

Sobyanin Sees Possibility for Kiosks to Return

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Kiosks, which were once an ubiquitous part of the cityscape, might see a return to Moscow's streets.

Igor Tabakov

Produce stalls and neighborhood kiosks may return to the city streets, but in a cleaner, better-looking incarnation than their predecessors, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

Businessman and community leaders appealed to Sobyanin earlier this fall to bring back the kiosks. Sobyanin had the majority of small-scale stalls removed after assuming office three years ago.

"We are in fact ready to put up as many kiosks as are necessary for city dwellers," Sobyanin said in an interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda published on the City Hall website on Tuesday. "But they mustn't interfere with road traffic and pedestrians, and their appearance must be decent. And the stalls must carry what the customers need."

Sobyanin said that Moscow's advance as number one among European cities in building new retail space became possible after the city's government eliminated the unlicensed and unregulated kiosk trade.

New stores began to appear "because we started to squeeze out all that rowdy trade that was created in the early 1990s and became a breeding ground for crime," Sobyanin said.

Because disorganized, illegal trade still flourishes in the city, favorite little neighborhood stores won't appear, Sobyanin said. "Why should they? One can go into the street, put up a shed and trade all you want without any taxes."

With over 456,200 square meters of retail space built in just the first half of 2013, Russia topped the rankings for shopping center construction, but the country still had a low ratio of shopping malls to people, according to research by Cushman & Wakefield published last week.

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