



Congratulatory greetings to the DECR from Christian confessions in Russia

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations congratulations were sent by the leaders of Christian confessions in Russia, namely: Archbishop Dietrich Brauer of the Russian Evangelical Lutheran Church; Peter V. Mitskevich, president of the Russian Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists; head bishop Eduard Grabovenko of the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith; head bishop Sergei Ryakhovsky, president of the Russian United Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals), and first deputy chairman Oleg Yu. Goncharov of the Euro-Asia Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Archbishop of the Russian Evangelical Lutheran Church Dietrich Brauer wrote in his congratulatory message to DECR's chairman, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk: *"As Prophet Isaiah said, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace; who brings good news, who announces salvation' (Is52:7). This is precisely the kind of mission that the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations entrusted to your leadership by the providential mercy of God was carrying out in the difficult 20th century and continues to carry out in the no less difficult 21st century.*

"Your service contributes to upholding mutual understanding, good-neighborly relations, the spirit of peace and good will among different religious confessions and different countries. I thank you and your staff for close and fruitful cooperation and wish that God may grant you wisdom, knowledge and every blessing in your service ahead!"

President Peter Mitskevich of the Russian Union of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists noted in his congratulatory message to the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations that *"the Russian Orthodox Church has always influenced the formation of people's spirituality and life style."*

He further wrote that *"in 1946, fulfilling its highly responsible mission in our multiconfessional and multinational country, the Russian Orthodox Church established the Department for External Church Relations as a body that was needed for relations with the outside world. During the time of its service, DECR has achieved great results in promoting knowledge and in diplomatic activity thanks to its highly qualified staff. Thanks to this service, relations of good will have been built with all religious*

organizations, which is beneficial for the consolidation of Russian society and prosperity of the country. The Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations fulfills its peacemaking function at various international forums, and as a result has become a high authority of general recognition and influence on the development of international religious life."

In his congratulatory message, head bishop Eduard Grabovenko of the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith mentioned the *"ongoing dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church, our and other Christian Churches in the framework of the Christian Interconfessional Consultative Committee."* Then he expressed his satisfaction with the possibility *"for taking part in joint plenary meetings, round-tables and symposiums and for discussing important public issues."*

"Openness to society, willingness to discuss topical issues and the building of good relations with representatives of public organizations and various religions in our multinational and multiconfessional Motherland are extremely important for the Russian Orthodox Church which has been the most authoritative organization in our country during many centuries. The establishment of the Department for External Church Relations in 1946, active peacemaking and social position of its leaders have brought a serious contribution to the building of peace and accord in society, the enhancing of the authority of Christian worldview and preaching of the Gospel of Christ," wrote in his congratulatory address Sergei Ryakhovsky, president of the Russian United Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals).

He noted with profound satisfaction *"friendly relations and constructive cooperation between the DECR and his Union that began when His Holiness Patriarch Kirill was chairman of the Department."*

Sergei Ryakhovsky also noted that discussed at the Christian Interconfessional Consultative Committee (CICC) are issues topical for the Christian Churches of the CIS and Baltic states. *"It is our privilege to cooperate with you in the CICC and at other interconfessional venues, including many consultative committees at the bodies of legislative and executive powers where we, as Christians, can speak together in defense and support of traditional moral and ethical values."*

He mentioned *"the unique charity project of aid to the Syrian people rendered by religious communities in Russia with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the basis of the Interreligious working group for humanitarian aid to population of Syria at the Council for cooperation with religious associations under the President of the Russian Federation. This has been written into history as an example of genuine charity of the people of faith."*

O.Yu. Goncharov, first deputy chairman of the Euro-Asia division of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, wrote in his address to Metropolitan Hilarion: *"In recent years the*

Department under your wise leadership has done a great work for harmonization of interreligious and interconfessional relations in Russia and abroad. You and your staff are rendering all possible aid to the representatives of religious associations in our country in spiritual and social ministries, defense of traditional religious values and freedom of religion or belief, and solution of topical problems of life and activity of religious communities and their faithful. The Interreligious Committee for aid to the people of Syria has become a special project of interreligious cooperation.”

He expressed his thanks to Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and the DECR staff members for *‘their great contribution to the development of interconfessional dialogue developing within the Christian Interconfessional Consultative Committee of the CIS and Baltic countries. Topics discussed at this venue, such as peacemaking, spiritual and social ministries, defense of traditional religious values are exerting great influence on religious confessions and Russian society at large.’*

DECR Communication Service

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