



President Dmitry Medvedev underscores importance of Christian roots in Russian-German relations

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Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and German Chancellor Angela Merkel attended the final plenary session of the St. Petersburg Dialogue forum on July 15, 2010. In his address, President Medvedev said in particular, 'Religious dialogue is very important. Both in Russian and German societies, there are values based on Christian roots which will continue to unite us'.

The work of the forum was summed up by the cochairs of the Russian and German Coordinating Committees, Mr. V. Zubkov, first deputy minister of the Russian government, and Mr. L. de Maiziere, retired federal minister.

Speaking about the importance of the forum's section on Churches in Europe, Mr. Zubkov stressed that the modernization of society is directly dependent on the spiritual and moral education of the younger generation and its future is impossible without reliance on traditional values. He also informed the forum that the Churches in Europe working group supported the introduction of teaching religious traditions in school in Russia.

Participating in the closing session of the forum from the Russian Orthodox Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, Hegumen Philip Riabykh, DECR vice-chairman, Rev. Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far-abroad countries, Rev. Igor Kireyev, head of the section for catechism and Sunday schools at the Synodal department for religious education and catechism, and Rev. Alexy Rybakov of the Russian Orthodox Church's representation in Germany.

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