



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk awarded the Russian MFA's Medal 'For Cooperation'**



On September 3, 2021, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, met with the Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey V. Lavrov, at the Russian MFA House of Receptions.

The head of the Russian foreign policy ministry presented the DECR head with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Medal 'For Cooperation' timed to the 75th anniversary of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations and Metropolitan Hilarion's 55th birthday.

"Our meeting is held soon after your birthday". Mister Lavrov noted, "In addition to the congratulations that I and my colleagues had sent to you, we would like to recognize in addition your contribution to the development of relations with our compatriots abroad, to the advocacy of traditional religious and moral values of the multi-ethnic people of the Russian Federation and, in cooperation with our diplomacy, the advocacy of the interests of the country on various platforms, including through the UN, Council of Europe and other multilateral organizations".

Having thanked the minister for his warm congratulations, Metropolitan Hilarion made a special mention of the importance of contacts between the MFA and the DECR, "Very frequent challenges are common for us. It is important therefore that we have an opportunity for synchronizing watches on a permanent

basis: there is a mechanism for consultations; there is a Working Groups acting between the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department for External Church Relations. This Working Group was founded, as you remember, at the initiative of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, when he occupied the post of DECR chairman. And we continue the work we began then". The hierarch thanked Mr. Lavrov for the long-standing cooperation, expressing a hope for its further consolidation and development.

From the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, the meeting was attended by the DECR vice-chairmen Archbishop Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Alania, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov and Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), as well as DECR secretary for the diaspora, Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev.

The Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs was represented by G. I. Askaldovich, ambassador-at-large; K. P. Kozhanov, deputy head of the MFA Department for the Federation Constituents, Parliament and Public Associations; M. M. Melikh, head of the department for liaison with major Russian religious organizations of the MFA Department for Relations with Federation Constituents, Parliament and Public Association, and O. V. Shor, a staff member of this department.

In the course of further talk, its participants discussed matters of mutual concern.

DECR Communication Service

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