

The Russian invasion of Ukraine prompts various reactions by media regulatory authorities

IRIS 2022-3:1/4

*Eric Munch
European Platform for Regulatory Authorities (EPRA)*

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 has prompted media regulatory authorities across Europe to take various measures against several Russian state-controlled media outlets, over recurring disinformation in their coverage of the conflict. While some regulators carefully monitor the situation, others have taken steps to restrict the retransmission of certain channels on their national territory, on the grounds of threats to national security – for EU regulators this has been mostly on the basis of Article 3(3) of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

The European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) has decided, after an exchange with the Ukrainian regulator, the National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting (NCTRB), to collect data on the measures put in place by EPRA members.

Between 24-28 February, the Latvian (NEPLP), Estonian (CTRA) and Lithuanian (RTCL) regulators restricted retransmission of RTR Planeta, Rossiya 24, TVCi and Belarus 24. NEPLP and CTRA also suspended retransmission for RBK and MIR24, while RTCL and CTRA extended the suspension to NTV MIR. Access to Prima1s Baltijas Kanals Lietuva, in Lithuania, and RTVi in Latvia, was also suspended. On 25 February, RTCL successfully requested that YouTube remove the channels associated with the programmes and published a recommendation for telecommunications operators to provide retransmission services of several Ukrainian TV channels (1+1, 2+2, Channel Ukraine, ICTV, STB, Inter, New Channel, TET, K1 and NTN) to provide their Russian speakers with more diversity in content.

The same day, the Polish National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT) adopted a resolution on the deletion of five Russian programmes from the register of TV programmes: Russia Today (RT), RT Documentary, RTR Planeta, Soyuz TV, Rossiya 24 – rendering them inaccessible through cable networks, satellite and internet platforms.

On 1 March, the Bulgarian Council for Electronic Media took the decision to restrict retransmission of RT and Sputnik, and all their subsidiaries.

Following the adoption by the Council of the European Union, on 1 March, of a regulation and a decision restricting access of RT (including its different language versions) and Sputnik to the European media market, ERGA, the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, announced on 2 March that it “stands united and is committed to contribute to the swift and effective implementation of the measures by all stakeholders”. Several media regulators who had not yet taken measures at national level – such as the Czech regulator, RRTV – have since drawn the attention of national operators to the immediate and direct application of the Council’s regulation and decision.

Media regulatory authorities outside of the European Union have also taken measures against Russian channels.

The Ukrainian regulator, NCTRB, decided on 25 February to suspend the retransmission of more than seventy Russian TV channels in connection with recurring use of violent rhetoric referring to the Ukrainian authorities, law enforcement bodies, armed forces and the Ukrainian people in general; perceived as a threat to national security in the context of the current crisis.

On 28 February, Ofcom, the UK regulator, opened 15 investigations into the due impartiality of news programmes on the RT news channel, followed by further 12 investigations on the same grounds, launched on 2 March.

On 2 March, the Committee for Extraordinary Situations of the Republic of Moldova issued a decision providing for the suspension of programmes originally produced in countries that had not ratified the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (except for EU, US and Canadian programmes, and films and entertainment programmes in general). It also temporarily grants the Audiovisual Council the power to suspend licences and retransmission.

NEPLP turpina ierobežot Krievijas propagandas kanālu izplatību Latvijā

<https://www.neplpadome.lv/lv/sakums/padome/padomes-sedes/sedes-sadalas/neplp-turpina-ierobezot-krievijas-propagandas-kanalu-izplatibu-latvija.html>

NEPLP continues to restrict the spread of Russian propaganda channels in Latvia

TTJA otsustas keelata viie telekanali taasedastamise Eesti Vabariigi territooriumil

TTJA decides to ban retransmission of five TV channels on the territory of the Republic of Estonia

Decision to Suspend Retransmission of 6 Russian Language TV Programmes

<https://www.rtk.lt/en/news/decision-to-suspend-retransmission-of-6-russian-language-tv-programmes>

Russian programs removed from the registry of distributed programs

<https://www.gov.pl/web/krrit-en/russian-programs-removed-from-the-registry-of-distributed-programs>

Tisková zpráva RRTV o sankcích Evropské unie proti aktivitám Ruské Federace v oblasti dezinformací a manipulace s informacem

https://www.rrtv.cz/cz/files/press/TZ_sankce%20EU.pdf

RRTV press release on European Union sanctions against the activities of the Russian Federation in the field of disinformation and manipulation of information

The National Council applies to the National Regulatory Authorities of European countries

<https://www.nrada.gov.ua/en/zvernennya-natsionalnoyi-rady-yevropejskyh-mediaregulyatoriv-pro-pidtrymku-v-borotbi-z-propagandoyu-rf/>

Ofcom launches further investigations into RT

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/ofcom-launches-a-further-12-investigations-into-rt>

Comisia pentru Situatii Exceptionale a Republicii Moldova DISPOZITIA nr. 5 din 2 martie 2022

https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/dispozitia_cse_rm_nr.5_din_02.03.2022_stampila.pdf

Commission for Exceptional Situations of the Republic of Moldova DECISION No. 5 of 2 March 2022

Прессъобщение

<https://www.cem.bg/displaynewsbg/795>

CEM press release

