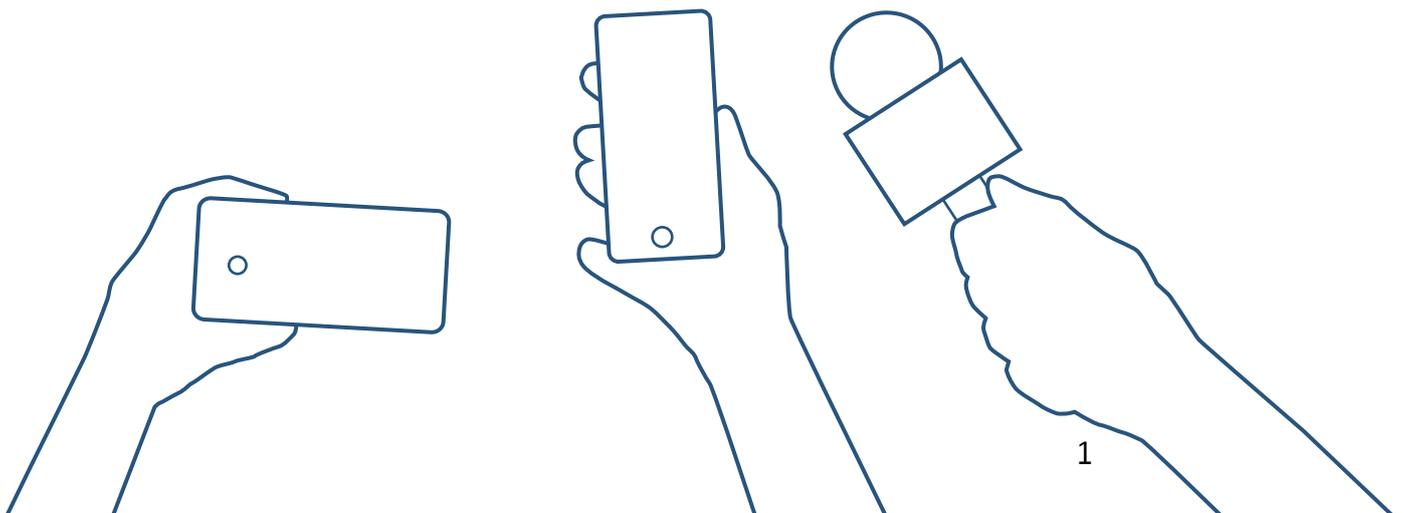


A Barents Press
guidebook

Journalism по-русски

[English version]
What you need to know
about working conditions
for your Russian colleagues

**Full-length
PDF edition**



Title, English version:

Journalism по-русски

(Journalism in Russian)

Title, Russian version:

Журналистика in Russian

(Journalism in Russian)

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We would like to thank all 28 interviewed journalists, men and women working in the Barents Region for telling your stories.



About Barents Press International

Barents Press International is an NGO operated by journalists for journalists in the northernmost regions in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and North-western Russia.

We create, we share knowledge and we work together across the borders. We believe that more journalism across the borders is vital in decreasing misunderstandings, fake news and the gap of knowledge between our countries.

This book is part of that mission.

Illustration inspired by Nina Vatolina, 1941

A gap that shouldn't be there

Do western journalists really know the nuances involved in working as a journalist in modern Russia - juridical, financial, ethically? Do Russian journalists really understand the equivalent nuances for journalists in Western countries? Our experience is that the regrettable answer is no.

There is a gap of knowledge that can make it challenging to cooperate colleague to colleague. A gap we believe should not be there.

We believe this book is one important bridge over the gap. Through the following pages, Russian journalists share their own words about their working conditions, not in black and white but in many different colours. We also outline the most important legal aspects that Russian journalists face in their work.

We believe quality journalism is a necessity in society, and we strongly believe that cross border connections and cooperation is key to a more trusting, understanding world.

**Colleagues, let's start
bridging the gap!**

Anna Kireeva, Barents Press Russia
Tim Andersson Rask, Barents Press Sweden



NJC on the Bridging Gaps Project

Winston Churchill is quoted for saying that Russia is “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma”.

The same goes for Russian Journalism.

The Nordic Journalist Centre tries to solve the riddle, understand the mystery and unlock the enigma. Through education and exchange, we bring Russian and Nordic journalists together, and let them look into each other’s profession and the conditions under which it is undertaken.

The Nordic Journalist Centre endorses this booklet and its effort to “bridge the gaps” between journalists in the Nordic regions of Europe, including Russia.

“Nordic and the Russian Journalists have much to share. Provided they will”, as Russian tv-host, Vladimir Pozner, phrased it at a seminar in 2019 during Almedalsveckan in Sweden. “I absolutely think that the existing relations between journalists of Russia and the Nordic countries should continue to develop and strengthen”.

Nordic Journalist Centre, www.njc.dk

*Leif Lønsmann, Board member and
senior advisor*

John Frølich, Managing Director

Nordic Journalist Centre (NJC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1957. The goal is to strengthen the development of Nordic media and journalism by organizing mid-career training and courses for journalists from all Nordic countries, based on common cultural values and the ‘Nordic media Model’. Furthermore, NJC contributes to networking activities among journalists and editors in the Nordic Region, including North West Russia.



The Questionnaire

**Interviews with
28 Russian journalists*
representing a wide range of
modern media**

* All interview persons are anonymous,
listed by type of their media



Illustration inspired by Veniamin Briskin, 1971



In your opinion, which of the Russian laws related to the activities of the media, most affect the work of a journalist in the country?

I am not the head of the editorial office or the owner of the media, so I do not often face legal problems related to the law. But I think today there are a number of laws that affect the activities of journalists, and their theses should be taken into account. First of all, it is a question of the method to cover the activities of public authorities, criticism of the power in mass media. Some legal rules are evaluative and can be interpreted in two ways. For example, the law on extremist activity countermeasures can bring a journalist and a paper to the dock even if the editorial office does not believe it has distributed such information. To the same extent it applies to the law on fake news.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

In my opinion, the activities of Russian journalists are seriously complicated by the two laws that have come into force at the end of March this year, about insult of the power and about responsibility for spreading fake news. Both laws punish for contraventions with large fines and blocking of the media, but at the same time they have a very vague formulations that enable repressive application of these laws in relation to objectionable publications or journalists. Due to threats of blocking and fines the editorial policy of many media outlets has become more cautious in criticism of the authorities, coverage of conflict situations and controversial historical subjects.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

All laws related to information, its transmission and distribution affect the work of a journalist, one way or another.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Recent changes related to the insulting of power, as well as the law allowing mass media and journalists to be registered as foreign agents.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Russia has a very good media law, but, unfortunately, there is talk of changing it. It would work well if it were kept. Unfortunately, the authorities are not always open and accessible, as it is prescribed in the law. The law on the propaganda of homosexuality does not explain what propaganda is. One can fall under it quite unconsciously, because it is formulated extremely vaguely. So any uncritical statement against homosexuals can be regarded as propaganda. The law on foreign agents and undesirable organizations now applies to individuals as well. Cooperating with anyone on any project, you can get the status of 'an undesirable organization'. There appeared regulations that place on secret list the country's combat losses and combat operations. Doing investigative journalism on this topic one can get a large criminal sentence. Extremism is a separate issue. There are organizations

banned in Russia (recognized as terrorist or extremist). If it is necessary to mention LIH, the Right Sector and TD in the text, one should not forget to attribute that these organizations are forbidden in Russia. Otherwise, there comes a big fine. The law on fake news, which is worded in the way that all the information that someone may not like can be considered fake news. And the courts tend to side with them. Then the author, being even a hundred times right, can be fined for spreading fake news. The law on the abuse of power implies that any critical publication, if desired, can be regarded as a clear disrespect for the authorities, and then the author will be fined by Roskomnadzor.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

