

MONITORING OF RUSSIAN TV CHANNELS 2016

Bratislava, 10 January 2017 - Russian channels continue to deceive their viewers, according to a monitoring report.

The state-controlled channels - First Channel and Russia 1 - as well as NTV, controlled by the state-owned company Gazprom Media Holding, continue to offer their viewers extremely limited range of views and opinions. They concentrate on President Putin and his cabinet. The Russian narratives include accusations against the US and EU, a research done in September and October by MEMO 98, a Slovak monitoring group, in cooperation with Internews Ukraine, shows.

The monitoring revealed that the main Russian channels continue to be used as instruments of propaganda. The state channels invariably offer only the official position and neglect to air any independent and alternative views or critical reporting challenging the performance or views of the authorities. This is a long-term trend identified also in the previous monitoring periods in 2015 and 2016.

RBK also focused its coverage on the Russian authorities, especially the incumbent president, but its coverage of authorities was more neutral compared to the state-controlled TV channels. While Dozhd also provided a significant portion of its coverage to the authorities, in contrast with the state-controlled TV channels as well as with NTV and RBK, its coverage was more diverse and included also critical views. Russia Today focused primarily on institutions and affairs outside of Russia, presenting them overall in a very negative light.

As for the coverage of topics, First channel, Russia 1 and NTV focused their news coverage mainly on politics and foreign affairs. By contrast, the second most featured topic in RBK and Dozhd was business and economy, followed by foreign affairs. As for the coverage of topics on Russia Today, foreign affairs clearly dominated the news broadcasts. While the First channel, Russia 1, NTV and Russia Today concentrated their coverage on the conflict in Syria, RBK and Dozhd gave more coverage to the Russian economy. Apart from the Russia Today, all monitored TV channels also provided extensive coverage of the 2016 parliamentary elections in Russia.

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