



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: Brotherly relations between the Russian and Serbian Churches will remain with the new Serbian Patriarch**



The Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church was held in Belgrade on 18 th February 2021. Metropolitan Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana was elected Patriarch and enthroned at the Cathedral church of St Mikhail the Archangel on the next day.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations spoke about the procedure of election of the Patriarch of Serbia at the request of Yekaterina Gracheva, a host of 'The Church and the World' TV programme.

The archpastor noted that candidates for Patriarch can be any of the bishops with at least five years of diocesan service. 'There are some thirty candidates, three are selected. In the first round by direct voted one is selected, then the second, and the third. One of these three is elected by lot,' Metropolitan Hilarion explained and continued to say that this time the lot fell on Metropolitan Porfirije of Zagreb and Ljubljana, who is well-known in the Russian Orthodox Church. 'I have known him personally for many years, met him in Serbia many times and in Croatia during my visits there. Our relations are warm and very friendly,' Metropolitan Hilarion said.

Metropolitan Hilarion hopes that the relations between the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches will remain fraternal and constructive during Patriarch Porfirije and added: 'We need support of each other.' 'I believe that this worthy election will serve to the strengthening of our good relationship,' the DECR chairman underscored and said that His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia was the first to congratulate Patriarch Porfirije on his election.

Metropolitan Hilarion said that the new Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church was one of the most famous hierarchs. Patriarch Porfirije, aged 59, graduated from the University of Belgrade and the theological faculty of the University of Athens where he received his doctorate for the thesis on the theology of St. Paul and St. John Chrysostom.

'He is a recognized church leader enjoying high authority. I believe that this election will be highly appreciated not only in Serbia, but also in the entire Orthodox world,' Metropolitan Hilarion emphasized.

The DECR chairman mentioned that he had an opportunity to follow Patriarch Kirill and congratulated the newly elected Patriarch of Serbia over the phone, wishing him God's aid in his high and responsible primatial ministry.

*DECR Communication service*

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