



## **The DECR Chairman: "We vigorously oppose atheism perceived as a 'common denominator' of all religions"**

On 12 January 2010, Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk met with journalists at the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations. While answering their questions, he told them that the Russian Orthodox Church intended to continue dialogue with different European institutions, including the European Union and the Council of Europe, "on the problems linked to the moral and spiritual human life."

"We shall try to attain the decision-making, in legislation in particular, that would take into account not only the atheistic and secular world outlook, but also the religious one," Archbishop Hilarion said.

He turned the attention of the audience to the fact that the work of international European institutions is based on a certain ideology that has been shaped during a certain period of time, and a secular atheistic understanding of ethical questions is prevailing in this ideological paradigm.

"We call the decision-makers to take into account religious world outlook in all spheres of morality, including family ethics, in all that concerns human life and death, for instance, the problem of euthanasia. We vigorously oppose atheism perceived as a 'common denominator' of all religions, as secular politicians sometimes try to present it, saying, 'There are differences among religions; therefore, let us proceed from atheistic prerequisites so that no religion feels offended.' This position is absolutely false and unacceptable to us. We state that traditional religions have much more in common rather than different in the sphere of morality," the DECR chairman said.

Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk expressed his conviction that the European international institutions should take the fundamental values of traditional religious communities into consideration. "The point is not in theological postulates, but rather in the values on which the life of Christian community has been based for centuries, for instance, in traditional understanding of family. We will never agree with the legislative equating of a same-sex 'union' to a marriage of man and woman, or with the right of the same-sex couples to adopt and raise children. We will never agree with encouraging the killing of an embryo in mother's womb or with saying that it is not a sin. We will never agree with charging physicians with the mission not only to give people medical treatment, but also to kill them."