

**Eurovision Moscow is on the move**

*Tony Naets, Head of Eurovision Production and Services, EBU*





# Eurovision

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## From the Rossiya Hotel to Pozharskiy Pereulok.



Eurovision Moscow is finishing its move from the Rossiya Hotel to its new premises at Pozharskiy Pereulok.

The Rossiya Hotel, an architectural masterpiece of the Krushchev era, and once the largest hotel in the world, is to be demolished. Developers working with the City of Moscow have grandiose plans for the site which once was a popular quarter of the city just outside of the Kremlin gates (of course, living that close to the Kremlin is not always without risk . . . which is the reason for this move).

The Mayor of Moscow Yuri Mikhailovich Luzhkov (who can probably apply for a job in EuroDisney after the expiry of one of his terms) has been for the better part of a decade on something of a building spree, destroying existing buildings (usually eyesores – Russian architects have clearly learned from Belgian architects) and intending to replace them with grandiose projects. Since Brussels has the ugliest building in the world (the church at Koekelberg), the Russians went one better by building an authentic 17th-

century basilica, replacing a much beloved (but equally ugly) outdoor swimming pool.

The Intourist Hotel (famous for this writer by being at one time the press centre for the Soviet Party Congress: congress press credentials were required to enter the hotel, but the credentials were handed out on the mezzanine floor of the hotel... Logistics take note!), and the Moskva Hotel have all been destroyed (providing Moscow with something tourists really love: big holes in the town, lots of slush and an acute shortage of hotel rooms).

### Panorama

So after many confusing messages, the City has also taken aim at the Rossiya. Check-out time came for all guests at the end of December, staff were made redundant, and Eurovision stayed (well protected) until mid-February. Now the Rossiya has gone from our address books, and so has the view – which allowed us to pay Moscow staff a pittance since they had the best view of all Eurovision employees and they should really have paid an entrance fee for it.

In case you wish to wax nostalgic: it was the site of the Eurovision news operation in 1988 for the Reagan-

# SCOW

is on the move

Gorbachev summit (it was also my accommodation when I was on my first trip to the Soviet Union) and it became again our base of operations after a brief detour to a communal building behind the US Embassy (a period in Eurovision history marked by our contract with the KGB to provide security).

## Cockroaches

It will be interesting to see how the city intends to get rid of the hotel: light-weight construction was not an Olympic discipline for Soviet trained architects. And then it will be curtains for the cockroaches and any skeletons left in the closets. You can still see the hotel and our network antenna on Google Earth . . . watch for a big bang to appear.

The new Eurovision premises at 15 Pozharskiy Pereulok (not far from the basilica and an easy ride on the metro) are on the fourth floor of a newly built office building. As in Washington, landmark views are supplied as a chroma-key background from a remotely controlled camera that will be the only eye on the Kremlin. The studio will now look like any other studio, but it will still be within easy reach for all of those who need to appear on camera from what is after all one of the centres of world power.



*The old office*

