RUSSIAN PRESENTATION OF THE PROGRAM «UNESCO CITIES OF LITERATURE» TOOK PLACE IN THE ULYANOVSK REGION

The event took place on September, 15 at the Lenin Memorial and became part of the business program of the VI International Cultural Forum and the Literary Festival “The Word. Volume Two”.

The work of the venue has begun with the signing of the cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Policy of the Ulyanovsk region and the Italian Institute of Culture in Moscow. The agreement was signed by Minister of the Regional Department Tatiana Ivshina and Director of the Institute Olga Strada.

“Ulyanovsk has become one of the first cities that were integrated into the UNESCO program. The very first ones were Ulyanovsk schools having received the status of UNESCO Associated schools. Universities also join these processes: today Ulyanovsk State University has a UNESCO chair; the establishment of a UNESCO chair in Ulyanovsk State Pedagogical University named after I. N. Ulyanov is in progress. It is worth mentioning that this is the fourth consecutive year when the International Cultural Forum in Ulyanovsk receives the patronage of UNESCO – the highest acknowledgement of the importance of discussed questions and topics at the Forum. And, of course, it’s the fact that Ulyanovsk has gained the status of UNESCO City of Literature, as UNESCO General Director Ms. Irina Bokova declared in the presence of the President of the Russian Federation in December 2015”, – noted the Minister of Arts and Cultural Policy of the Ulyanovsk region Tatiana Ivshina in her opening remarks to the reports.

The venue was attended by representatives of several UNESCO Cities of Literature, which have reflected the most important, in their opinion, topics related to their city in their reports.

The editor of the journal “New Eastern Europe”, a journalist of the newspaper “Tygodnik Powszechny” Małgorzata Nocuń (Krakow, Poland) in her story about Krakow, which has received the status of “UNESCO City of Literature”, said that Krakow is the cultural center of Poland. There lived two Nobel prize winners in literature there – Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska; the magazine “Tygodnik Powszechny” and the publishing house “Znak”, which have played an important role in the cultural life of Poland, work there; the literary festival Conrad, which collects many publishers and writers on its venues and opens the Russian modern literature for the Polish readers, takes place in Krakow.

The poet-translator Ksenia Dyakonova, representing Barcelona - UNESCO City of Literature (Spain), as the central theme for her presentation has chosen the Literary Museum of Barcelona. It details not only the world literature, but also the works of Catalan poet Jacint Verdaguer, known for his poem “L’Atlàntida”.

Fyodor Bogorodsky, a descendant of Nikolay Karamzin, President of the Karamzin House in Uruguay (Montevideo, Uruguay) also took part in the presentation of the program. In his speech he emphasized on the Uruguayan literature and its brightest representatives.

The representatives of the organizations engaged into the promotion of this program on the territory of the Ulyanovsk region – the director of the Foundation “Ulyanovsk – Capital of Culture” Galina Muromtseva and a manager of the Direction “Ulyanovsk – City of Literature” Pavel Andreev – have shared their experience of the implementation of the “UNESCO City of Literature” program. As Galina noted in her report, these organizations work in two different areas: the Direction implements literary projects on the territory of the city, actively collaborating with cultural organizations, local communities, etc; the Foundation is promoting Ulyanovsk as UNESCO City of Literature at the federal level: “Gaining the status of “UNESCO City of Literature” is extremely important for the Ulyanovsk region because through this status the region can present itself and our country at the international level. This status already attracts the attention of the
major Russian and international organizations, as no any other Russian city has managed to become a member of the Creative Cities Network”.

“For the City Administration of Ulyanovsk it is now important to integrate the topic of literature into various spheres of life, so that the city could develop through it. We would like to be able to improve the quality of the citizens’ life together with the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Policy, the Foundation “Ulyanovsk – Capital of Culture”, libraries and other organizations”, – said Pavel.

In addition, Lyudmila Skrynnikova, head of the Sector of socio-cultural projection of Taganrog Cultural Department, participated in the work of the venue. She spoke about Chekhov’s Book Festival, which is held annually in Taganrog and becomes a catalyst for the development of publishing activities, gastronomy, etc.

After the reports, a discussion started, during which the experts could share their opinions about what aspects of the implementation of this program should be paid attention on. The discussion participants have noted the conduct of scientific sociological research on the theme of reading, as well as building a close interaction with entrepreneurs as suggestions for the program organizers.

It is worth reminding that the organizers of the VI International Cultural Forum, which was held in the Ulyanovsk region on September, 15-16 under the auspices of UNESCO, is organized by the Government of the Ulyanovsk region, the Ministry of Arts and Cultural Policy of the Ulyanovsk region, the Foundation “Ulyanovsk – Capital of Culture”, the Regional Art Museum and the Agency of Tourism of the Ulyanovsk region. The official partners are the Department of Culture of Moscow and the EKSMO-AST Publishing Group.