



## Metropolitan Hilarion: the Department for External Church Relations safeguards the sacred boundaries of our Church



On the air of the Church and the World program, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relation, spoke about the work of this synodal establishment, which marks its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Dwelling on the history of the DECR, His Eminence noted that the Department was established in 1946, “when the Church just began recovering after two decades of severe repressions and a war, when our whole country was rising from ashes after the four years of war”. The aim of the formation of this synodal structure was to establish contacts with other Christian confessions, with other religions and with our compatriots who found themselves in emigration.

“At that time, it was a small establishment consisting of a few staffers, but gradually it grew”, he said, “Just under 20 years, the Department was headed by the present Primate of the Russian Orthodox

Church, and for 12 year now it has been headed by me”.

The DECR is popularly called “the church ministry for foreign affairs”. However, as Metropolitan Hilarion pointed out, at present special key points can be seen in the work of this establishment. “We are increasingly engaged in safeguarding the sacred boundaries of our Church”, His Eminence stated.

“In the present geopolitical situation, the same forces that work against Russia work against the Russian Orthodox Church too. They work to weaken, to dismember the Church, to tear away her historical parts that are inseparably linked with her, in particular, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church”, the DECR head said stating that connected with this struggle are main events happening at present in the sphere of inter-Orthodox relations.

“For this reason, in recent years we have unfortunately turned from a church diplomatic department into the kind of a church defence department”, Metropolitan Hilarion noted, “We are defending the heritage we have received from our ancestors, from over five centuries of our Church’s existence. And we believe that no one is given a right to plunder this heritage as our adversaries are trying to do”.

*DECR Communication Service*

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