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Securing the Future
GLOBAL CULTURAL CAPITALS: NEW TRENDS IN CITY DEVELOPMENT
Panel Discussion

JUNE 22, 2012 — 14:45–16:00, STARBAR

St. Petersburg, Russia
2012

Moderator:

Oleg Kharkhordin, Rector, The European University in St. Petersburg

Panelists:

Irina Antonova, Director, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

Valery Gergiev, Artistic Director of the Mariinsky Theatre; Founder of the Valery Gergiev Charitable Foundation

Sergei Kapkov, Head, Department of Culture of Moscow

Alexei Kudrin, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St. Petersburg State University

Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales, Secretary General, International Exhibitions Bureau

Vladimir Medinsky, Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation

Mikhail Piotrovsky, General Director, State Hermitage Museum

Mikhail Prokhorov, Founder, ONEXIM Group; Founder, The Mikhail Prokhorov Foundation

Alexander Sokurov, Producer, winner of the Venice Film Festival in 2011

O. Kharkhordin:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

We are opening the session on Global Cultural Capitals. We still have two empty seats, because the former Minister of Finance, Alexei Kudrin, and the current Minister of Culture, Vladimir Medinsky, are still on their way. We will begin without them, as we have very little time and many panelists.

To discuss all of the questions we are interested in could take hours or days; it could be the theme of a lengthy conference. Our discussion will last one hour and fifteen minutes; therefore, participants will have only five minutes each for their presentations.

The structure of the panel will be as follows. I would first like to ask a question of the Minister of Culture, taking into account our time constraints: should we change our preliminary plan, which was that representatives of the cultural sector should speak first, then representatives of business and government, and then our foreign guest, who has, indeed, not yet arrived?

Vladimir Medinsky, would you mind if Mr. Piotrovsky speaks first, and then you?

V. Medinsky:

You do not have to change anything; please do it the way you planned.

O. Kharkhordin:

Good, thank you. We will begin with a presentation from the Director of the State Hermitage Museum, Mikhail Piotrovsky.

I would like to ask him the following question. We understand that there are two absolute leaders in cultural productivity, if we look at Russian cities. In St. Petersburg, there is a museum of European, or even global renown. That is, of course, the State Hermitage Museum. There is a theatre of European renown, the Mariinsky Theatre. Our university is called the European University of St. Petersburg. We claim a level of production in the humanities on a European scale.

Can other Russian cities aspire to the role of a global cultural capital? Are Moscow and St. Petersburg really achieving the status of global cultural capitals? Mr. Piotrovsky, what is your opinion?

M. Piotrovsky:

Extending your question, I would like to say something about the philosophy, the experience of our city. I think that there can only be one capital of a country, never two. If we are talking about cultural capitals metaphorically, then there are many of these in the world. I like this approach: an all-encompassing dialogue about global cultural capitals, about their roles, their comparisons, and about the rise and fall in their numbers. Every city should try to be a global cultural capital in a certain way. In actual fact, competitions and comparisons take place. By some criteria, only a few cities can be considered global cultural capitals: London, Paris, and New York. If you judge by other criteria, there are many such cities.

Every city, every institution should strive to exist in the global world. That is my position, and the position of the State Hermitage Museum. We are undertaking a project, The Greater Hermitage, identifying means and ways to have a presence in the world surrounding the Hermitage, from a new building to the Internet. There is a need to compare yourself with others and to forge a position for yourself. Every city and every cultural institution finds its niche with this approach. It seems to me that the world's museums will succeed in acting thus. They will realize the dissemination of culture in the world.

After this philosophical digression, I would like to return to the discussion of our city. We will talk about the historical centre, about the position of St. Petersburg as a cultural capital. The themes for discussion will be the structure of the city centre and other aspects of how the city functions. We often talk about this with difficulty; infrastructure must be formulated.

My favourite topic is Palace Square, a place for parades and strolls: strolls in that beautiful sense, bringing to mind the Parisian flâneur of the 19th century. Next to the square there is architecture similar to that of Peterhof: palaces and gardens, as they

were in the Petrine era. This creates a unique setting. It is a stage upon which cultural activity can and must take place, develop, and attract the world.

There is another perhaps unexpected, tricky problem which is connected to our cultural makeup: St. Petersburg has always been a military city. A long time ago, I asked my dear father if he remembered what differentiated Moscow from St. Petersburg, and St. Petersburg from Moscow, in his childhood. He said, “I remember when I was a child, Moscow was surrounded by churches and St. Petersburg was surrounded by officers and soldiers.” We are losing this element. Our army is good and ready for combat, but that element of the presence of soldiers as a part of the culture of the city, as a part of the city landscape, is disappearing before our very eyes. I believe that this is one of the points for our consideration, as we are formulating the global particularities of the cultural capital that St. Petersburg can – specifically, can – become. I think we should always believe that we can become something. As soon as we start saying, “We are cultured, the most cultured”, all of this ends. “We can be” indicates time and development, allowing us to move forwards.

I have presented to you a few things to consider for the beginning of our dialogue, some of which are perhaps controversial.

O. Kharkhordin:

Military culture: this is a very interesting theory. The British are helping us support this tradition: on July 4 another Royal Navy ship is visiting us. This is an attempt to show that relations on a military level are equally important to the particular status of a city. As far as I know, the British Consulate is the only one which invites officers to its yearly celebrations.

Now I would like to invite Valery Gergiev, a man who now works in three global cultural capitals – in St. Petersburg, London, and New York – to talk about cultural productivity. Do you think there is something particular about the development of culture which sets St. Petersburg apart, in comparison with the other prominent cultural cities in which you are required to spend a lot of time?

V. Gergiev:

It seems to me that St. Petersburg will remain one of the cultural capitals of Europe and, it goes without saying, of Russia. Sometimes, the meaning of 'cultural capital' is connected with the amount of champagne drunk after a cultural event, with the amount of caviar that is consumed. St. Petersburg can retain its uniqueness and not have to compete with Moscow, nor with London, nor with New York. In New York they love to say that Washington is the capital of the United States of America, but New York is the capital of the world. They are talking about cultural clout, not just about the fact that New York is a financial centre.

