

Culture Ministry to Support New Literary TV Shows

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At a press conference on Feb. 12, minister Vladimir Medinsky announced that the Culture Ministry would support to a number of television productions based on famous Russian novels, including Mikhail Sholokhov's classic "And Quiet Flows the Don," and Dostoevsky's "Demons," among others, Itar-Tass reported.

He added that the ministry was concerned about the quality of programs available on Russian television. "In the best case we have 'My Fair Nanny,' and in the worst case it's 'Cops,'" Medinsky said, citing two adaptations of U.S. programs. He claimed that the Culture Ministry, the cinema fund, the union of cinematographers and production companies were cooperating to produce the literature-based series, and that together they formed a "single, cohesive team."

Television programs are not alone in attracting the attention of the Culture Ministry. The minister also spoke about the trials faced by Russian cinema. He revealed that Russian

films made up 18 percent of box office ticket sales in Russia 2013, higher than in previous years, but that this was by no means an outstanding achievement, that Russian films should make up at least half of all ticket sales, Itar-Tass reported.

In an effort to boost homegrown film-making, the ministry held a screenwriting contest to encourage emerging writers in 2013, the results of which will be announced in March 2014. The ministry allocated 6.7 billion rubles to be spent on film production in 2013 which financed the production of 40 feature films, 85 animated films, 400 documentaries, supported 57 film festivals in 27 regions in Russia. According to the minister, 24 of these films were included in international film festivals.

Despite these measures, he added that some form of protectionism was needed to encourage and develop Russian cinema because competing with Hollywood was "difficult." He said protectionism should be discussed and pointed to the existence of "quotas" in other countries, which he described as necessary to "protect Russian cinema." The minister concluded that the ministry would consult with experts on the best manner in which to protect and develop Russian cinema.

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