# Russia Overtakes France as Europe's Biggest Market for Movie Tickets

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**Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia has become Europe's biggest cinema market, overtaking France at the box office in 2017, according to a tally of 28 European Union members and 10 non-EU countries.

Russia's cinema market has been rocked by incidents of state interference in the past year, as the Culture Ministry has sought to boost ticket sales for domestic productions by revoking and rescheduling screenings of foreign films. On Wednesday, Russian cinemas replaced foreign films including box-office hit Avengers: Infinity War in favor of Russian war films to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany during World War II.

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The Russian gross box office soared to 53.2 billion rubles ($852 million) last year, boosted by

an "unprecedented" increase in cinema attendance at more than 212 million tickets sold, the Strasbourg-based European Audiovisual Observatory said last week.

"This made Russia the biggest European market in terms of admissions last year," it said in a study released ahead of the Cannes film festival.

France, which in 2016 sold 213 million tickets, has dropped to second at 209.4 million tickets sold in 2017. Britain and Germany sold 170.6 million and 122.3 million tickets each.

In the first four months of this year, Russian cinemas have raked in the equivalent of all ticket sales in 2016, the state-run TASS news agency reported late last month, citing the Russian Cinema Fund.

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