

Editorial 2022-04

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One month has passed, and war is still raging in Ukraine. One of many unfortunate consequences of this dreadful event is that the Russian Federation is no longer a member state of the Council of Europe, or of the European Audiovisual Observatory. Despite this, the IRIS newsletter continues, and will continue, to report on legal issues concerning Russia in so far as they are of interest for the audiovisual sector and for our members, as you can see in the present newsletter: in the UK, following 29 investigations, the media regulator Ofcom has revoked the broadcasting licences of RT's licensee ANO TV Novosti, considering it not a fit and proper broadcaster given the regulator's immediate concerns about its compliance with due impartiality rules; In Germany, the Berlin-Brandenburg media authority decided to threaten RT DE with a fine if it did not cease broadcasting in Germany. The European Court of Human Rights decided to apply an urgent interim measure concerning Novaya Gazeta, inviting the Russian authorities to abstain until further notice from actions and decisions aimed at full blocking and termination of its activities; in the Russian Federation, the Arbitration Court of the Kirov Region issued a judgment in a copyright case that could establish a trend or precedent in relation to how Western copyright holders are treated in Russia; and in Ukraine, the Commission on Journalistic Ethics dismissed a complaint concerning offensive language directed at a Russian warship on a TV programme.

Beyond our monthly reporting, the Observatory has recently published a note that discusses the legal and institutional framework behind the EU sanctions against the Russian state-owned channels RT and Sputnik. And at the same time, we have also released a new report that looks at the various aspects of governance of public service media and its role in safeguarding the independence of PSM. Finally, as I wrote last month in these electronic pages, I can only express my solidarity with the victims of this terrible war, wishing that it ends soon, and a durable, just peace ensues. More than ever, stay safe and enjoy your read!

Maja Cappello, editor European Audiovisual Observatory