The existence of restrictive laws does not mean that they cannot be circumvented. One can find a lot of similarities in Soviet times. The question is whether people who enforce the law are able to read between the lines. If someone is afraid of black cats, they will see black cats everywhere. It is important to have an experienced lawyer who can defend the position of the media. Interpretation of the laws is unsteady which can motivate the management of mass media, being afraid to get served with an article of law, to tighten control over the subjects to be reported on and to be on the safe side.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

In my opinion, one of the most pernicious laws that contradicts the principle of journalistic task to help people is the requirement to publish a photo of a child only if you have a written consent of a parent, a guardian or a trustee). In recent years, the Murmansk region including, people are often lost. Media publish portraits of children with the information about their statures, distinctive features, items of clothing; and then we receive warnings from Roskomnadzor. And the question arises: are we to save the child by spreading information or to wait for a written permission from parents, or ignore this information at all? There's a similar situation with articles about drugs and suicides. They can be combined under a common term: 'about what-can't-be-mentioned'. How to write about suicide without naming the sequence of the person's actions? No way. Or it's very difficult. That's why Russian media have almost stopped writing about it.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned National newspaper

The Information Law, The Media Law, The Advertising Law.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

It seems to me that these are laws relating to the insult and disrespect of authority, the laws on fake news, suicides and a vague law on justification terrorism.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

It's the law which prohibits foreign ownership of the media, since in our region foreigners owned the main share in the main independent media. This

greatly affected the independence of the media in the region; the foreigners had to sell their shares to any people who wanted to buy them.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

Everything that you don't know is scary. Foreign Agent Act, which extends individuals.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Recently, these are laws related to insulting the power and feelings of believers and also the activities of Roskomnadzor to identify extremism, separatism and hate speech.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Copyright Law, Media Law, Civil Code of applying images of citizens.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

First of all, the topics that the journalists of our channel cover are determined not by laws but by the editors of the channel. I, as a journalist, do not know every provision of laws on mass media, and there is no sense in this knowledge.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Those are Media Law, amendments on insulting the authorities, restrictions of Roskomnadzor, insulting the feelings of believers.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It's Media Law. But journalists are not required to know all the laws; articles on sensitive topics are always examined by lawyers.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

First of all, these are Roskomnadzor's restrictions that cannot be ignored or that will end with a fine or blocking of the resource. It's the Advertising Act that prohibits writing 'the best' and other superlative words in advertising articles. The antimonopoly service may fined and the amount of fines will be hundreds of thousands rubles.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

They are Media Law, Honor and Dignity Protection Act, Electoral Law, as well as amendments to Copyright Law.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

The Law on Information, Mass Media Law, Advertising Act. new restrictions of Roskomnadzor, amendments related to insulting the authorities and feelings of believers strongly affect the activities of journalists.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

On insulting the authorities, insulting the feelings of believers, on state secrets, criminal punishment in the form of real terms for defamation.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned City newspaper

It's difficult to answer about the laws, but the restrictions of Roskomnadzor precisely affect.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I am not in the know of the names of the laws; we have a lawyer who deals with this issue.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

It's the recently adopted law on foreign agents for individuals. The thing that now most of the independent media in Russia do not want to take on journalists for staff positions and work with freelancers, especially in the regions. And this, of course, also applies to journalists of the Barents region in Russia. Among these media are also those which I write for: Radio Svoboda and its projects Sever.Realii, and Siberia.Realii. All of them are recognized as foreign agents; I receive fees from them and disseminate information since this is my main activity. So for me the threat of becoming a foreign agent is great. It is still unknown whether they will somehow inform me about the agent status or it may happen that, for example, my pages on social networks will suddenly be locked by decisions of the prosecutors and Roskomnadzor. It is also possible they may oblige me to do my financial accounts. In case I am not informed or not informed on time there is a danger that they will impose a large fine on me and freeze my bank cards.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Those are Media Law and Personal Data Law. I don't think Copyright law affects so much. Neither does the right to privacy in comparison with foreign countries.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

At the moment they are the law on fake news, on insulting authorities, as well as numerous restrictions in the law on advertising, which, for example, made it almost impossible to print stories about medical services. One cannot disclose treatment methods or name devices, it's only possible to use names of procedures in the registry, etc. That completely emasculates the text and the advertisers don't like it. And even if it is not commercial information which is free of these restrictions they will still look for signs of advertising and apply all these requirements. That affects newspaper business and the opportunity to make money. As a result, it affects the media itself and its independence in search for other sources of income.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

Of course, The Media Law affects our work most of all. It gives the right to request information both orally and in writing. In case the information is not

provided or of the response time (7 days) is violated it is possible to complain to the prosecutor's office, and this measure still works and is effective. I even complained about the structures of the government of St. Petersburg that ignored the request if ex-senator Sergey Katanandov is still working as Assistant Governor of St. Petersburg. After contacting the St. Petersburg prosecutor's office the city authorities were quick to respond, although they were not fined. But The Media Law does not only provide such good tools, but also limits our work. Several times we had problems after mentioning minors subjected to violence, which is prohibited by this law. We were not going to specifically violate it; we just rewrote federal media that openly mentioned such children (e.g. committed cadets of the Petrozavodsk navy school). For some reason, Roskomnadzor did not make claims against federal media for distributing images and names of cadets, while they tried to punish the regional media. We managed to avoid punishment by receiving written permissions from the parents. The law on personal data also affects our work. It sometimes builds up similar problems. The publication where I used to work, for example, was fined 5,000 for disclosing the name of a citizen, who committed suicide, after his father's complaint to Roskomnadzor and the prosecutor's office. We are also faced with the laws on protecting the health of citizens (medical confidentiality) and on commercial secret. These days we are affected by the law on Information, Information technology and information protection which allows punishing for disrespect to government bodies and symbols of power. We got no complaints on this line, but lawyers and the director of our media are being overcautious fearing of fines and sometimes offer to remove some stories. The last example here is about the ironic posters with Putin affixed by unknown people in our city. We published photos of these posters, but then one of them bearing the caption 'The Crimea is mine' was removed. Other photos and text remained on our website.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

They are Media Law and the law prohibiting the distribution of personal data.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

First of all, I would point out the Federal Law on Countering Extremist Activities. Many publications can be far-fetched, but media and journalists are likely to be prosecuted. It's also Federal Law on Information, Information Technologies and Protection Information, in particular clauses on the prohibition to disseminate information aimed at promoting war, fomenting national, racial or religious hatred and hostility, as well as other information for the dissemination of which criminal or administrative liability is provided. In addition, the dissemination of messages and materials of a foreign media acting as a foreign agent, and it turns out that common harmless information (even with critical overtones) can be put under this law.

I would also mention Federal Law on Amendments to the Code of the Russian Federation on offenses of the officials, which has introduced administrative responsibility for the dissemination of knowingly inaccurate socially significant information in the media and on the Internet. The fines are huge. And the language is vague. Again, you can find application to any journalist, if one looks hard enough. I should also name amendments to the Law

on Information, Information Technologies and Protection information and restrict access to abusive material. This is the so-called law of disrespect for authorities. There's no clear definition of what is considered disrespect . Therefore, it can be interpreted in any way. But the price of the issue is considerable.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



What, in your opinion, are the most controversial, painful or 'dangerous' topics that can be covered in the Russian media? Are there topics that the media in general or you as a journalist prefer to avoid?

