



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply Russia's Intensifying Campaign Against Independent Media

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 18, 2021

In this Council, the Russian delegation has repeatedly tried to create a false equivalence between the draconian measures taken against RFE/RL in Russia and the legal framework within which RT and Sputnik operate in the United States. There is no such equivalency. The Kremlin severely restricts RFE/RL's ability to broadcast on Russian television or radio. In contrast, the U.S. government in no way limits the ability of RT and Sputnik to broadcast in the United States.

We will repeat what we have stated before: there is no equivalence between U.S. FARA legislation and Russia's "foreign agent" law. Russia uses its "foreign agent" law to restrict, intimidate, prosecute, and shut down civil society organizations and independent media.

America's *Foreign Agent Registration Act* does not impose restrictions on how media outlets registered in the United States print and broadcast their stories and opinions. In contrast, RFE/RL outlets are not permitted to broadcast on television or radio in Russia. Freedom of Expression enjoys strong legal and constitutional protection in the United States, including for members of the press, whether they are U.S. citizens or foreign nationals or whether they work for U.S.- or foreign -owned and affiliated outlets.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

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