

Culture Ministry to Slash Spending by 30%

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Vladimir Medinsky

Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky said in an interview published Tuesday that his ministry will cut internal expenditures by 30 percent as Russia's economic crisis hits government budgets.

Several large-scale regional cultural projects will be scrapped because of the reduced cash flow to the Culture Ministry, Medinsky told newspaper Kommersant.

The preservation of some cultural spending will be maintained "at the cost of total economy in all the rest: construction, restoration, programs, festivals," Medinsky was quoted as saying.

Economic woes have forced government departments to dramatically reduce their spending plans. The price of oil, Russia's chief commodity export, has dropped below \$70 a barrel from a June high of \$115 a barrel, and the Russian economy is expected to contract up to 4 percent this year.

Cultural building projects that will be canceled in 2015 include a puppet theater in the northern city of Arkhangelsk, a cultural center in Kaluga, a library in the republic of Buryatia and a series of projects linked to the 100-year anniversary of the founding of Murmansk, according to Medinsky.

Funding for state institutions including museums and libraries, will be preserved at previous levels, Medinsky said, Kommersant reported.

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