St. Petersburg should rest easy when looking at the advantages held by Moscow. In Moscow there is more money. Recently we have been hearing that St. Petersburg, again, has much less money. This has been linked to the arrival of the current Governor and the departure of the previous Governor. I believe that that is not the most important thing. We have unique advantages, many of which have already been mentioned here. My colleague, Alexander Sokurov, is creating world-class cinema in St. Petersburg; the great State Hermitage Museum is here; we have many other good museums; we have the Mariinsky Theatre, and this theatre is not the only one; in our city there is an active musical conservatory, which gave the world Tchaikovsky, where Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was a teacher, and where Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and Prokofiev were students. I could keep you here a long time, going through our heritage.

I would like to express one wish, which is the general thesis of my presentation here. I have just participated in a dialogue about philanthropy, and it is with great pleasure that I now take part in this discussion. I often drive along the riverside, and there is much that pleases me. One thing which constantly irritates me though – and I think that it is much more dangerous than a potential project which may not come into existence – is the Gazprom Tower. The television tower is present in our lives every day. It sparkles like a Christmas tree, but much less beautifully than any Christmas tree. Travelling past the Peter and Paul Fortress, we could be observing

a wonderful view, a symbol of St. Petersburg. In actual fact, what we see first of all is the aggressively lit television tower. I do not know who had this idea. We, who are very experienced, well-known people, who have the opportunity to discuss things, find this inconspicuous or unimportant. There is always something more important happening today. It seems to me, in the fight for St. Petersburg, we need to fight against this phenomenon. Some official has had the idea, "Let us light everything up so that people can see us." It spoils the magnificent view every day.

I have one more point I would like to make. We have here a vast opportunity to enrich the lives of schoolchildren even in their early years, since they can visit the Hermitage Museum at the age of seven or eight. You do not need to wait until you are 17 years old, when you have to prepare yourself for entry into university, or you have the chance to invite a girl to the Hermitage for 20 minutes. A schoolchild can discover the ballet *The Nutcracker*. Everyone at some point experiences their first *Nutcracker*, their very first; do you understand? It is these opportunities that will make St. Petersburg a real cultural capital of global importance.

Really, I have performed hundreds of times in New York and in London; I lead groups in these cities and have done a lot there. I like a lot about these capitals, but as soon as we try to function like New York, we will lose, because in that race we will not come first. St. Petersburg will become a clear cultural leader on the foundation of its pride and its magnificent and fantastic cultural history. We will try to do everything possible to achieve that.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. I understand that you have added a new, sociological criterion for an outstanding city. I always thought that people remembered their first kiss. Now I realize that they will remember their first *Nutcracker*. Good.

Alexander Sokurov, you are an obvious example of a person who works in the cultural sector on a European level. I will not talk about the list of your films and all of the prizes you have won. It is much more interesting to us today to listen to your

thoughts on St. Petersburg as a cultural capital. And then we will move from presentations by Petersburgers to presentations by Muscovites.

A. Sokurov:

Thank you. It is a great honour for me to be in the presence of my brilliant fellow countrymen and our foreign guest.

I will take advantage of the presence of the Minister of Culture, and say that we are waiting to hear from him at Lenfilm Studios. We have many problems; we are in a critical condition. We have passed our plan for transforming the studio to the Ministry, and we are awaiting its reaction. We have turned to the President with a request to somehow find a solution to the problem. We very much hope that the development of the studio will be continued. It is a big studio on a national scale, with a national programme. It is one of the remarkable aspects of our city. Currently, film production has halted: the previous leadership of the Ministry of Culture determined the funding for the coming project, but now we are no longer being financed, and documents have not been signed. I beg of you: please help us.

Regarding the theme of our dialogue, the term 'globalization' causes me great concern. We know that a definite protest against the tendencies of globalization is growing in the public consciousness worldwide. In business, in economics, in finance, this tendency, perhaps, has a positive side, although I doubt it. But in the cultural sphere, globalization brings constraints and very serious problems. It leads to an effort to unite everything, to create one general thing. Meanwhile, the dignity of humanity and the value of our lives are in variety and the protection of our culture. In my opinion, this is a very big issue.

Our great artistic culture, our significant, famous global associations must be protected to an adequate extent from the negative aspects of globalization which come with capitals. Honoured Maestro Gergiev, sitting here, is himself a unique and remarkable figure. He works to develop a polyphony of culture, for the preservation of classical culture. We know how strong the influence of mass culture is on big capitals: New York, London, Paris, and, unfortunately, Moscow. The existence of

cultural capitals as a phenomenon is extremely dangerous, in my opinion, to the development of national culture in principle.

Again, I turn to the experience of Maestro Gergiev. He not only works beyond the borders of this country, not only exalts our culture, our art within our super-capitals, Moscow and St. Petersburg, but he also works to develop the culture of his own small homeland, North Ossetia. The classical culture of our great motherland is not developed anywhere in the North Caucasus except in the homeland of Gergiev. We all know that other than that, it is not developed anywhere. I sent my students to the closing ceremony of a festival on June 25 so that they could see and listen to a live orchestra and live performers.

Globalization and the significance of capitals have a global tendency which is complicated and which contradicts nature. The role of capitals in the development of national culture is also not as positive as it may seem. Modern society and the modern Russian state are weak; they have a poorly developed, bureaucratic culture and are being torn apart by political contradictions and various party crises. This is expressed in the concentration of power and the concentration of life in super-cities. We do not have the energy or the means to create culture. Culture is the most important goal in the existence of any state and, in my opinion, the most important thing there is in the life of a nation. Not defence, nor industry, nor politics... Nothing has the significance that culture has. All of culture, all of its power, all of the economic interests of the culture of our country are concentrated in one or two cities.

We understand perfectly what is happening in the huge Russian Empire today. A significant proportion of cities and regional capitals are residing in cultural poverty. Huge resources were designated for the expansion of the influence of culture in the past, under the conditions of a different social system. The big cities' major, famous theatres toured across the whole country, from the Far East to the North Caucasus and the northern territories of Russia. There are now no tours; the Ministry of Culture does not have the capacity to support them. Everything is being squeezed today into the energy of the two capitals, and this is bad, harmful, and dangerous.

