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New Law on Culture to Be Announced by June

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Dmitry Livanov and Vladimir Medinsky on May 7, 2013.

A working group formulating a new law regulating culture should be ready to announce its first conclusions by June, Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky said Wednesday in the Federation Council, Itar-Tass reported.

"This is a document which has been awaited for 20 years," Medinsky said, adding that the future law would encompass "all legal norms, from laws about film to laws about advertising."

The announcement did not come as a surprise: further steps have been anticipated following the release of the controversial document "Foundations of State Cultural Politics" on May 16. Portions of the report that were released early to the press were criticized by some cultural figures as being harshly reactionary and against multiculturalism. While the controversial phrase "Russia is not Europe" was dropped from the final version of the report, the language

remains focused on encouraging "native Russian" culture at the expense of "foreign" cultures.

Medinsky himself has been criticized of late abroad and by liberal Russians for inciendiary remarks made about European culture and homosexuality. Last month, Medinsky said Russia was "the last keeper of European culture, Christian values and truly European civilization," a remark that angered many Europeans.

Similarly, Medinsky recently expressed astonishment at Conchita Wurst, the transvestite Eurovision 2014 champion, saying: "I am having trouble making peace with Eurovision, or, more precisely, with the victory of the individual who won... I don't know how to explain what that was to children who watched the competition."

In advance of the broader cultural legislation expected in June, more focused legislation regulating profanity in art will go into effect on July 1, and the Culture Ministry has already opened an online platform allowing citizens to report offensive material witnessed in theater performances, artworks or films.

While few details about the future broad cultural legislation have been announced, it is anticipated that it will use "Foundations of State Cultural Politics" as a guide and will consist of similarly conservative policies.

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