I am not the head of the editorial office or the owner of the media, so I do not often face legal problems related to the law. But I think today there are a number of laws that affect the activities of journalists, and their theses should be taken into account. First of all, it is a question of the method to cover the activities of public authorities, criticism of the power in mass media. Some legal rules are evaluative and can be interpreted in two ways. For example, the law on extremist activity countermeasures can bring a journalist and a paper to the dock even if the editorial office does not believe it has distributed such information. To the same extent it applies to the law on fake news.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

In my opinion, the activities of Russian journalists are seriously complicated by the two laws that have come into force at the end of March this year, about insult of the power and about responsibility for spreading fake news. Both laws punish for contraventions with large fines and blocking of the media, but at the same time they have a very vague formulations that enable repressive application of these laws in relation to objectionable publications or journalists. Due to threats of blocking and fines the editorial policy of many media outlets has become more cautious in criticism of the authorities, coverage of conflict situations and controversial historical subjects.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

They are controversial topics such as the war in Ukraine or Syria. But personally, I am not interested in these topics and I do not cover them. There are strictly regulated topics: minor children, suicide, ethnic conflicts. Here it is necessary to choose the wording very carefully. Criticism of the authorities is a dangerous subject; you can get under the law on insulting the authorities where the word "insulting" is not clarified. I avoid topics which are not related to the region my media encircles. This is not interesting to the readers. There are no uncomfortable topics that I specifically avoid.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

A painful reaction is always associated with articles related to economic benefits of the state: negative environmental impact of large corporations, oil and gas companies on the region, etc. Criticism of the authorities at the regional level is quite appropriate. Coverage of public protests and rallies causes close attention of supervisory bodies. The main thing is that there should be no call for protests. Once we published a photo with a poster 'Stop feeding Moscow', this text was duplicated in the article. Law enforcement agencies asked for expertise of this phrase with a view to extremism and separatism - we could have touched aspects of the federal structure. The examination did not confirm extremism. Our lawyers did not allow withdrawing the circulation and confiscating the computers.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, of course, the decision is always mine. One can give reasons not to do the job.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Everyone has their own experience of 'getting burned' by a topic. But the problem here is not in some specific topics, but in the fact that many regional media have information contacts with the authorities and large regional enterprises. The presence of such contracts keeps from going too deep into the problem; such media try not to focus on critical topics. Now mass media are dominated by the financial component, money and service contracts with the power and the companies have turned into censorship. The word 'censorship' itself is no longer used, it is a dirty word. But the inner censor is present, as a rule, everywhere. Hardly any regional media are able to survive without such contracts.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

I've already marked them. I can say that in our newspaper there are no stories about lost people, suicides and drugs. Nothing at all. Unfortunately. And not because I am, as an editor, afraid of fines, but because court cases take a lot of time and nerves.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

'Dangerous' topics are child abuse, suicide, homosexual relationships. You never know what you will get from Roskomnadzor in these cases. I write on a specific topic, not related to what I have indicated above, so there is nothing to avoid. But there have been instances when our newspaper did not report on high-profile cases such as the trial of the former head of the government of the Murmansk region. Why, I don't know. But I think not to quarrel with the head of the region, as her name also appeared in the case file.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

I would mention the topic of suicide, because you can get under the persecution of the law because of the possible dissemination of information about the method of suicide. A similar incident occurred to the Norwegian

Barents Observer website. Our mass medium is independent. The founders are private persons. They, as a rule, do not interfere in the work of the editorial office. Sometimes the founders can advise us something at the collegial level, but not in form of an order.

I personally don't have any topics that I avoid. However, I avoid inviting some people to the studio. For example, I do not like to interview top city officials who are members of the ruling party "United Russia". They have a party discipline that 'forbids' them to think and be sincere. Interviews with them are boring and sly for both me and the audience. These people tend not to answer questions truthfully and get away with them.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

The subjects of the Caucasus and Chechnya imply physical danger. A few years ago the topic of terrible conditions for Chechen gays surfaced. We wrote about that and feared persecution. It's also the topic of private military companies. Our journalists receive direct threats. Once a basket of funeral flowers with a severed ram's head inside and a photo of a newspaper journalist attached were brought to the editorial office. And after that, on various resources there began to appear reports and articles discrediting the reputation of the newspaper and individual journalists. The topic of corruption in power has ceased to be dangerous, as officials simply do not respond to such investigations. On the one hand, there is wide scope for journalists to investigate, and they won't get in trouble. On the other hand, officials do not react to such reports which do not cause any consequences for them. In addition, readers are already bored with this topic; they are not interested in such investigations.

And it's the law on the abuse of power. The sense of self-censorship has increased many times. If we write about a rally we carefully select photos so that there is no insult to the authorities. We constantly have to decide for ourselves whether we want to publish something very critical or we want to go on working in the future. Sometimes we decide that it is worth risking the existence of the newspaper and to publish a story.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

The most difficult situation for journalists has become the reporting on issues offending the interests of very large business companies. Now it's hard to write investigations that might affect large corporations. The media would be dragged to the courts, where judges would side with the companies, not the media.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Those are topics related to corruption - it is difficult to approach them in small cities, sources fear for their anonymity, they can be immediately calculated. Criticism of power, religious topics, everything related to protests and rallies. This is here that self-censorship steps in; texts are deducted by lawyers, etc. I can't recall a single topic that a journalist from our media would try to avoid.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We try to avoid many topics if these topics are not issued for us by the regional government which is the founder of the media. Otherwise, it will end just with removing the article. Among forbidden issues are those of Shies and environmental problems in general, social support for families (a very painful topic), health problems. We, as a state-owned media, avoid all sensitive topics related to any field of activity. It is important to understand that these prohibitions are connected not with federal state policy, but with individual regional or city officials, directors, 'small tsars', who themselves establish their own rules.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

'Dangerous'? Yes, the most ordinary topics do not occur in our reports: protests, the problem of garbage and environmental protection, LGBT people, suicide, closing of budget institutions (rural schools and small health care stations), problems of enterprises which have contractual relations with media (advertising contracts, contracts for information service). It's worth mentioning that a journalist's work is almost around the clock, often seven days a week and very low paid. Media advertising contracts do not affect a journalist's salary.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

We will not photograph children. As it is, we can write on any topic, since I work for a private media. The most dangerous events to cover are protests, domestic violence, suicide and issues related to individual officials and businessmen.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

There are no topics which we would not write about. But we have such a situation in the country that any topic can be painful. But we still write on all topics. Despite the fact that the regional government is one of the founders of our media, we write about various problems of our region. Of course, we carry out orders to inform about the activities of the regional government and also work out advertising contracts with different institutions but we are not pinched as to the rest of the topics, we write about the problems that exist in our the region.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

These are topics related to environmental issues when we write about the most resonant problems; you never know how this will turn out. Here you always walk on the edge. Topics related to military issues as it's very easy to get under a military or state secret. Topics related to terrorist issues.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

I would name the topics related to organized crime and corruption in the power structures, it's difficult to obtaining reliable insiders' information, evidence base and consequences for a journalist after publications on this topic. As to painful or controversial topics, I would refer here the topic of decommunization, that is, the refusal of communist symbolism, rethinking

of the Soviet period and personalities (Lenin, Stalin), renaming cities and streets. This topic is painful for some part of the population. The rights of sexual minorities are another painful topic. LGBT Propaganda Act was originally adopted in our region, and was sent up to the federal level. A very difficult and controversial topic is sexual education. A religious theme and an insult to the feelings of believers is also a difficult topic. But here the regional media's peace depends on the personality who heads the Eparchy: whether there will be hysteria after each note or a calm reaction. The subject of Shies is an extremely painful problem for regional authorities. Regional state-owned media, in principle, do not cover anything related to this topic.
Interview #18 Regional freelancer

There are obvious taboos which relate to the first persons of the state, the party United Russia, government officials and, regional authorities. If we talk about regional issues any things related to criticizing the authorities just do not appear in our media. The founder of the outlet is the regional government and it controls the information that we release.
Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Criticism of the federal authorities, Shies, Orthodoxy, patriotism. Sometimes local authorities regarding corruption, because as it's said 'you shouldn't touch them; things can get worse for you'.
Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Dangerous are the topics of suicide, drug related topics, LGBT people, religious aspects. I cover all of them but with great care.
Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

Such topics include any conflict situations in which one of the parties is presented by law enforcement agencies (police fights, trials, dispersal of rallies). So are the topics where business interests are involved when they run counter to the interests of residents.
Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Experience has shown, dangerous topics can include politics and economics, social sphere and environment if they are covered in a way unfavorable for the authorities, if they contain criticism of the officials and, in some cases, even if they are presented neutrally. For example, my colleague, a journalist from Arkhangelsk, who wrote about the headquarters of a well-known in Russia opposition politician and was his volunteer in 2017, unexpectedly for himself became a witness in a case of allegedly illegal financing of the headquarters. And although it was illegal, his home was searched and his computer hard drive and telephone were taken from him. Many journalists, including me, write a lot about the construction of Shies landfill plant, about fakes associated with it and people's moods. We quote activists who, among other things, criticized the Russian government and specifically Putin. I write a lot on environmental topics, and they are all politicized; behind the accidents, catastrophes or deteriorating environmental conditions in

different regions of the country there are always large companies associated with the Russian power.

