



DECR's delegation takes part in regional conference of Russian compatriots from near abroad countries



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On 5th September 2026, a regional conference of Russian compatriots from near abroad countries began its work in Yerevan, Armenia. Taking part in the conference was a delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate led by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations.

Among those who spoke at the conference opening were Mr S.P. Kopyrkin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia; Mr G.A. Ovechko, Director of the Department for Relations with Compatriots Abroad of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr M.V. Drozdov, Chair of the World Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad; and

other officials.

The Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations conveyed to all those present blessings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'. The church delegation had arrived in Yerevan with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to take part in a round table meeting entitled 'The Russian Orthodox Church and Compatriots: Experience of Cooperation in European Countries,' held on 3rd – 4th September at the Moscow House in Yerevan. As the DECR chairman noted in his speech, the meetings focusing on cooperation between the Church and compatriots, organized by the Department for External Church Relations and the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department for Relations with Compatriots Abroad, have been taking place in various parts of the world since 2009.

Among the topics discussed during the round table meeting in 2026 were pastoral care for the faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church in the region and various parish projects aimed at promoting religious education, helping families remain rooted in the Orthodox culture and teaching the Russian language to children. The meeting also focused on cooperation of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes with Russian embassies and the Rossotrudnichestvo representations. "In my view, we had a very interesting and fruitful discussion. The participants in the meeting came to the conclusion that it is necessary to ensure comprehensive development of the projects carried out jointly by our parishes abroad and local compatriots' associations," the DECR chairman said.

"Most of the near abroad countries constitute an area of the Moscow Patriarchate's pastoral responsibility. Our responsibility today is to preserve and strengthen those roots that nourish and give strength to the historical Rus', meaning the Orthodox faith, moral guiding principles, historical memory and tradition. It is only through the spiritual and national unity that we can withstand our foes' attempts to destroy our communion," Metropolitan Anthony added.

The conference brought together Russian compatriots from Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, South Ossetia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The conference will conclude its work on 6th September.

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