

OSCE Media Freedom Representative strongly denounces retaliatory measures against German media in Russia

VIENNA, 4 February 2022 – While closely looking into the implications of recent developments involving RT DE channel and Deutsche Welle broadcaster on media freedom in the region, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro today condemned the retaliatory measures undertaken by the Russian authorities against German media outlet Deutsche Welle.

“Initiating retaliatory proceedings against media and penalizing journalists for the legitimate pursuit of their professional activities merely based on political motives is disproportionate and goes against the very spirit of OSCE principles and commitments regarding media freedom,” Ribeiro said. “I call on the Russian authorities to reconsider their approach and ensure that media professionals can continue fulfilling their important societal role.”

The Representative’s comments follow the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ announcement of 3 February about the retaliatory measures against German media operating in the country, as a response to a recent decision by Germany’s national media regulator in a case against RT DE. In particular, the Russian authorities decided to close the office of the TV and radio broadcaster Deutsche Welle; to revoke the accreditation of all employees of the Deutsche Welle Russian bureau; to terminate Deutsche Welle’s satellite and other broadcasting; and to suggest labelling Deutsche Welle as a foreign agent.

Earlier, on 2 February, Germany’s national media regulator, the Commission for Admission and Supervision (ZAK), declared that RT DE Productions is a German-based broadcaster – the same conclusion that the Media Authority of Berlin-Brandenburg (MABB) had come to in December last year. According to ZAK, this means that RT DE is subject to Germany’s laws and regulations and requires a license to broadcast. This license was reportedly not applied for by RT DE and was not granted to RT DE. ZAK declared that this means that RT DE must cease all broadcasting in Germany, including through live stream on the internet, via mobile and smart TV apps, as well as via satellite.

“International obligations and standards, including OSCE principles and commitments, put a high barrier on the possibility to put restrictions on broadcasting by media outlets. Such restrictions always have to be legitimate and fall under the scrutiny of a functioning, independent regulatory system, with the possibility to appeal restrictive decisions.”

The Representative invites OSCE participating States that have differences regarding media activities to use all available platforms to engage in open and constructive discussions to find suitable solutions.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States. She provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom and promotes full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments. Learn more at www.osce.org/fom, Twitter: [@OSCE_RFoM](https://twitter.com/OSCE_RFoM) and on www.facebook.com/osce.rfom

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/511438>

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