The issues connected with the history of the country are also dangerous. Many people remember the case of the Karelian historian Yuri Dmitriev. He discovered the Sandarmokh cemetery where the prisoners of Gulag were buried. Today in Russia they prefer either to hush up or distort the truth about the events of that period in history of the USSR. Of course, I'm afraid to write on all these topics, but it's impossible not to write about all this, people should know this.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

The most dangerous topics for me is violation of minors' rights, it's difficult to write about that as there are a lot of prohibitions. The same is about the topics of suicides, it is sometimes impossible to give even important details (one cannot describe the method, for example), corruption and negligence of officials. The reaction of Roskomnadzor which fulfills their 'violation plan' is a danger.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Those that can be interpreted in two ways and bring under any of the laws, for example, about fake news.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

The most painful topic is ethnic hatred related to some Caucasians who committed a crime, robbed and beat someone. These publications cause an explosive reaction of society and of the authorities. I try to avoid this topic. It's better to write about it as a fact of crime, so that there's not even a hint of a national component. Another painful topic is the abuse by security forces, say, the FSB or the Ministry of Internal Affairs, their intimidation acts against political activists. After the protests on March 26, 2017, I wrote about that. As a result, there were annoyed calls from the former press service head of the regional FSB with an attempt to put pressure on me: 'Are you ready to bear responsibility for these hints?', 'Your texts are with absolutely no proof'.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Most of the media in Russia have a founder who pays salaries to reporters. And the founder's political party membership, his views on life and goals affect the media and topics which may become a taboo. From my own experience I can say for sure that in the regional budget donated media we do not criticize the governor, for example. In a scandalous situation we can tone down sharp details and soften the blows. We do not evaluate the adopted laws; we only inform the population about their entry into force or some changes. Tough policies in the media system, even control and subordination affect the ways of journalists. We weigh the topics, evaluate in advance and try to predict what resonance there will be. I often work with social and environmental topics; they are connected with the government and the work of ministries. Here criticism and possibility of evaluating poor-quality work are allowed. Budget donated media cannot afford what

the opposition is doing, that's for sure.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

It is dangerous to write about suicides, especially about children. Though the percentage of these cases is growing it may be interpreted as a call for suicide. And no one's going to clear up the issue. A ban on the dissemination of information on methods of committing suicide and calls for suicide are established by article 15.1 of the Law on information, information technology and information security.

Another thing is about planned mass actions. It also may be interpreted as a call if the demonstration is not in line with state interests. Analytics on military and political issues may well become an occasion for accusations of revealing state secrets or military secrets, even if the information is taken from open sources. This has already happened to our scientists.

If you decide to write an article on fascism, nationalism, then you have to be extremely careful not to suddenly get accused of propaganda. That is, the arguments of the Nazis, even if they are followed by a complete debunking, can be regarded precisely like propaganda. Religious and national topics are very slippery because the excitement of ethnic or religious hatred may also lead a journalist to court. And if you write that a group of angry Muslims shouted insults at Orthodox parishioners' church, or vice versa, then nothing will prevent you from being accused of inciting hatred.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



How is the editorial decision made in your mass medium? Are you told which subjects to cover? Are topics discussed and decided at editorial meetings? Who has the last word? Do you yourself make a decision based on your journalistic judgment?

There are topics that are determined by the editorial board, for example, coverage of the transition of Russia to digital broadcasting. It was necessary to write a lot and in detail, although, personally I, did not consider it necessary. There are editorial tasks related to the visits of officials to the region – these topics are obligatory; it is not even discussed. As to most of the topics on the regional agenda I suggest and work them out myself, taking into account the scale of events, the resonance of the occasions. Generally speaking, I can refuse to perform the task if I justify my position. For example, I do not consider it necessary (but even harmful) to distribute the materials of ECO-Media Barents. I do not cover their activities, although I do not exclude the possibility that they can sign a contract with the editorial office to cover their activities, in which case another journalist will fulfill their order. It seems to me that the ratio of the editorial board's decision to mine is about 20% to 80%.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

The editorial policy of our edition is determined by the editor-in-chief, but the

subjects in most cases are offered by the journalists. I am free to choose topics, but there are taboos among them such as personal criticism of the President and Governor (partly this is due to the laws mentioned above and partly to the contract with the regional administration), as well as business groups associated with the founder of the edition. In this case I can offer the story on the taboo subject to another edition or post it in social networks. Personally, I make a journalistic decision on my own and do not write texts which contradict my intrinsic conviction.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media Interview

The discussion is made at the editorial meetings; and it is the editor who has the main word.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

The decision is made collectively by the editor-in-chief and the heads of the thematic departments, journalists are also involved in this. The editor-in-chief has the last word purely formally.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

We practice the second and the third options. Ideas are discussed at planning meetings. In my edition authors may opt out due to a conflict of interest or personal risk.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We are told which issues to cover.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

We have weekly planning meetings where journalists propose topics. For example, they tell me which speakers they plan to talk to. I advise something and share my contacts. In addition, of course, I propose some topics and appoint someone who will do it. Or keep it for myself. Of course, I have the last word. Most often I reject or postpone a subject if I see that the journalist cannot cope with it yet.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

There are all three options, the percentage is difficult to determine. There are topics that are covered a priori, they are about city and regional life. It happens that the editor-in-chief himself gives the task on what topic to write. Sometimes it requires writing in a certain key. For example, someone should be definitively praised, and another person should be definitively blamed. Among the reasons there may be personal preferences or advertising relationships with companies. We may not write about some companies and their important information until they place advertisements in our newspaper. The subjects to cover are discussed at daily meetings. Decisions are made there, but the main word remains with the editor-in-chief or the editor-on-duty. I also make a decision whether to write about something or not. If the task comes from the editor-in-chief and I do not like it, there are no special options, I have to write. Often the authorities require a certain

angle in the coverage of the topic. If I do not agree with this, I still write the text, but I try to soften this angle, because I understand that if I give this text to another journalist, then most likely there will be only the position of the editor-in-chief. For many years of my work there have been about 4 times when I radically disagreed with the position of the editor-in-chief. And I always managed to soften the text. But over time, the editor-in-chief understood my tricks and such topics are sometimes given to another journalist.
Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Topics are chosen by the editor; the correspondents also suggest something newsworthy to the editor. The decision is made by the TV news section editor. Sometimes it is discussed with the correspondents. We have short meetings every morning when we discuss current issues of the day and upcoming shooting. The editor makes the decision together with correspondents. There are situations when the editor suggests a topic, and not all correspondents welcome it, they say that it is not interesting. And the editor listens to the opinion of colleagues removing his proposal from the agenda. Of course, I can make a decision based on my journalistic judgment.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

All three options are practiced. Everything depends on the position of a journalist and the range of topics he specializes in. Sometimes journalists know better than editors what it is important to write about and when. All this is coordinated at the planning meetings where also the journalists are given tasks which are to be done quickly. There are topics that require long-term work. We have little subordination but a lot of popular authors. Usually the editor agrees with the journalists' arguments. A journalist is not a function, but a person with an opinion.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

Decisions are made at planning meetings. But very often journalists themselves offer subjects to cover. Sometimes they are rejected (very rarely), usually they are accepted.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

The discussion of topics and suggestions takes place at editorial meetings. The editor defines relevance of the topic and suggests in which package to submit it. Journalists may propose their own topics, and their opinion may not coincide with the opinion of the editors, but on the website, there will come out authors' columns.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

