[RU] Act on the limitation of foreign ownership in the media

IRIS 2014-10:1/31

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On 14 October 2014 President Vladimir Putin signed into law amendments to the Statute on the Mass Media that drastically limit foreign ownership in the media. The new Statute enters into force on 1 January 2016.

The amendments revise Article 19-1 of the Statute on the Mass Media, itself introduced in 2001 (see IRIS 2001-9/25), and further tightens the policy introduced by a 2008 statute to curb foreign investment in companies of strategic importance to the security of the nation (see IRIS 2008-8/32).

A foreign state, international organisation or an organisation under foreign control, a foreign citizen, foreign legal entity, Russian entity with foreign stock, stateless person or a dual citizen may not establish a media outlet in Russia, act as its editorial office or engage in broadcasting. They may not own share or stock in media entities that exceed 20 percent of the charter capital. They may neither control nor direct media outlets and broadcasters nor determine their policies or decisions.

The amendments would extend to all media, including online outlets, registered in Russia.

The documents proving compliance with the new statute shall be submitted to Roskomnadzor, the governmental watchdog in the media field, by 15 February 2016. A failure to do so and/or non-compliance with the restrictions will lead to a suspension of activity of the media outlet or broadcasting organisation.

On 24 September 2014 the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović called on the Russian authorities to carefully address the law, at the time only a draft, and noted that it should not concentrate ideas and information in the hands of national political elites, thus hampering the important watchdog function of journalists.

О внесении изменений в Закон Российской Федерации "О средствах массовой информации"

http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102362850&intelsearch=14+%EE%EA%F2%FF%E1%F0%FF+2014+%E3.+N+305-%D4%C7+

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Federal Statute of 14 October 2014, No. 305-FZ "On amending the Statute of the Russian federation "On the Mass Media", adopted by the State Duma on 26 September 2014, approved by the Federation Council on 1 October 2014, published on the official portal on 14 October 2014

"Proposed media ownership requirements could further damage media pluralism in Russia, OSCE Representative says", Statement by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, 24 September 2014

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