There is nothing more dangerous to culture than this kind of concentration and centralization. This is an extremely dangerous moment, in my opinion.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you very much. After the concentrated expression of the St. Petersburg position – the global St. Petersburg position, as I understand it – we will move...

A. Sokurov:

No, forgive me, that is my individual, personal position.

O. Kharkhordin:

Yours, of course.

Let us turn to the presentations of representatives of Moscow. I would like to give the floor to Irina Antonova.

I. Antonova:

I would like to join those who think that the categorization of cities as capitals, most important cities, global cities, and so on is not productive enough. I think that world cultural centres are, for example, Salzburg, where there are world-class music festivals; Bayreuth, the organizer of the Wagner Festival, or Venice, where the Biennale has become the most famous forum of the arts. Events in musical life or in the sphere of the plastic arts become a point of departure for a city to achieve cultural heights. It seems to me that a conversation about which is more important is not useful.

Something else is far more important. Cities have different resources, and I think that St. Petersburg's resources cannot be compared with anything else. It is enough to mention the State Hermitage: the principal museum of this country, one of the foremost museums in the world. We are now at the stage in the formation of museums in which it is now impossible to build a museum of this kind in Russia. To find resources for this kind of construction would be impossible.

The point is not to try to surpass each other, but to focus on our own activity: it is vital to concentrate on this. The individual efforts of creative people which lead in one direction or another are of great significance.

In Moscow, there is a place called Winzavod. It is a group of galleries which show modern art, and it arose in an empty space. The activity of each of these galleries separately would have, perhaps, sometimes been interesting, but it would not have become an event. Something remarkable began when they came together and created a centre where the most varied phenomena in modern art are exhibited. People from the arts sector from abroad began to flock there. When they arrive in Moscow, foreigners ask, "Where is Winzavod?" They want to go there and see how the different movements in modern art are concentrated in one place, and different tendencies are represented. Whether they are good or bad is another question. As a rule, great art is not present there. Cultural attractiveness exists there, and that is the most important thing.

The same thing applies to museums which do not have great resources, but have programmes and projects which are not even based on the most significant material, but which seem very interesting. I can give you examples of exhibitions which are interesting, not because they show the greatest works of art, but because of the way in which they have managed to find the right moment in a particular time, to sense the demand for this or that material.

One of these exhibitions was *Moscow–Paris*, at which avant-garde work was exhibited from Russia and France from the first 30 years of the 20th century. This exhibition had an unbelievable attendance rate and was a stunning success. Works of Russian avant-garde artists were shown there at the right moment. The exhibition provided the opportunity to get to know this material. People came to this exhibition not to see French art, but first of all art from their own country, and they came many times.

This automatically brings me to the experience of our museum. The *Moscow–Berlin* exhibition threw light on the work of German and Russian artists from the first 50

years of the 20th century in a completely new way. At this exhibition, a discovery was made.

For people working in the cultural sphere, the activity, the concept, and finding that which is needed now are the important things. I would say that the ability to listen to your time and to sense what will be required in the future are the main things that are necessary in order to attract attention to a museum, to a theatre, or to another cultural institution.

We need to find new forms of work, which the major museums, the leviathan museums – the Metropolitan Museum, the Louvre, the Hermitage Museum, the British Museum – are searching for now. Multi-functionality and the addressing of many areas of potential activity of a museum are qualities that are now in demand and indispensable. A museum of visual arts must now display more than just plastic arts.

Again, I return to the experience of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. The December Nights Music Festival has existed for 31 years. Concerts are organized in museums all over the world, but our festival has something different. We organize, without fail, a common programme. A special exhibition is prepared for the Festival, and there is a special musical programme. We look for harmony between different forms of art, giving the opportunity to those with a better eye, and those with a better ear, having been presented with these impressions, to further their understanding of art. This event enjoys great international interest. Isaac Stern, Cecilia Bartoli, Zuckerman, and other world-famous musicians have participated in this festival for over 31 years, finding an interest in it.

In the life of a museum, there are other moments which allow you to find new forms for using a museum's materials: for example, the discovery of themes for discussion in the cultural space. We have had exhibitions in which dipylon vases have sat side by side with the Eiffel Tower, or where, let us say, Roman portraiture has been displayed with the work of Michelangelo. Such dialogues inspire interest in the public, turning its imagination to new perceptions.

The problem of resources, which are now very difficult to obtain, is facing museums now. How can we fill museums with chef d'oeuvres? In our time, this is impossible. We can buy one painting, but this acquisition will not solve anything. The use of the material we have in various combinations is one of the paths we can take, not to globality, not to reach first place or the status of a capital, but to the improvement of the image of a city, a museum, or a theatre. This is simply one area.

O. Kharkhordin:

We are moving now from representatives of culture to representatives of business and government. I thought that the logical continuation would be for Sergei Kapkov, who is trying to grapple with what will make Moscow a global financial centre, to take the floor.

S. Kapkov:

If we are not successful in becoming a global financial centre, then we will try to become a cultural centre.

O. Kharkhordin:

Please tell us about this.

S. Kapkov:

I believe that in order to be interesting on the world stage, it is imperative to form a deeper understanding of your own identity. We need to be competitive with other global cities. Thanks to our ancestors, our museum collections, and our great music school, we have a basis by which we should be guided.

I think that global cities are cities which live a double life. It never happens that the citizens of a city do not find it interesting, but the global community, or the global consumer, does. Our task is, first of all, to make the city interesting to its inhabitants on a cultural level. They are the primary consumers, the people who create the

ideas, because a city is not just a place where people live: it is a place where ideas live, where ideas are formulated.

The place a city occupies in terms of cultural exchanges is also important. We must acknowledge that Maestro Gergiev won a global competition for the right to lead orchestras and associations, when Maestro Gergiev is invited to New York or to London. Ideas are being exported to those two great, cultural cities, since that was where they were lost. Internal ideas are no less important than external ideas, which we can set aside for export, starting from the classics and ending with modern art.

Let us look at the statistics for the number of cultural institutions: in London there are 162 museums; in Moscow there are more than 300. The issues are the quality of these museums and in the ideas and the ideology which form these institutions.

In New York there are 255 libraries; in the Department of Culture in Moscow alone, there are 446 libraries, and on top of that there are federal libraries, and additional libraries in all comprehensive schools. The question is: how do these libraries interact with society? Do they have any interesting content? Are they windows into the world, into global progress, into the global network?

