



Meeting of the “Religions” Working Group of the Petersburg Dialogue Forum Held in Kaliningrad



DECR Communication Service, 27.05.2026.

The regular meeting of the “Religions” Working Group of the Petersburg Dialogue Forum, held in Kaliningrad on May 26, 2026, was devoted to the topic “The Phenomenon of Secularity.”

Participants in the event included: Metropolitan Seraphim of Baltiysk and Svetlogorsk, Patriarchal Vicar of the Kaliningrad Metropolia; Archpriest Sergy Zvonarev, Secretary of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate for the affairs of the far abroad; Archpriest Alexander Zadornov, Vice-Rector for Research and Theological Studies and Head of the Department of Church Practical Disciplines of the Moscow Theological Academy; Archpriest Vladimir Khulap, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and Head of the Department of Church Practical Disciplines of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy; Archpriest Dimitry Sizonenko, Head of the International Department of the St.

Petersburg Theological Academy; Hieromonk Makary (Markish), Head of the Department for Church Relations with Society and the Media of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Diocese; S.A. Melnikov, Deputy Director for Research and Public Relations of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Chairman of the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom; R.N. Lunkin, Deputy Director for Research and Head of the Department of Social and Political Studies of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences; N.S. Semyonova, Head of the Department of Church History and Church Law of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Institute for Postgraduate Studies and Doctoral Research; Hierodeacon Alexy (Ochkanov), staff member of the DECR Secretariat for Far Abroad Countries; and Yu.A. Danilov, Head of the Information and Analytical Directorate of the Synodal Department for Church Relations with Society and the Media.

Metropolitan Seraphim of Baltiysk and Svetlogorsk, Patriarchal Vicar of the Kaliningrad Metropolia, addressed the participants with a welcoming speech, noting the relevance and complexity of the topic submitted for discussion by the working group.

Archpriest Sergy Zvonarev conveyed to the participants the greetings of Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the DECR, and his wishes for fruitful work.

During the meeting, presentations were delivered by Archpriest Alexander Zadornov, "Parity or Neutrality? The Perception of Secularity in Contemporary Society"; Hieromonk Makary (Markish), "Between the Secular and the Worldly"; Yu.A. Danilov, "Secularity and Religion in Contemporary Russia: Problem Areas"; N.S. Semyonova, "The Concept of the Secular State: History and Modernity"; S.A. Melnikov, "From Secularity in Law to Aggressive Secularism: Contemporary Mechanisms of Discrimination Against Believers and Supporters of Traditional Values in Western Countries"; Dr. R.N. Lunkin, "The Erosion of Secularity in the Context of the Rightward Turn in Europe and Reactions to It"; Archpriest Vladimir Khulap, "Secularism in the Theology of Archpriest Alexander Schmemmann"; and Archpriest Dmitry Sizonenko, "A Critique of the Dualism of the Sacred and the Secular in Twentieth-Century Christian Theology: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Henri de Lubac as Two Strategies for Overcoming Secularity."

A discussion followed, during which the participants analyzed various aspects of secularity, including social, philosophical, legal, theological, and sociological dimensions. In a historical retrospective, they examined the formation of the phenomena of secularity and secularism, their common and distinctive features, differences in approaches to their interpretation in ecclesiastical and secular thought, and changes in their semantic content over time. Particular attention was devoted to the threats posed by secularism to contemporary society and to the presence of religion within it.