proposed by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk at the commission's previous meeting.

Metropolitan Hilarion made a report giving an analysis of the documents drafted by the working groups and made proposals for further work, which were accepted by the commission.

The draft documents were presented by the working group leaders – Archbishop Ioann, Archpriest Andrey Novikov, Rev. Ioann Miroljubov and Ms. E. Orlova.

The commission considered and approved the documents 'On accepting those who come back from schisms into the fold of the Church, and 'On measures to overcome the consequences of the 17<sup>th</sup> century church division'. These documents will be submitted to the Inter-Council Presence's Presidium.

*DECR Communication Service*

*Photos from the websites of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the UOC diocese of Donetsk*

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