For this reason, if we measure ourselves by Soviet statistics, then, thank goodness, we have a lot. Are we able to give out substantial ideas, not only to our citizens, but to the whole world? This is, of course, an open question. Our task is to find people like those present here. I imagine Lenfilm is no less of a propagandist for our country, and no less of a factory for producing ideas, than is the Moscow Conservatory. Tarkovsky fitted easily into the global cultural context; therefore, his work is recognized as a global classic.

The task of any city is to educate and increase the number of people who are formulating ideas and demands, for the city and for the outside world.

Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. Yes, the production of ideas as the foundation of culture's mission sums up the activity of great museums, great theatres, and great film studios.

I would like to find out the position of those people who are creating real things that we require. My question is for Mikhail Prokhorov. I remember that during your election campaign, you spoke about global cultural capitals as a part of your campaign. Has your opinion changed?

M. Prokhorov:

No, of course, after such a short time my opinion has not changed. On the contrary, it has strengthened. It is common knowledge that global cities determine fundamental trends of the development of humanity. If we look at the economic concept, we live in an era of global economics, and this trend cannot be changed. It seems to me that culture is moving in the opposite direction, toward localization.

It is precisely because of this that ten years ago, my foundation formulated the concept of developing local culture in major Russian cities. Two cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, have historically stood apart, and the whole of the rest of the country has lived according the principle of freedom, as Academician Glazychev has said. A few residential areas have cropped up around industrial sites. In the Soviet Union, not much thought was given to quality of life, from the perspective of living and cultural heritage.

I refer to the history of the appearance of cultural spaces. For my own purposes, I have separated these spaces into three types. The first type is the Greek polis: free cities, the cultural spaces of free people. The second type is metropolises, which attracted populations and reduced the provinces to nothing. A classic example is Ancient Rome, and, at a later time, major monarchies: that was how Paris, London, and a few other cities came about. The third type of cultural space came out of trade cities. Here you could cite Frankfurt am Main, Chicago, and Milan. Wise governance of a city had quite a strong influence on developing culture after changes in economics, when cities acquired new attributes.

Now there are two cities, and the battle for the status of global capitals, whatever we want to call it, is very important. It is imperative to participate in global trends, and to determine the modern development of humanity. In answer to these demands there

are several general rules: the history of a city, the collective intellect, the quality of education, openness to new influences, and the ability to generate new cultural products.

Sitting here are prominent cultural figures who, through their work, are creating absolutely unique cultural products. The task for politics and business is to create conditions so that these great cultural products can reach all of our citizens and be taken as far abroad as possible.

To speak practically, I believe that it is necessary in the near future to do two things. Firstly, we need to have a serious look at the law on philanthropy and significantly simplify it, to stimulate philanthropy by various means. Then there is the second thing. I think that everyone who works in the cultural sector will support me on this. We urgently need to repeal Federal Laws 83-FZ and 94-FZ. It is impossible to budget for a unique cultural product and put it up for bids alongside furniture and ordinary stationery products. A cultural product does not fit within the scope of these laws. If we do this together, the development of culture would move from a sidelined principle to a fundamental principle. The quality of human capital is defined by the level and the ability of a nation to produce ideas which capture the world's attention. We possess everything for this.

Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you, Mikhail. The applause in the hall speaks volumes about the popularity of your initiatives. Only the former Minister of Finance, Alexei Kudrin, did not clap, and I will hand over the floor to him now.

Alexei Kudrin is a political figure on the world stage. It is difficult to characterize him as a Petersburger or a Muscovite with regard to identity. I will ask you the following question: what would you say to us about cultural capitals, looking at this from a global perspective?

A. Kudrin:

Thank you. It is my pleasure to take part in this dialogue, because I am an inhabitant of both cities. At heart I am still really a Petersburger, and I like to say that we have two capitals in this country, however contradictory that sounds, and two cultural capitals claiming participation in the race to become global cultural capitals. I will try to explain my position in terms of what can be a cultural capital. When visiting various countries and cities, I always try to go to the local museums or theatres. I have attended many of the festivals that have been talked about here. I am coming to the conclusion that it is not just the first museums, founded in the past, that determine a cultural capital. They create a nimbus around themselves, a nourishing environment. The places that become determining factors are those where ideas are produced, or new values, which become first of all the property of a narrow circle of aesthetes, of specialists, and then of everyone. A lot of places exist where the search for the new is going on, the necessary experiment, where from a huge number of experiments something emerges as a new idea, a new paradigm for life. There are cities where these kinds of places are more concentrated. New York, London, Moscow, and St. Petersburg may be cities where modern understanding and modern culture is created.

St. Petersburg and Moscow have a foundation which should create this, but we need to depart a little from the bureaucratic approach. I think that the major sources of production of cultural values are the education, training, and participation of those people who are creating the foundations or the traditions in education.

Let us look at the creation of the iPhone. It is the product of the eventual merging of the products of many small, innovative enterprises. Someone made an innovative discovery, which was then found, brought forward, and realized in the final product.

The existence of the Mariinsky Theatre and its brilliant results depend on someone training those people who come to the Mariinsky, where they finish their studies. The cultural social stratum of actors, composers, designers, and modern artists must be preserved; they must come from somewhere; they must enter into this competition. The Mariinsky Theatre is the final collection.

St. Petersburg has the necessary environment, and Moscow, to a significant extent, has it also. I repeat: a cultural capital must be distinguished precisely by this modern environment, nourishing and creating a foundation for the new, and not just by those traditions or galleries of classical art which were founded in the past.

That is what I wanted to note in relation to cultural capitals. I am prepared to answer any questions. I am the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at St. Petersburg State University; I try to devote my time to this. Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Our panel is not about science; we will discuss science and education tomorrow. Therefore, Alexei Kudrin's opinion...

A. Kudrin:

I agree with the need to amend Federal Laws 83-FZ and 94-FZ.

O. Kharkhordin:

You see what an important result this is.

A. Kudrin:

It is imperative that we come to an agreement on how to amend these laws.