The regional Department of Information and Public Relations issues a list of topics for us to cover. These tasks are distributed to reporters at the planning meetings. They can offer their own topics if they are not acute and negative, they are also accepted.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

It is the Channel's management who has the last word and they are always present at the planning meetings. When informational events happen the topic of the story is discussed by the editor, then with the commercial director (whether it affects the interests of the business with which we have contractual relationship) and with the officials of the channel. In order to have a topic proposed by a journalist approved, all three stages must be completed.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

The decision is made at the planning meetings; the last word is left to the editor. Journalists actively suggest their topics, they are always accepted. The founders never interfere with the editorial policy.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Journalists are actively to suggest their topics, so does the editor.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

All three options are present. The editor speaks about certain topics that he considers it necessary to highlight. But journalists are constantly offering their own topics. The editor can advise and adjust the approach to the topic, but usually, topics proposed by the reporters are approved by the editor.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

I am a freelancer and I propose topics myself. If for some reason my topic is not accepted by a media, I offer it to another one.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

All options are used. We get tasks and topics from the government: patriotic themes, positive stories about activities of the governor and government members, etc. All other topics are discussed at planning meetings; journalists and the editor suggest and discuss topics. The editor-in-chief gets the last word.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Collegially on a planning meeting, the last word is with the editor, always one hundred percent.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Journalists from our media monitor the news, inform the editor, and discuss topics. Sometimes the editor himself suggests topics. The last word is always with the editor-in-chief, but he most often agrees with the ideas proposed by journalists.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

All topics are discussed at planning meetings, but sometimes the management (not the editor) says its last word, and it becomes decisive.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Sometimes I am offered topics by the media that I work for. If I have time I write. But this is a rare thing. Most often, I myself find topics and suggest them to different independent media. If someone refuses, it's usually not because they're afraid or there is censorship but the topic just does not seem relevant for them. Or they have already published an article about this. In this case, I just turn to another media. It has never happened that no one agreed to the topic proposed by me.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

The founder of our media is the regional government. I have an official state assignment on which we must cover certain topics (resettlement of emergency housing, the 75-th anniversary of victory in the World War II, support for government business, etc.) Though, journalists in our editorial office have freedom of choice. If a correspondent does not like the topic, he will not take it up. There will be no consequences for the journalist; someone else will do it in the end. If the topic is state-run the founder can dictate his accents. If not, then most often the founder does not intervene.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Usually we discuss that at meetings or make personal decisions. As to controversial issues, it is often a general solution.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We do it in consultation discussing topics within a team of journalists. Sometimes the project manager or the director of the publishing house joins us. But more often we make decisions without their participation. Even more often journalists decide for themselves what and how to write. There are requests or advice from the director or the project manager and even the founder, but these are not orders. Sometimes it happens that their wishes remain unsatisfied and nothing wrong occurs after that. But these requests make up 3-5% of our workload. The rest is our own choice. Sometimes we discuss topics at planning meetings, but more often on the fly, in my office or in the work chat. We have great freedom in the editorial office to determine the topics ourselves, without discussion, so it is most often a journalist who has the last word. I do not even remember any topic being hacked from above. In 99% of cases I make my own decision.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

There is a certain media plan conducted by the press services of the government, ministries, city authorities. We take something from this plan to cover on our website and attend events; in this case, we are told what topics we should cover. At editorial meetings, the last word is with the editor. If I'm not happy with the way my story looks like after editing, I just can refuse publishing it and suggest another media to publishing my variant under a

pseudonym.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

Discussion of topics and decision-making take place at editorial meetings. for the editor-in-chief has the last word. He is responsible for everything in the media. But I myself make a decision based on my journalistic position. If my position does not coincide with the position of the editors, I may not write the story.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Have you ever been asked to delete or edit published articles, and if so, by whom? What did you / your editor do? If the articles had not been removed were there any consequences?

I do not remember a case when someone required me to delete a published material. There was a situation when I was asked to replace a specific official with an unnamed source. But since the official did not ask me about being presented as an unnamed source, we did not change anything, even at the request of this person. I do not remember the authorities have ever tried to 'correct' anything in my materials, even if it contained criticism. It seems to me that in such situation's journalists can decide whether they may be pressured from the outside or not.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

I didn't have to delete my published texts, but several times the editor didn't agree to my suggestion of the subjects for articles because they were included in the category of taboo. Then I published them in other media and in social networks.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, I have. The regional administration asked to remove a story about the Governor of the region. The story was removed (for the owner of the media could face economic and political consequences) for a week, and then quietly returned it to its place.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, we were asked by the government of the region to remove the article about the regional officials being involved in corruption. We ignored the request. There were no consequences.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, I have. The editorial response was negative. We do not delete the

publication and reserve the right to reply: the offended person can express the opinion on the pages of our edition – we will give him the opportunity, as this is a requirement of the media law. We are more often asked not to write about something than to delete a published story. But such requests were refused to do. The consequences were sad, several journalists were buried. Sometimes the authors were threatened. A journalist could be sent a named funeral wreath. But I have never been threatened. I believe that the guarantee of safety is a statement. If you know something and you are asked not to write about it – write it fast, and you will stay alive.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

There were such requests. The report was not deleted, but the text had to be changed. This is also about a journalist's experience of. An experienced journalist of a state media knows which points can cause such a reaction and is obliged to avoid them.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

As to large stories such as a detailed interview for example, we always coordinate the text with the speaker. The interviewees can read the entire article but can only revise their own quotes. There were cases when we had to remove a completed publication. For example, recently, we removed the story about the shelter for homeless animals. The main interviewee, the owner of the shelter, did not like the article, and it did not come out. It was not resonant, but we decided not to release it. Sometimes, after publication in the newspaper, officials ask to post their comments. I suggest that they do this on the website. We do not delete information from the site at all. This is forbidden. We do not delete any information from the site. It is forbidden.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, I have. It often happens that a person whom an article is focused on does not like the publication or believes that the journalist has misunderstood him. Usually, before I turn on the recorder, I always warn that I am recording a conversation and in case my speaker has any questions, we can listen to the recording. And I warn that I can use all this in my publication. However, not everyone understands this. They agree, but after the publication appears, they can call and blame me, that is: not everything said was for writing and quoting. Recently I wrote about a company serving a residential house and asked questions financial nature. The representative of the company openly mentioned sums and figures. But she was later surprised to see the figures in the article. She was extremely offended. It turned out that she thought that I was asking some questions not as a journalist but as a citizen, despite the fact that it was an official interview and I used an audio recording. The met that person's demands and we removed that part of the text as it was not fundamental. In the printed edition, the text was published in full.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Our editorial staff has never been required to do so. There were cases when a report was asked to be corrected. But these requests were on the oc-

casions when the reports had factual errors. We have never been asked to remove any inconvenient opinion. And if that happened, we would say no.
Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Such requests come sometimes from officials and people in business, but we always assess the risks. How important and critical is it for us to insist on our own position or is it better to agree to the request in order to be able to continue our activities so that our readers do not stop receiving the newspaper? Each case is solved directly with the authors. How important is this or that phrase or paragraph to them? Sometimes we change or delete something. It is important that we do not mislead the reader. We will not publish fakes. If there is a controversial point that is not important to us, we'd better delete the entire controversial piece. If the removal of the piece affects the whole story, then we add that we have been appealed with a denial of a particular phrase.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

This is practically never the case with us. We have a clear information re-checking practice.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Of course, I was. But we have a rule - we do not delete anything. If we make a mistake, then we make a refutation or continuation of the topic. Most often, local officials asked to remove or change the text. We do not change. There were no sanctions against the editors, they just take offence at us.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We are constantly asked to do such things. In 100% of cases, we remove or rewrite a story. The option of not removing is not even considered. It is believed that the founder has the right to interfere.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

