



## DECR Chairman Archbishop Hilarion meets with foreign journalists

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On 11 November 2009, the DECR Chairman Archbishop Hilarion met with foreign journalists. He answered questions of the leading mass media representatives from Belarus, Bulgaria, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Greece, Denmark, India, Spain, Italy, Canada, Cuba, Kuwait, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, the USA, Turkey, Finland, France, FRG, Czechia, Switzerland, and Japan. Taking part in the meeting was Rev. Dr. Georgy Zavershinsky, head of the DECR Communication Service.

Archbishop Hilarion told the participants about the Russian Orthodox Church and the main directions of her external activities. 'The Russian Orthodox Church is the Church not only of the Russian Federation and the majority of the Russian population. She is a global religious organization that unites Orthodox Christians living in the territory of the former USSR and in other countries. There are diocese and parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church on all continents, including Antarctica.'

The DECR Chairman said further that the Russian Orthodox Church plays a particular role in the countries in the post-Soviet space, as she is nearly the sole chain that connects the people of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and other republics of the former USSR. This is a spiritual space called Holy Russia. The Archbishop underscored that this name defines not only political frontiers as they change in the course of time, but rather show the spiritual and cultural tradition uniting many nations. This tradition goes back to the holy Prince Vladimir who baptized Russia in 988.

Archbishop Hilarion also told the journalists about the Day of National Unity and the Feast of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God. "The history of this icon is linked with the tragic period of the Time of Troubles in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The feast was instituted in commemoration of the liberation of Russia from foreign invaders in 1612."

The DECR Chairman also spoke about the problems and prospects of the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church and about the ecclesiastical situation in Ukraine and Belarus. He answered questions about the inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian and inter-religions relations and the problems of life in the present-day society.