O. Kharkhordin:

OK. As I understand what Alexei Kudrin said in his presentation, we need to add new products to our traditional ones. The iPhone was presented as an example of what can be done with culture. So, as it turns out, we should produce ideas not in big chunks or traditional, undifferentiated masses; we should aim them at the mass consumer, doling the meaning of life out into 50-gram portions to make it accessible to every citizen? Perhaps I have not thought this through to the end?

A. Kudrin:

You know, culture is not one unified product. Speaking in the broadest sense, culture is the signs, the characteristics of society. If society masters it, then it is a cultured society, but if it does not master culture, you just have a couple of laboratories with specialists. I think that real, classical art is for everyone.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. The next presenter is Vicente Gonzalez Loscertales, the Secretary General of the International Exhibitions Bureau.

O. Kharkhordin:

I will switch to English, Mr. Loscertales, so that you understand that you have a unique role in this panel. Very much so. We were also supposed to have Josef Ackermann, the former Director of Deutsche Bank, as well as the Head of the Berlin Museums, but neither of them could come to this illustrious panel, so you represent the view from outside. These internal dynamics are all dynamics, of course, from within Russia, so you are the real global person here. Tell us what you think about the preceding discussion.

V. Loscertales:

Listening to today's discussion between very well-known personalities from Moscow and St. Petersburg, I was asking myself what someone from Seville is doing here in this discussion. But we are talking about culture and cities, and these are universal phenomena which rely on all of us and make all of us belong to the same family.

I am here in my capacity as Secretary General of the organization in charge of world exhibitions. World exhibitions, as you know, have a long history, and are big events which have transformed the faces of our cities: London, with the Victoria and Albert Museum; Paris, with the Grand Palais, the Petit Palais, and the Palais de la Découverte; all our big cities have seen their cultural faces transformed, thanks to these mega-events. They have been introduced in the city to accelerate processes

that should take place anyway, but they have been accelerated thanks to the expos, and have transformed the cities into huge cultural capitals.

In addition, they have made these cities showcases of cultural diversity. In the history of music, the notes that you see were very much influenced by orchestras coming from the Far East: Java, for example. We see this in the history of the expo, and we can see the influence of these big events in all the architecture, and in every cultural phenomenon. They transform the face of the city; they are part of the strategic plans of the city, and they prepare the city for the future and create a cultural infrastructure which can give life to the cultural initiatives and identities of different countries.

In the past, the competition to host this kind of expo was always between capitals. Today, we are assisting a new phenomenon: cities which are not capitals are trying to be present on the world stage, creating cultural projects and initiatives which have traditionally been absent. We have seen, and I have heard in the very interesting intervention of my neighbour here, other possibilities. We have some cities that monopolize culture and other cities that have many difficulties creating decent museums and decent theatres, which are the natural platforms for developing their culture. I think that from this point of view, world exhibitions are becoming catalysts to accelerate and implement development in cultural infrastructures. When I say “cultural infrastructures”, I am talking about quality of life. This is not just culture; it is an essential part of the quality of life. We cannot conceive of life in the city without a strong cultural movement.

We need to find the necessary resources to prepare our cities to have this strong cultural life, and expos can provide that. The successful hosting of an expo can enable a city to rely on talents, international efforts, and investment that would not be otherwise available on the same scale for the same objectives. I can give you the example of my home city. Seville has been the subject of many operas: we have a very long list of operas based in Seville, but it has never had an opera theatre until the Expo. Thanks to the Expo, people have discovered that we *have* got the public

for a theatre. Since the theatre opened, it has been full every day, and long queues of young people wait in the street to gain entry to the opera.

We have five city candidates for the 2020 expo. The enthusiasm is great. One of the cities is Ekaterinburg, which has a strong cultural base. If an expo takes place, Ekaterinburg will greatly benefit from opening to the world. It is strategically situated between Asia and Europe. The branding of the city, the opening of the city to the world, will make this city one of the cultural capitals of both the Eastern and Western world at the same time. Thank you for your attention.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you for your comments, and I am sorry that you only had five minutes, but it is five minutes of St. Petersburg fame.

O. Kharkhordin:

I want to thank Vladimir Medinsky for changing his schedule. The organizers told me immediately that urgent governmental matters meant he was forced to leave the panel early, but he asked me to allow him to speak last, so that he could listen to all of the participants.

With that, let us move on to the presentation from the Minister of Culture.

I will remind you of the first question, which we started this panel with. Are there opportunities in our country for the existence of global cultural capitals, apart from Moscow and St. Petersburg? Perhaps even these two cities, because of one thing or another, do not reach the level of global cultural capitals? Vladimir Medinsky, please go ahead.

V. Medinsky:

Thank you. I will be brief. It is much more interesting to me to listen to specialists than to give my own opinion. We have a few minutes, and I will go through some of our initiatives, which we are putting forward for public discussion. The Ministry deals not only with financing specific, government projects, not only with restoration, but it

also influences the rules of the game for successful independent development of cultural fields.

First of all, this means changes in the sphere of taxes. We suggest exempting museums from VAT for the importation of items of cultural value, and profit tax, which is not levied on cultural institutions, educational institutions, and healthcare services.

Thank you. We think that we need to change our approach to land tax. This tax is only not levied, I think, on establishments dealing in traditional folk crafts. Perhaps Alexei Kudrin can correct me on this. I do not understand how the land of these establishments differs from the land occupied by other state cultural institutions. Benefits from this tax are also necessary, as they are in a section of property tax from which only federal monuments are now exempt. Alexei Kudrin, what do you think?

A. Kudrin:

Land tax and property tax are levied at the federal constituent entity level; the rates are set by the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Only the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg can assign benefits for its institutions: it can remove tax or, on the contrary, make it as high as possible. This question is not decided at the federal level of the State Duma.

V. Medinsky:

That goes without saying, but we need to formulate a political approach in this regard. I do not see the point of moving state money from one pocket to another with the traditional loss along the way.

This affects a whole range of other innovations. For example, there are serious problems with insurance of a museum's valuables when they are transported, especially when they are exhibited abroad.

