



Delegation of the Department for External Church Relations on a visit to Warsaw

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A delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations was on a visit to Warsaw on February 25-26, 2010. It included Hegumen Philip Riabykh, DECR vice-chairman, and Rev. Seriy Zvonarev, DECR acting secretary for the far-abroad countries. The aim of the visit was to discuss the Churches' possible assistance in building good-neighbourly relations between the peoples of Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The trip was organized on invitation of the head of the Polish Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Savva, Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland, and Archbishop Józef Michalik, Archbishop of **Przemyśl**, President of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Roman Catholic Church.

The visit began with a meeting with Metropolitan Savva and Bishop Stanislaw Budzik, general secretary of the Polish Bishops' Conference. They discussed possible steps for strengthening good relations between Eastern European nations.

The delegation took part in a meeting of the Inter-Confessional Council of Churches in Poland chaired by Archbishop Jeremiah of Wroclaw and Szczecin, Polish Orthodox Church. Early this year the Council initiated a dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church on the historical past and building good relations between the peoples of Belarus, Poland, Russia and Ukraine. Speaking at the meeting Hegumen Philip stressed that 'we have everything to overcome the tragic past and build a peaceful and prosperous future. We are united by common Christian values and their defense should become the basis for our people's cooperation'.

On February 25, the delegation held talks with a delegation of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland including Archbishop **Henryk Muszyński** of Gniezno, Primate of Poland, Bishop Stanislaw Budzik and Bishop Tadeusz Pikus, head of the Polish Bishops' Conference's Council for Ecumenism. It was agreed to set up a working group for elaborating a joint document on the reconciliation of the nations. It was also agreed that the group would consist of representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland with the participation of officials from the Polish Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Russia. The meeting adopted a communiqué.

The visit concluded with a grand dinner. Among its participants were Russian Ambassador in Poland V.

Grinin, Polish Seim Deputy E. Chikvin, and Chairman of the Christian Public Association K. Morawski.

DECR Communication Service

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