Russian Orthodox Church delegation led by Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk takes part in an Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission meeting

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The Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission began its sessions on December 10 at the Patriarchate of Constantinople's Orthodox Center in Chambesy near Geneva, to continue its work on the agenda of a Holy and Great Council of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The results of its work will be submitted to the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference, the date of which has not been fixed yet. Previously these conferences were held in 1976, 1982, 1986 and 2009.

The Commission's work is chaired by Metropolitan John of Pergamon, Patriarchate of Constantinople. The ROC delegation includes Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, Archbishop Mark of Berlin-German and Great Britain, Russian Church Abroad, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and interpreter A. Churyakov.

After a prayer for the work of the Commission, Metropolitan John said an introductory word. A telegram asking for blessing and prayer was sent out to all the primates of Local Orthodox Churches. The opening address was followed by speeches of the leaders of the delegation.

Archbishop Hilarion conveyed to the participants a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kill of Moscow and All Russia, making a special mention of the fact that His Holiness as the then Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad took part in the previous meeting of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission in 1993 in his capacity of DECR chairman.

His Eminence Hilarion set forth briefly the position taken by the Russian Orthodox Church on major items on the Commission's agenda, such as autocephaly and the way of proclaiming it and autonomy and the way of granting it.

Then Metropolitan Jeremiah of Switzerland in his capacity of the Commission's secretary made a report on the agenda items.

The Commission will work till December 16.

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