We are happy to discuss proposals in relation to new forms of and possible changes to legislation in the area of public-private partnerships. To look at the budget as

coming 100% from the investor, when it comes to cultural artefacts, I think is wrong: it is imperative that we actively create conditions which are as attractive as possible to businesses, patrons, and sponsors. We live in the real world, and we understand that we need to formulate rules, so as not to create loopholes for yet another ambiguous scheme in which those who want to use it find themselves immediately in the position of having all of this expenditure written off down to the minimum. I would like to invite Mikhail Prokhorov with all his best practices to create partnerships in this sphere.

Many innovations exist. In a number of countries, people in creative professions receive income tax allowances in those sectors of the economy where it is needed. We need to look at this carefully. I see our main mission as actively creating conditions for the independent development of cultural territories, for the independent development of new global capitals. The state cannot look after everyone: 837,000 people work in cultural fields in the state sector alone; that is a huge army. More active, mutually beneficial involvement of all citizens in the development of the cultural sphere, I think, can make a qualitative breakthrough.

I support my colleague, Mr. Sokurov, in this regard. Russia is not just Moscow and St. Petersburg. Those two cities are our pride, but Russia is much bigger.

As far as Lenfilm is concerned, I promise to come and see you on Sunday. That is all; thank you.

From the audience:

In relation to the creation of a public–private partnership, there is a law in St. Petersburg in this sphere, which is already established. You could take this as a basis for the creation of a federal law, making some changes and filtering or editing out some things.

V. Medinsky:

Thank you. That suggestion has already been made, yes.

O. Kharkhordin:

We will now move to questions from the floor. Before giving you this opportunity, I would like to ask a question to all of the panelists. I understand that this is one of the first panels on the economics of culture or on the problems in the cultural sector. This is the fifth Forum in a row at which I have been present, and every time there are about four panels about energy and about oil, but, as Mikhail Piotrovsky pointed out, this is the first time in the course of these five years that culture has been mentioned.

M. Piotrovsky:

It is the first time in St. Petersburg. In Davos, there are a few round tables about culture.

O. Kharkhordin:

In Davos there are some; they know what to export there. One might draw the conclusion that the backbone of our national identity is a gas pipeline, and not the people sitting on this stage.

The question is this: to what extent do you think culture should prevail in our export strategy over the continually emphasized energy resources?

M. Prokhorov:

In my opinion, this is all very simple. The integrity of a country is not ensured by guns or tanks or gas or oil, but by culture alone. If culture develops in a country, the territory can be protected. If culture does not develop here, then no guns or tanks can defend this territory. As a wise man once said, "Those who have left us live with us only through culture." That says it all.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. If nobody else on the panel wishes to answer this question, then we will see what the audience has to offer us. Who wants to ask a question?

O. van Winden

Hello, my name is Olof. I am the Director of the Netherlands Media Arts Institute. I organize festivals around the world. I am curator of the Seoul Biennale, so I operate in some quite large cultural capitals in the world. It is good to hear that there is a very positive sign that culture is used as an important tool to create cultural capital. However, I am quite surprised to see this positivity, because there is also quite a paradox. I see many current governments cutting cultural funding severely, and not only in Western Europe. I think it is a global problem. Do you have an answer to that, and also, do you know what the current situation is here in Russia?

O. Kharkhordin:

Valery, please go ahead.

V. Gergiev:

My answer to your question will be a continuation of what Mikhail was talking about. We are always speaking in many countries. Mikhail Piotrovsky is also linked to major projects with many global capitals. The presence of the State Hermitage Museum on the world stage is felt in America, and in Amsterdam, I think, and in Asia.

Russia depends to a lesser degree on those factors upon which Europe depends, and Europe depends to a lesser degree on those factors upon which Russia depends. If the gas pipeline runs dry in half a year, Vladimir Medinsky will be faced with new questions, not only about what to do with the millions of people who work in the cultural sector, but to with how to at least retain the level we have achieved over the last ten years. Russia faces a huge dilemma that everyone knows about: how do we move away from dependence on the value of gas and oil? And so we should make education and culture our first priority, and even our second priority.

I say "culture" without thinking at all about show business. One is confused with the other very often in Russia. Everyone loves a bright, beautiful show, and there is

nothing bad in that: show business hits its target dead on. I have made a suggestion that the television tower should not be lit up any more. A Christmas tree lights up once a year; the television tower lights up every day of the year. Show business is a principal source of money, and at the same time people dance, sing, radiate, create, and develop designs: all of this is important. It seems to me that the dependence of Russia on the price of gas and oil will weaken; it will become another lesson of history we will have learned. If the price of oil goes down (and it seems likely that this might happen), will we learn not to rush to the most extreme, and slash spending on culture? This is a huge question. I hope that it never happens. I am sure that the new government will carefully think through every step in this direction. There is one more problem which we need to talk about, food for thought for all of us: our duties are completely undefined. How many times should we perform: 900 or 200? How many times should we hold exhibitions: two or 22 times a year? Within the Mariinsky Theatre team there are questions, there are problems, there are shortcomings, but we perform a minimum of 760 times a year, of which 550 performances are in St. Petersburg and 200 or so performances are across the remaining 30–40 countries. Is that good or bad? I am beginning to think that it is bad. With the same level of financing, or even less significant financing than that of our counterparts, why should we not give the company time to relax? Why not make them work 100 times a year, give them the opportunity to spend four days a week with their children? There are many unresolved issues here.

I think, in the list of problems which Europe has come up against, there is also the problem that the norms which are in place were determined in years of plenty. Today, a lot of our colleagues are coming up against this. It is worth saying that even La Scala, a symbol of Italy, is not increasing but reducing its support. This sounds terrible to Italians: this was considered to be perhaps the foremost theatre in the world, because the Italian opera was always amongst the leaders. Long before opera appeared here, it was a traditional art in Italy. There is something to think about here.

I hope that I have partially answered your question. We must be ready for the eventuality that we must learn this lesson of history, and we are not yet thinking about the fact that we will have to go through this. I call upon everyone to take notice. Culture is the first and the second priority.

O. Kharkhordin:

Alexei Kudrin wanted to add something.

A. Kudrin:

There was a specific question which we were discussing today in one of the sections. I would say that this debt crisis which has gripped the Western world today means that over the last 20 years, the leading countries have maintained social expenditures, primarily government expenditures, beyond their means. The US has entered an extreme economic crisis, and the same applies to all the other major countries. These leading countries were living in debt. Today, this debt has reached a critical point: it means that these countries are not trusted; they are not given money to allow them to keep living like that.

