

PRESS RELEASE



**EUROPA
NOSTRA**

Fédération européenne du patrimoine culturel
Pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage

Moscow's Iconic Modernist Architecture Under Threat

Président / President
S.A.R. le Prince Consort de Danemark

Président exécutif / Executive President
Andrea H. Schuler

The Hague, 10 December 2007 – Europa Nostra - the Pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage representing 250 heritage organisations throughout Europe – has written to Mr Alexander Sokolov, Minister of Culture, and to Mr Yuri Luzhkov, Mayor of Moscow, to urge them to halt the rapid pace of destruction of the architecture of the Modern Movement. It thereby supports the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the Moscow Architectural Preservation Society (MAPS) in their campaigns waged for the preservation of this valuable heritage.

Russia has made major contributions to the architectural heritage of the last century. Besides the Bauhaus in Germany or the De Stijl movement in the Netherlands, the Russian Avant-garde played a key role in the development of European Modernism. Several important buildings such as the NARKOMFIN house, the house-studio of Konstantin Melnikov or the daring constructions of Vladimir Shukhov are now considered by experts to be iconic examples of modern architectural and engineering culture. Today they are in a poor condition and suffer from complicated problems of ownership. They are nevertheless considered by the expert opinion of ICOMOS - advisory body of UNESCO on the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention - as potential World Heritage properties.

In letters addressed last week to the Minister of Culture, and the Mayor of Moscow, Europa Nostra has urged them to establish the necessary conditions for the preservation of these key achievements of the Russian avant-garde, to raise their protected status to the Federal level, and to consider including them on the Russian Federation's Tentative List in view of their nomination to the World Heritage List. Moreover, support for a proposed international cooperation project for the restoration of a trial section of the NARKOMFIN building would give an encouraging signal to the international public and show the positive will of those responsible for preserving and rehabilitating the buildings of the European Modern Movement in Russia.

For more information, please contact:

Laurie Neale, Communications Officer, co@europanostra.org, tel. +31 70 302 40 55
Eléonore de Merode, Policy/Heritage at Risk, policy@europanostra.org, tel +31 70 302 40 52

Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation for Heritage, is the representative platform of over 250 heritage NGOs active throughout Europe. It is the voice of this vast movement of European civil society active in the field of heritage towards international bodies concerned, in particular the European Union Institutions, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Europa Nostra is dedicated to putting heritage and its benefits in the mainstream of public consciousness and to making heritage a priority for public policies both at European and national levels. Its specific objectives are to promote, at a European level, high standards of quality in the fields of heritage conservation, architecture, urban and rural planning and to advocate a balanced and sustainable development of urban and rural, built and natural environment.

Europa Nostra supports national and international campaigns for the preservation and rescue of Europe's heritage at risk. It encourages exemplary initiatives in favour of the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage by recognising outstanding heritage achievements, in particular through the running of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. Through its various activities, Europa Nostra seeks to highlight the importance of cultural heritage as a building block of European identity and as a contribution to the strengthening of the sense of European citizenship.

www.europanostra.org

Lange Voorhout 35
NL - 2514 EC Den Haag
tel +31 70 302 40 51 / 53 / 55
fax +31 70 361 78 65
e-mail office@europanostra.org
www.europanostra.org