



## **DECR chairman meets with representatives of Muslim community in Italy**

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On October 18, 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, met at the DECR with representatives of the Muslim community in Italy, Sheikh Abdul-Wahid Pallavicini and Imam Yahya Palavicini.

Metropolitan Hilarion related to the Islamic religious leaders in Italy the rich experience of interreligious dialogue in Russia in which Orthodox Christians and Muslims have co-existed peacefully for centuries. He underscored that the absence of conflicts on religious grounds was a result of open cooperation between leaders of the communities and education of the faithful in their own tradition.

The DECR chairman also noted that leaders of the Abrahamic religions should focus in their dialogue on family values, which have fallen into decay in the secular society. He believes that it is the family ideals that can make traditional religions allies in opposing the moral relativism of the modern society.

Metropolitan Hilarion informed the Islamic leaders that the Russian Orthodox Church followed with concern the worsening situation of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa, who have been subjected to persecution and discrimination in recent times.

The leaders of the Muslim community in Italy shared the concern for the developments in the Middle East and North Africa and expressed the intention to enter into cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church in dealing with problems of mutual concern.

*DECR Communication Service*