We will have a restructuring of all the social and state political systems in these fields in the coming years. This will also proportionally affect the cultural sphere. I am talking about other countries. Unfortunately, expenses will be cut there. I would like for military expenditures to be cut, and secondly, for subsidies for industrial enterprises which interfere with competition and create state preferences in certain fields to be eliminated. I would like for expenditures on roads to be cut to a lesser extent, and for the smallest cut to affect education and culture. Whether Western governments succeed in completing such a manoeuvre, so that education, health, and culture lose less, will depend on the policy of those governments.

In our country, the situation is different for now; it is closer to what Valery was talking about. We must learn this lesson. I remember that in 2000, when I became a minister, the federal budget for culture was around RUB 8–10 billion for the whole country. Today it is 100 billion. This is a tenfold increase over ten years. Not one

other budgetary concern has grown ten times over. It sounds unusual, but that was the last measure I undertook before I left my post, when I was preparing the budget for 2012. Before, the figure was not 100 billion; in the previous year, it had been a bit less. This is a high standard, which, admittedly, is very difficult to maintain, if the price of oil goes down: everything which has been said here is correct.

Incidentally, the structure of expenses for cultural sectors could also be better. In this structure, communal payments and the means for renovation of monuments and maintenance of buildings predominate, rather than the content which we directly associate with culture. I understand that buildings for libraries and other establishments are also necessary, but there is a minimum of new projects there, of new buildings. We know that poorly maintained historical monuments loom over us; we travel past them; they are decrepit. We are losing many monuments every year because we have not been able to restore them. Therefore, a significant portion of funds have begun to be devoted to these things. Little funding is given directly into the production of ideas in this structure.

Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. Sergei Kapkov.

S. Kapkov:

I will pick up on what Alexei Kudrin has said. Funding of culture in Moscow has been growing up to now. The yearly budget for our cultural institutions is RUB 34 billion, and for our programme for the reconstruction of public spaces – parks, boulevards, symbols of the city – it is RUB 12 billion. The issue lies in the fact that standards of funding are poorly formulated. Let us say that the budget for all theatrical and concert-related fields is RUB 11 billion, of which RUB 8 billion is the fund for the salaries of 15,000 artists, who are theatre and related personnel.

In the feudal and twenty-year-plan-type thinking of the previous Mayor, a huge number of theatres were created, which were often very peculiar, did not have their

own buildings, and did not understand their own missions. We simply give them money, without receiving anything in return. We are now changing our standards for funding. We are formulating a different governmental task, so that every creative organization understands what the city expects of it, and to what extent the organization can count on the city.

According to our statistics, any cultural institution in Moscow makes about 30% of its budget on sale of tickets and additional services, as Moscow is an affluent city. I think that if we sort out the system of funding and accountability, this figure will rise to 50%. We want to depart from old, Soviet forms of governance of organizations, and come to forms of cultural governance through money, which Alexei Kudrin talked about. We need to give money not only to support buildings, but also for the creation of new productions, new exhibitions, and new cultural ideas. It is necessary not only to support state organizations, but to create conditions so that different organizations can participate in cultural life which do not carry the status of city or federal organizations, but which could be privately or individually owned. Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Let us take one more question.

K. Bykov:

I am Kirill Bykov, from the European University.

My question is for Mikhail Piotrovsky. It is known that among the biggest global companies which support the State Hermitage is Japan Tobacco International. How do you feel about the initiative of the Ministry of Health to ban philanthropy or sponsorship from tobacco companies, or to allow it but only anonymously?

M. Piotrovsky:

I feel that this is extremely negative, and I expressed this in writing, in a letter to the Ministry of Health. In our country there are difficulties with patronage and encouraging patronage. A tobacco company... Things are changing and times are

changing. There are military companies, many companies around, which in a short time will not be considered very humanitarian or humane. When thinking about culture, we should not forbid anything: on the contrary, we must support all companies which are prepared to participate in cultural life. It goes without saying that this is advertisement, but the advertisement is minimal. Hardly anyone knows that that logo is connected with tobacco.

O. Kharkhordin:

We still have time for two more questions and two answers, but with only a minute for each question and answer.

M. Ordzhonikidze:

I represent the Government of St. Petersburg. I would like to make a comment addressed to you. Excuse me, Mr. Kapkov; you probably did not expect that. We are talking here about culture and are giving a testimonial about former leaders in the room, where people from all countries are present. This is, on our part, probably unethical, since we are, after all, discussing the question of culture. That is my comment to you. I think that all of you will agree with me.

S. Kapkov:

Allow me to respond to your comment. Colleagues, I have 917 cultural institutions, of which 117 do not have their own premises and do not carry any kind of cultural purpose. Take for example Yevgeny Petrosyan's theatre, which was founded by Yury Luzhkov and which costs the city budget RUB 60 million. These are all respected people. Or take Nadezhda Babkina's theatre, which costs RUB 160 million. As an example, the Christmas Festival, which Maestro Gergiev runs in Moscow, also costs RUB 60 million, but it includes 152 concerts. I am not the one supporting these; the city budget and Muscovites support a huge number of institutions which do not do anything; they do not even hold one concert. The

Turetsky Choir is another. There is a huge number; there are 139 of these institutions.

M. Ordzhonikidze:

Let us say, not you, but the Moscow Government.

S. Kapkov:

Not me and not even the Moscow Government: every Muscovite is paying for the fact that Yury Luzhkov did not even give these people premises, but simply named them a city theatre, a theatre as a business entity. That is the extent of the catastrophe: money earned by other Muscovites simply disappears. This is a very evident problem in Moscow.

O. Kharkhordin:

We will just have one last question from the floor; please go ahead.

P. Pozhigailo:

I am Pavel Pozhigailo, President of the Committee on Culture of the Civic Chamber, and the new President of VOOPiK, the society for the preservation of monuments.

I would like to ask a question of Alexander Sokurov, as my colleague and friend in the protection of monuments. If the cherry orchard is being cut down, you need to shout. That is fine – better safe than sorry, because if not, then you will forget Firs, and the orchard will be chopped down. In this I support Mr. Kapkov.

