



DECR chairman meets with Mr. László Sasfalvi, state secretary of Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice

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On 19 June 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with Mr. László Sasfalvi, state secretary of Hungarian Ministry of Public Administration and Justice. They were joined in the meeting that took place at the parish house of the Church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God, by Mr. Ferenc Nagy-Rebek, Hungarian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary and deputy head of mission; Mr. Csaba Nemes, political counsellor of the Ministry; Mr. Gábor Gálic, head of the Ministry's chancellery; Mr. Andras Nis, a staff member of the chancellery; and Mr. Miguel Palacio, a staff member of the DECR secretariat for far abroad countries.

The DECR chairman recalled that he met with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary Mr. Zsolt Semjen and with Mr. László Sasfalvi in Budapest on June 2. "I am happy to continue our talks during your visit to Russia, when you can be introduced to the present-day life of the Russian Orthodox Church" - Metropolitan Hilarion said.

Mr. Sasfalvi, who visited Moscow and Voronezh, shared his impressions of the Russian Orthodox Church and said that the government of Hungary adopted a new Constitution, in which the Christian roots of Hungary are emphasized. Calling it an important move, Mr. Sasfalvi said he expected a negative reaction of liberal circles in certain European states.

Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that the Russian Orthodox Church welcomed the signing by the President of the Republic of Hungary Mr. Pál Schmitt of the country's fundamental law, which fixes the course of development based on the priority of traditional Christian values. 'This moral basis is being revised in political world and even among Christians. I hope that you will be able to defend your new Constitution. While defending it, you will defend the future of your nation,' Metropolitan Hilarion noted.

He mentioned the necessity of the system of protecting Christians who find themselves in a difficult situation in the Middle East, North Africa, and Transcaucasia.

Metropolitan Hilarion expressed his confidence in the existence of a large field for joint actions of Christian confessions and governments of the European Union states and said that our Muslim brothers

should be invited to cooperation. He mentioned the statement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on the situation of Christians in certain countries, for instance, in Egypt and Iraq, and a similar statement in defence of Christians by the All-Russian Muftiate.

During his recent working visit to Cairo, Metropolitan Hilarion met with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, and discovered complete solidarity in the matter. 'Representatives of the Traditional Islam are disappointed with the developments and are willing to unite with us to change the situation.' Metropolitan Hilarion hopes that the Hungarian state would give due attention to the matter.

Mr. Sasfalvi noted an important role of the mass media in contemporary society and shared his idea of setting up a separate religious TV channel.

Also discussed was a reconstruction of Orthodox churches in Hungary. Mr. Sasfalvi said he is working for adding the Russian Orthodox to the list historical churches of Hungary.

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