Several times I was banned from work on a topic. But it all depends on the official's personality. Once I was asked to rewrite the text for the shot material, but I refused. But this job (rewrite the text) was passed to another journalist who did this. Sometimes uncoordinated videos may appear on the screen but posting them on the website will not be allowed. Once a journalist disobeyed the director's ban to say anything about specific topics and expressed his opinion on his own page in a social network; he was suspended from work for 2 weeks. For 2 weeks he was coming to work but he was not given any task to do. Then he was called to the director's office, they listened to his apologies and got their way having reached his agreement with the position of the television company not to cover that issue. After that the journalist was able to return to work. There have been cases when a completed story was not aired on the regional channel because a couple of minutes before the broadcast Moscow had not agreed on it.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, but this happens quite rarely. This may be due to the use of names of criminals (from official press releases of the prosecutor's office). They asked to remove the names. Sometimes officials ask to delete or change the text. Sometimes the founder asks to delete some news if he believes that the article contains advertising. In such case we do not delete news but remove the names of firms if they are present in the article. Once a deputy of the regional Duma got on the Forbes list, and we wrote about it. We were persistently asked to remove the story, but he got so excited on the Internet, and we left all as was. There have never been any sanctions.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Of course, we have. Usually it is done by officials or security officials. Once a co-owner of the newspaper, an owner of a private business, asked to remove the story about competing companies. The editors of the website did not remove the story, but the owners of the media also have access to the website, so they themselves removed the story. It was a singular event. The editor regularly refuses to change stories or remove them, and there were not any sanctions. They will not dismiss the editor, will they? Who will work then? There are few smart people in this area; no one wants to engage in this profession.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

We are often asked to remove stories, mainly by business representatives. As to regional officials or deputies, their referrals began to decrease; they simply began to ignore negative messages. But sometimes they ask to remove or change this or that story. If it does not contain our mistake or contradict the law, we do nothing with the story. We are always ready to offer businesspeople or officials to publish their point of view, but we will not edit the story. Once we had to remove an article by court order, the court decided we were wrong. But there were no other similar problems.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

I do not remember anyone ever deleting my articles. Parts of the text may be changed due to errors made by journalists. It is extremely rare that local politicians having given and read an interview can call and ask to change some part of the text to look better. Journalists do not want to quarrel with them and if it's not a fundamental issue it is corrected.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

Of course, we have. Usually this is someone from the regional government who calls and asks to remove or change the text. This requirement is categorical, it is not discussed, the text or the paragraph is removed. If this is some fundamental for us then the editor may defend the text or its part.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we have, but only in the electronic version since it is impossible to remove from anything from the printed one. This is the point of special vulnerability, in contrast to other colleagues. The last thing deleted was the announcement of Night-at-the-Library event entitled 'Once in Transylvania, or A Night with Dracula'. A group of Orthodox believers promised to com-

plain to the prosecutor's office about the librarians being devil worshippers. We cooperated with the librarians as we have been friends for a long time and they pleaded us 'not to poke the bear'.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Oh, sure. Representatives of the local business, whose problems we are writing about. Usually this topic is discussed with the editor and the parties are looking for compromises, but the stories are never removed. Business threatens to stop advertising. But that has not happened yet.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

Yes. In my case, they were representatives of the regional government or security officials who called the director and asked to change (soften) the story, or not to broadcast it or publish on the website, or delay it for several days. The editor does different things depending on the situation. Often editors meet such requests.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

No. I have been trying for a long time to work with independent publications, so this is well beyond my experience.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, I have. Those were cases when, according to the founder, state-ordered articles had wrong accents or unwanted people were mentioned, etc. We delete or change them. There were disputes with the founders about criminal news, for example, about interrogations of officials. The news was not deleted. As a consequence there were unpleasant talks with representatives of the founder and pressure, but nothing more.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

It was a long time ago, just particular cases. Once a guy heard from a morning TV show about the law on oblivion and wrote to me that he doesn't want his name in an old and referred to the law. We then replaced the name (or just removed his name, I don't remember). The text was not critical. There was another similar case when a convicted woman after many years demanded remove her data from the story. As far as I know, the editor either removed them or deleted the article, it was years ago.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

This happens sometimes. Characters of critical publications ask or demand or even threaten us to remove something, but usually it's useless. Sometimes it ends in courts, but I, fortunately, still have not lost in trials. Though, it happens that I voluntarily meet the demanders and delete something from the text or correct it when information can harm a person at work, discredit them or cause a lot of stress. But this mainly concerns ordinary people, not villains, corrupters, overbearing officials and businessmen.

There was a case when I agreed to remove my large two-part investigation

which prevented the extension of a large advertising contract. Though, two years have passed since the publication, everyone read the text a long time ago and it could be needed only by those who were looking for information about the company and its leaders mentioned in the investigation.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

They asked me to be removed more than once because sometimes regional topics go to the federal level, and here everyone is afraid ... As a rule, the editor allows publication, I personally didn't feel any consequences on myself, but I was marked with a certain label and I have been wearing this mark for years.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

This has happened in my life. One story was removed by the editor. It was about an official from education department who terrorized school principals. Another story was about her relative and she asked to remove it. Her relative was a teacher and turned out to be a pedophile. The prosecutor's offices demanded not just dismiss him but also write in the documents that he had no right to work with children. The official did not want to spoil the documents of her relative. I got a call. First they asked me, and then they threatened me. And when the story was published, there were unceasing insulting calls to the editorial office with insults.

It happened once that our editor banned the publication of my investigation about a totalitarian sect. But the vice editor published the story when the editor was absent. Being an editor-in-chief in a state holding I was asked to change an article in favor of a deputy of the ruling party. While driving his car, he hit another car and a little girl suffered in the accident. She lost her hands. We were told that the editors were incorrectly informed. And the material should either be removed or changed in favor of the deputy. We made another calls, the information was confirmed and supplemented by new comments. And this did not change the essence of the story. It was published. It was done by another journalist of our editorial staff. There were no consequences.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



What is more important: the independence of journalism or the survival of your publication?

Unfortunately, a very small number of publications in Russia can boast that the independence of journalism is put at the forefront. Probably, in my edition they try to observe the principles of independence (not always as it turns out), but in the rating of priorities they are not in the first place. Today, the existence of most media is a struggle of compromises.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

For me and most of my colleagues in the edition the independence is more

important, but for the editor it's medium's survival that values more.
Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

It's the independence of journalism. I'd rather lose the contract for information services but to be able to defend a matter of principle.
Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

There's a fine line between the two things. Without the survival of the publishing house there will not be independent journalism. But freedom of speech is a priority.
Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

These two things go in connection. Our newspaper is almost entirely funded by the readers. But between prosperity and independence we choose independence.
Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

It is survival of the publication in a very weak media market in the regions.
Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

For a journalist independence is more important, and for an editor the survival of the publication is more important. This has a conflict that allows searching for new forms of interaction and compromise. For me today, the main thing is to let the newspaper continue to exist in the region.
Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

We do not have such a dilemma. Our newspaper is an official publication of the authority. We are officially dependent, as we exist on budget money and perform municipal tasks. The editor is a deputy of the city Council, a supporter of a certain party; and since decisions are made by him, there's no talk about any independence.
Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Our mass medium depends on commercial advertising. Basically, the company's budget is formed at the expense of this item of income. About 10-15% of the budget consists of contracts for information services with government agencies (city department of education, city guardianship authorities, the city Council, that is, contracts of social character). However, paid stuff are marked with the sign 'By order...'. If there is a paid story about the activities of the city Council, then before it there comes the screensaver 'To order of the city Council'. However, the presence of a contract with a state structure does not prevent our editorial board from making a critical story about this customer. But this situation is rather an exception for the Russian media than a rule. For example, our company has a contract for information service about the activities of the city Council deputies. The top officials of the city decided to raise their salaries by 28%, and we made a

story about the attitude of the city residents to this decision. The story was very critical, but no sanctions followed. The contract is still valid, and the deputies have still raised their salaries, but by 18%.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

I don't see any contradiction in the question, but it all depends on the level of danger. If the edition can exist under the condition of publishing only positive news and official press releases, then there is no sense in such edition and such journalism. Our journalists will leave such mass medium. Global deflections are impossible in professional journalism, but compromises are possible.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

