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Culture Ministry to Create House of Russian Culture

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Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky announced the new writers' house.

The various writers unions of Russia will be united in the near future under the roof of a single House of Russian Culture, Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky announced at hearings on the foundation of the new house within the Culture Ministry, Itar-Tass reported.

The House of Russian Culture will be located in an 18th-century mansion on Komsomolsky Prospekt, currently occupied by the Union of Writers of Russia, which will now share space with the Union of Russian Writers, the Union of Writers of Moscow, the Russian Pushkin Society, the Russia PEN Center, the International Society of Writers' Councils, the Russian Book Union, as well as magazines, publishers, media and other related organizations.

Medinsky added that he planned to consult with the various writers unions and publishers to discuss their visions for what the new structure will look like. Representatives of most of the major Russian writers' associations have expressed support for proposal, though Nikolai

Ivanov, deputy chairman of the Union of Writers of Russia, expressed hesitation at sharing the building with so many new neighbors: “We occupy the second and third floors of this building by government mandate. Where will we go? Will we not be there?”

In response to Ivanov, Medinsky focused on the poor condition of the building, saying that “we propose to save the building,” which he said had fallen into disrepair under the stewardship of the Union of Writers of Russia.” The house is one of the last pieces of property from the now-defunct Union of Writers of the U.S.S.R. that remains in government hands, and as such falls under the purview of the Culture Ministry.

After extensive restorations, plans call for the new House of Russian Culture to become “one of the centers of educational, concert and exhibit, publishing and research activity.” Literary conferences will take place in the center as well as creative gatherings and book presentations. The center will also include a children’s center and cafe.

At present, the 3,000-square-foot mansion is said to be in a hazardous condition. Renovations will be conduction using extrabudgetary funding that Medinsky said would be organized by the Culture Ministry. The start date for renovations has not yet been set, leaving it unclear when the new House of Russian Culture will be able to open.

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