



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia begins his visit to Armenia

On 16 March 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia arrived to the Republic of Armenia on an official visit. He is accompanied by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations; Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk head of the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat; chairman of the Synodal Information Department V. Legoida; and hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), DECR deputy chairman.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church was met at 'Zvartnots' airport by Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, hierarchs and clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, including Archbishop Eznik Petrosian, chairman of the Department for external church relations of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Archbishop Aram Ateshian, head of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople; Archbishop Grigoris Buniatian, head of the Ukrainian diocese of the Armenian Church; Bishop Ezras Movsisian, head of the South Russian diocese of the Armenian Church; and rector of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God archpriest Arseny Grigorian.

Also welcoming His Holiness were Armenian Minister of Education and Science Armen Ashotian, and Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Armenia V. Kovalenko (Russian Federation), A. Bozhko (Ukraine), S. Sukhorenko (Belarus), A. Bozhigitov (Kazakhstan), and Sh. Dzhumayev (Turkmenistan).

During his talk with mass media men at the 'Zvartnots' airport His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said. 'This is my first official visit here at the invitation of His Holiness Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II after my election to the Moscow Patriarchal Throne.'

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted that the exchange of official visits between the heads of the Churches is of great importance also as a symbolic action bearing witness to the high level

of bilateral relations. His Holiness emphasized the importance of such visits for the development of bilateral relations, saying: "... We belong to the ancient apostolic tradition that upholds moral and spiritual values. It is very important that thanks to these visits we become real co-workers, also in keeping and defending these values in the life of our nations and the entire world."

"I have great expectations of the meeting with my beloved brother the Patriarch-Catholics, with the bishops and clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and with the believers in Armenia. I am happy to be here in this blessed and much-suffering land," His Holiness said in conclusion.

After the talk, the Primates of the Russian Orthodox and the Armenian Apostolic Churches proceeded to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

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