For me, it's independence, but I understand people for whom journalism is the next job they are paid for. For a journalist, unfortunately, there is not always a choice. Especially for young people who are not very nice about media business. There are media in which I would not work.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

These things are interconnected. If we continue to be independent, we will keep the readers. Media is a business. If we make good quality news promptly, they will read us and we will have high traffic. Our advertisers will like it more. The survival of the media depends on your independence. It directly depends on us whether we will write a story or not. We don't write to order, it is not even discussed. Our site does not receive funding either from the regional budget or from the district one, although we have repeatedly been offered. This is our position.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Independent journalism is more important for society, without it is impossible to have a healthy society. But this is not the task we have. We don't have to seek subscribers, likes and circulations. Everything is paid from the regional budget. Our task is to inform the public about the activities of the regional government. Is not journalism, it is a very convenient and broad term – 'informing the public'.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

For regional directors the concept of survival is more important; it is essential that the stories are neutral and not dramatized. It's not even a matter of party politics and the government but of personal fears, laziness and their own business interests.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

It's independence of journalism. I'm not very much afraid of losing my job, I'm sure that I'll easily find another one.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

What is independent journalism? It is not independent; it is always dependent from finance. We need money, advertising or power as a founder. Independent There are no independent journalists or media. Talks of independent journalism are nonsense.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

The survival of the outlet is more important. This is our bread, people work for us, they have families.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

The question is difficult for any media. Independent journalism cannot exist in a vacuum, it must feed itself. Any media depend on sources of income: readers, advertisers. Therefore, the question is not simple, though it's necessary to focus on the standards of independent journalism. But we must not save ourselves as journalists or as media at any cost. Otherwise, we will be replaced by bloggers as unnecessary, they write about real things and about what is interesting for the society.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

In different years of my life, I would have answered this question in different ways. This is decision of everyone. It is important that the publication continues to exist. Another question is whether each journalist is able to withstand the topics that have to be 'worked out', so that the publication continues to exist. If you can't continue to work in such a situation then you leave.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

It's survival. Because no one is financing us, no one is helping in any way either with rent or with grants. We ourselves feed a team of twelve people.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Independence, for me it is a definite solution.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I'm not at all sure that journalism can be independent. In my region, I do not represent independent journalism. That is not the question. So the edition's survival is more important.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Of course, it's independence of journalism. In today's world there are many opportunities to create a new platform and do publications there. Probably the most striking example is the appearance of Medusa outlet where most of the employees of Lenta.ru went to after the editor-in-chief was fired. When the publication ceases to be independent, becomes loyal to the government and is engaged in propaganda, it, in fact, is already dead. I do not blame people who stay and work in such media as everyone needs money to feed the families. But if personally I can earn in a different way I will do it.

Now in my region, unfortunately, there are no independent media which can afford full-time journalists, so I'm a freelancer.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Journalism independence is a very illusive concept. In our country, the media belong either to the government or to oligarchs' corporations. In the second case, everything depends on how oppositional the oligarch is, and this in its turn depends on their commercial interests. There are few truly independent media, but it's very difficult to hide information these days because there is the Internet, social networks and blogs. I think the media, bloggers, social activists and opposition figure have created a good counterbalance system in Russia. And it works. Despite being a governmental website we can write about a lot of things, and about problems, too. Of course, we present them from a certain angle giving the word to power and pro-government structures; we do it in a more moderate as compared to what the opposition colleagues write. But these topics appear on our site. Therefore, the most important things in our work are conscience and professionalism. I faced a situation when a publicist from the government demanded to publish an article about the Yabloko party which contained a derogatory word, but I didn't do it. That publicist was fired long ago and I'm still working.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

It's a difficult question. Of course, maximum objectivity and balance are at the forefront. I stopped believing in the notion of independence a long time ago; in the current circumstances of the market this is ephemeral. But, unfortunately, many media today are left to choose between keeping either their media or their clear conscience.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

It is important to maintain a balance of both. But the drive should be towards independence.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

The independence of journalists is priceless, but nowadays the managers and editor do everything for the media to survive.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

Both are important. After all, the media is still a source of income for many people. You can always leave if you disagree with the media's policy. I have rich experience in that. But I've always had my back, a family with another small source of income. Although, it was a difficult financial situation. And not all journalists have that back. But condemning yourself and your children to hunger and poverty is scary.

If a website is in opposition to power this media can't count on advertisements because local business is afraid to give adverts to opposition. It turns out that the journalists work realizing that they won't get money for their hard work.

Now I am collaborating with such a website. There is no money; there are

only tiny pensions, a computer and a camera. There is no room for the editors as there's no money to rent it. We work from homes. But this is the path regions independent media go through.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



How much is the influence you can feel about what work to do? Can you decide not to do certain stuff such as to discredit someone?

I have partially answered it above. And yes, I can influence what work I do. I can decide not to do the task by justifying my decision to the management. If I find myself faced with a choice – to write an ordered article with the aim of defaming someone or get my discharge, I will choose the latter point. But I can hardly imagine that my current editorial stuff could put me before such a choice. But times are changing.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

No, I am not one of those journalists in our editorial office that cannot refuse to do something. As I noted above, I am free in my choice and can deny the issues which contradict my beliefs. But, unfortunately, I'm the only person in such position. I choose my own topics and offer them to the editor.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

It's only me who decides whether to write or not about this or that. Many times I was offered money for defaming companies or people. I never agreed to.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, I choose the topics myself and can refuse to write an article.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, of course, the decision is always mine. One can give reasons not to do the job.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, I can. Here I can say categorically that I am not going to do some stuff. It should be noted that the specificity of state regional media is that tasks like deliberate defaming are almost impossible, this is a violation of the law on slandering. In the stories which can be roughly attributed to discrediting of reputation we always present two points of view. It is easier for us not to give such a story at all.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, there is a principled position here: I am not engaged in black PR. By no means. Fortunately, I can do it. Disputes between economic companies and politicians are not ours.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

Theoretically, I can refuse, but as I wrote above, I did not try, because I understood that I could reduce the level of tension. I have never refused to perform the task of the editorial office yet, but I am sure that a refusal will be followed by a punishment. We have articles in which unflattering statements are made about certain politicians or businessmen. They are based on facts. However, the journalists who write them interpret the facts in their own way. I am glad that I'm not given these topics, because I do not know what will happen if I really refuse. I'll probably lose my job.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

I can make that decision. There haven't yet been any situations when a journalist was made to do the job against his will.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

I cannot imagine our editors giving a journalist the task to defame someone or write about someone or something from a certain obviously biased angle. A journalist can always refuse for various reasons: it's not his topic, there's a conflict of interest. For example, a man who was involved in corruption was a childhood friend of mine. I refused to do a story about him because I didn't want to call and ask him questions and then publish it, I couldn't be objective. If you can justify your refusal they will meet your wishes. In that case, the topic itself fell apart as the person was accused of corruption and imprisoned; there was no story anymore. Otherwise that topic would have simply been transferred to another journalist to be developed. One of our journalists is also a political activist. During the summer protests in Moscow, the editors gave him the task to report about the protests. He refused because of a conflict of interest since he supported the protests. He didn't write anything to the paper all summer. As a result, the task was simply assigned to another journalist.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

I can easily refuse to do an article, and this happened. But it was unrelated to politics, but was connected with customized advertising articles. They lend an ear to me, I am a professional, I have been working for a long time.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

It directly depends on us whether we will write a story or not. We don't write to order, it is not even discussed.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Any journalist in our editorial office may refuse to work on a certain subject. They won't have any problems because of that since the topics are neither acute nor interesting. This topic will be passed to another colleague.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

I can't influence what work to do, but I can categorically refuse. The company's superiors will be extremely unhappy. This may affect my holiday time and bonus rewards.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, of course we can. We were offered to work in such a way that we only everyone criticize everyone, but we did not go for it.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, if a journalist does not want to work on a topic, then he may not.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

We don't work like that. Our outlet has been repeatedly offered money to discredit various people, but such articles would discredit us. Journalists can refuse to work on any topic, the editor would either appoint another journalist to do it or write the story himself.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Certainly, I propose the main topics, but I never agree to do what I don't want to.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

