

## [UA] Broadcasting Council warns media group about infringements

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Ukraine's National Broadcasting Council has issued a warning to the broadcaster Inter Media Group after unscheduled inspections showed that its channels Inter, NTN, TRK Music TV (Pixel TV) and Kino TV (Enter Film) had violated current Ukrainian broadcasting law. The relevant provisions, in particular Article 28.4 of the Ukrainian Television and Radio Act, require television broadcasters to fill at least 70% of their weekly programme content with productions from Europe, the United States and Canada, and not less than 50% of airtime with Ukrainian productions.

In the case of Inter, one of the country's leading TV channels, the weekly share of European, US and Canadian productions was only 57%, while for NTN it was only 56.8%, with just 32% for Ukrainian productions. For Pixel TV, European and Ukrainian output were only 66.4% and 24.7% respectively, while Enter Film allocated 37% of airtime to European productions and 22% to Ukrainian productions.

The Broadcasting Council also criticised the Inter Media Group for refusing to produce licences allowing it to broadcast and distribute films. It gave the group one month to bring its activities into compliance with current legislation.

Inter is a private broadcaster owned by Ukrainian gas oligarch Dmytro Firtash, the country's only gas importer. Many patriotic Ukrainians consider news broadcasts on Inter and the other TV channels to be too pro-Russia and the number of Russian TV series to be excessive. A scandal broke out when Inter broadcast a New Year's programme in which Russian stars spoke in favour of the annexation of Crimea. Masked men then raided the broadcaster's offices and smashed its windows. Ukrainian patriots are calling for the broadcaster to be shut down. Meanwhile, Inter employees fear for their jobs, since the National Media Council has already warned the broadcaster twice about its pro-Russian stance. Although the warnings have no direct consequences, the Council will decide whether to extend the broadcaster's licence when its current one expires.