My second point is: what is to be done, Alexander Sokurov? If you remember, we two and Mikhail Piotrovsky gave a press conference about the Okhta Centre during its most controversial time. No other cultural representatives supported us. OMON was on the streets; there were cameras; there were speeches against the construction of the Okhta Centre. Thank goodness we triumphed through the combined efforts of Living City, VOOPiK, and others. Today, 6,000 hectares of historic Radonezh have been destroyed for the construction of cottages. Five

people showed up; we were physically threatened. In Borodino, thank goodness, there has been civil action five times over the demolition of houses. The Pushkin Hills: Vasilevich sat on remand for two years, which practically gave that remarkable man a heart attack. The whole landscape of the Pushkin Hills was demolished for cottage housing estates. You know, ten people protest against things like this, or a hundred people, maximum. Do you know what the question is? When do you think millions will come out to these towns? When will there be more than five or ten of us protesting? Today, Detsky Mir is being demolished; Dinamo Stadium is being reconstructed; this is going on before our very eyes. In this lawless action, the destruction of monuments, unfortunately, only a few individuals are taking a stand. And it seems to me that the culture of cities in many ways is still determined by the culture of those of its inhabitants who are capable of going out into the streets to defend the sacredness of their city from attack. What is to be done?

O. Kharkhordin:

This is a well-known question in Russian culture. Alexander Sokurov, what is your answer?

A. Sokurov:

That is a very complicated and burdensome question. A few days ago, we, a group of inhabitants of the city, finding ourselves already facing a wall, turned once again to the President, sent him a letter about the absolutely intolerable situation which has come about in our city. The demolition of historical monuments continues, and has even become more common. The process of discussion of each site, which existed under Governor Matvienko, unfortunately is not being continued today. Hidden agendas, the participation of the security services, the participation of mysterious men in epaulettes, all of the processes in city construction are becoming absolutely hidden; they cannot be decoded; the sources of the permits cannot be found; it is impossible to stop the destruction of a monument, even by appealing to

the Governor, who says directly, "I do not have the modern tools to stop the destruction of monuments." And where is this? In St. Petersburg.

You are correct in asking, "What else can we do?" Should we do what they did in Moscow, bringing hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets? Then be sent off to prisons, to camps again? Who else can we turn to? To the Lord God? We kept turning to the President; we kept turning to the Prime Minister. What else can be done? We have reached a wall. All possible legal means, all means allowed by law have been used up.

Our respected citizens do nothing, our organizations for city protection can do nothing, because they are always on the brink of breaking the law. That is it; we have used up absolutely all the options. Even our State Inspectorate for the Preservation of Monuments can do nothing, because in the city there is either a shady government or a colossal Mafia lobby; you cannot make head or tail of it. Even turning to the Prosecutor General has no significance and no power. Now I am saying, "What are we to do?" We will think about what to do; the situation is intolerable.

We are here in St. Petersburg; we will somehow protest. I know that in Moscow there are forces for protest. People cannot do anything: not in Ekaterinburg, not in Nizhny Novgorod, not in Astrakhan, not in Arkhangelsk; nowhere. Our hands are tied, either by absurd laws or by the global culture of illegality of our governmental and judiciary systems; by the absolute, global culture of illegality. It is, in fact, one of the results of globalization, which now exists not only in economics, but is also moving into state construction, into city construction politics. At the point when everything is becoming so global, the vice has become so deeply ingrained that it is impossible to uproot simply through societal efforts, simply by legal, citizens' actions.

O. Kharkhordin:

We have already, unfortunately, run out of time. This topic is timely, and we could discuss it for a whole day, but our panel is coming to a close. Mikhail Piotrovsky bravely started it off, and I would like to allow him to close.

M. Piotrovsky:

I would like to return to the philosophical aspect of our discussion, if I may. Regarding struggles: we have struggled; we will struggle, and this is a characteristic feature of a cultural capital, which St. Petersburg is. We just need to remember that bringing people out onto the streets worsened the situation for the Angleterre Hotel, and it was barbarically reconstructed precisely because too many people were on the streets. So here we need to act more subtly. But that is not the point.

I always love to argue with Alexander Sokurov. I would like to say a few words about globalization.

Firstly, globalization is terrible, but it is impossible to fight it by throwing stones at windows. Globalization is the same as the Internet, which is itself a rubbish dump which should have an alternative good, cultural product set up to oppose it. Globalization gives us the potential to access remarkable things. On the Internet, for example, there are museum sites. This, I think, is the achievement of all museums, creating a whole, great sphere. Thanks to our technical capabilities, we are creating things which are accessible to everyone in the world, and cultural globalization is good because globalization is access. The rest is a question of how it is used.

There is one more big thing, connected to global capitals. It is in those capitals that something is arising and being created that does not exist in the world: a dialogue about culture. I do not travel that often, but my last trip was not that long ago, and in my eyes, Amsterdam and London have changed. London has become a fantastic city: not just a place of residence for various people, but a cultural capital for many peoples of the world. There is the British Museum, and people not only from London but from the world over come to it and find their sacred objects there. That really is an animated cultural dialogue, which is impossible anywhere except in big capital cities like that.

This must be done, and it is one of the possibilities for the development of St. Petersburg. At one point we were the biggest Finnish city, the biggest Polish city, a major German city, a Russian city, one of the oldest Tatar cities, and today all of this is preserved. Here there is a space where big cities can work. Multiculturalism has not disappeared; it just has a different name, as well as its old name, the Friendship of Peoples. In a major city, it is possible to bring into being a collaboration of cultures; then it will not hinder the development of other cultural capitals.

Three days ago, I went to Kazan. There, with our communal participation, the particular cultural form of the city is developing fantastically, setting an example for the whole world. Thank you.

O. Kharkhordin:

Thank you. Let us applaud all of our panelists' presentations.

We will continue to think about culture at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum next year. For those of you who are interested in science, come tomorrow to one of the very last panel discussions. We will be discussing the fate of universities and the export of knowledge. I can briefly outline one of the theories as you are standing up and leaving. In the 19th century, Russia exported opera and ballet; in the 20th century, it exported military might, and physics and chemistry in connection with this. Now laboratories have developed, and do not be surprised if, in the 21st century, we export social sciences. Thank you.