Yes, definitely. In our publication, everyone can deny a certain topic. But there are journalists who will not refuse to do anything. I don't remember consequences of journalists' refusals.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Never in my life have I written a story with the aim of discrediting someone. Each of us decides for himself what work to do. We refuse a story if we do not have enough data, sources and documents.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

We do not have custom materials. I refuse to do something only if I'm full of activity, then my colleagues do the job.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I can refuse to make a story if it should be done in any particular custom view. It will simply be given to another journalist who doesn't mind. They can try to convince me why it is necessary to do so, but then they will agree. There were no consequences for me.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

I had an experience when the founder of the publication where I worked insisted on writing and publishing paid articles for certain people and com-

panies. But I refused.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Damaging materials discredit the founder as well. I think my superiors and me agree on that. I happened to make decisions and refuse to publish some information; however, it was a while ago. There haven't been such offers lately.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

The Media Law allows journalists to refuse a task if it contradicts their beliefs. I don't remember being forced to do something against my will. I could always refuse the topic or a task if I did not consider it possible to do. To dishonour someone? Sounds like hack job.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

In 80-85% of cases I make the decision myself. I can refuse, too. There haven't been any problems after that.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Yes, I can. Personally, I do not make dirt by order. And they can't make me do it.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

I can influence that. And it always has been this way. I say 'No'. And the management understands that it can't force me. But not everyone has that kind of character. And now I've been the editor-in-chief for a very long time. All decisions are mine.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Have you been affected by the latest restrictions in the laws related to the activities of journalists, and, If so, how?

Probably, I've not been influenced very much; this is a question to the editors, first of all.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

The new restrictions have only affected the editorial policy; it has become more cautious in criticizing the authorities and harsher with the sources of information. We prefer not to publish stories that can be interpreted as an insult to the authorities. LGBT is a closed topic for us. We won't risk 'crossing double solid.'

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we have to be very careful about what we write and check every phrase not to break the law

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, I have. I would be more involved in projects with foreign publications if I didn't risk becoming a foreign agent.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes. We have to work more carefully with LGBT topics, as well as with topics related to defense and national security, suicides, drugs. We have to use careful or sometimes ridiculous wordings. We cannot write 'the man hanged himself' or 'jumped off the roof' - we are forbidden to describe the method of suicide. Many mass media began to use the phrase 'the person has committed 'Roskomnadzor'. You can't write 'the person puffed on a joint, or heated heroin on a spoon,' because that's a description of drug use.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

I don't feel I'm influenced by them.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

As I wrote above, we have abandoned a number of topics. I also had to print out 'one million' pages of the organizations banned in Russia. We don't write about them, of course.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

I cannot answer it, because the law is constantly changing, I do not remember what was changed last time, I have to constantly study at seminars with lawyers.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Of course, if we want to continue to work, we must comply with the laws, adapt to them. The law on fake news came into force shortly until April 1. We stopped joking that day. Though the lawyers say the law does not forbid joking. But just in case, we do not give a piece of news as reliable and then say that it was an April fool's joke, no more. We had checked the information before the law on fake news came into force, so in this regard, nothing has changed for us. There were opposition leaders who come to our studio and expressed their opinion, which the authorities did not like. About garbage reform, for example. One activist talked about the mandatory recycling of garbage, which is not in the territorial scheme of waste management. Officials don't like it. How can you attract a TV channel for this? I don't see. This is exactly the opinion of an individual activist; even the format of the transfer is called 'special opinion'. We give him the right to express it. Last year I had a guest in the program, a lawyer. She wrote a statement to the Prosecutor's office with a request to check the legality of the city administration's actions when choosing a site for the city landfill. In

the interview she mentioned that in this situation the head of the city allegedly, as it seemed to her, was guided by any momentary interests. And for this interview on the TV company and the lawyer got two claims for protection of honor, advantage and business reputation. We won the trial because there was no offence. But that was before the adoption of the law on contempt. We have a full-time lawyer in the editorial office. We examine and discuss some controversial materials with the lawyer at the stage of editing. If in doubt we can break the law, we just don't use it. We do not have censorship in the sense that the information issued may not please the authorities. And there haven't even been any attempts on the part of officials to somehow intrude into editorial work. There is work on the text, verification of it for compliance with reality.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Yes, self-censorship has increased. We play safe smoothing the corners, trying to protect ourselves and avoid obvious statements, even when we hold all the facts. For example, speaking about the corrupt activities of officials we use the words 'perhaps', 'most likely', 'as may be supposed' or write 'the person whose name coincides with the name of the official', 'the owner of this cottage is Ivan Ivanov, a full namesake of the official'. In case it goes before the court it doesn't matter if you have evidence of corruption of an official, it's important whether the story has insulted that official. The court will not consider the veracity of the information.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

I still do not understand if they have affected me. Sometimes I have to write 'full namesake' and give the name of the official or businessman, even when I have data in my hand. One limitation is that LinkedIn is banned in Russia, and it has become much more difficult for me to search for contacts, which on this network was easy to use. I do not use Facebook fundamentally. The search for information in Russia has become difficult due to the fact that for some reason this information has been banned by Roskomnadzor. It's good that at least there is free VPN.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

So far it has not really affected the editors. We report on sensitive topics, but very carefully.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, we have. I follow the comments more thoroughly. Our edition is so harmless that we do not face new restrictions.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

Me not.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

I did not notice such an effect. You just need to be extremely careful with

age restrictions and photos with smoking and alcohol.
Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Actually not. This is not even about Roskomnadzor but communication culture of journalists. If parents taught them to be polite and respectful as to other people's feelings then they should not have problems with Roskomnadzor.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

It became very difficult to cover rallies, especially in terms of video. Slogans and shouting can easily turn into slander, contempt and fakes. We try to keep the word 'president' out of the shot. It's hard to write on different topics that can be perceived as incitement of discord. It has become more difficult to write about suicides and to use photos of children from various mass and public events. In other cases a child's photo should only from the back or so that the child could not be recognized.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, I have to apply more strict requirements while working with the language. But I think that all over the world the vocabulary of media is becoming more politically correct, less figurative and less frivolous. Sometimes new restrictions are overreacting and annoying. The practice of some restrictions, of course, is shocking. For example, wild fines for Nazi symbols when it's really impossible to publish historical photos of World War II because they show those symbols.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

My work is affected by Copyright Law; it's not possible to use any music or photos you like from the Internet. Aside from that, we internally know perfectly well what and how it is possible to write and what is not. A person who comes to work in our media understands perfectly well whose media these are, how they write here, on what topics we will write and which topics we will never notice, who can be criticized and who cannot. We write with great caution about everything related to Orthodoxy.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, especially regarding the requirements of Roskomnadzor. We spend a lot of time and effort on age markings of any nonsense, on double-checking parental permission to take pictures of children and whether there is anything in the texts that Roskomnadzor can consider as appeals to anything (terrorism, extremism, drug addiction). We refused to participate in the contest for articles about the suppression of extremism because we were not sure which phrases we can be crucified for. We spend time and energy mastering Aesopian language instead of informing people and writing news for them.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Oh, sure. Once a person committed suicide by self-immolation. And here the way of suicide was important. We had to find various euphemisms and write that he went to the barn with gasoline and burned down. That is, we write between the lines as if hinting on what really happened. We describe news related to the desecration of religious or state symbols the same way. Once there was a trial of a man who insulted the first person of the state. To avoid a penalty, we quoted the word 'moron' without naming whom exactly he called like that.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

No, I haven't. We have such strong internal constraints in the company that new restrictions are just rubbish.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

So far they haven't influenced us; we are waiting and hope to avoid that.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned National newspaper

It has become more difficult to write stories when children are involved. I have to carefully monitor the photos and videos as to the scenes of smoking.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

There seem to have been no precedents so far. The only thing you keep in mind what things you should be careful about.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, we have. Now we often play it safe not publishing certain photos. We are thinking over the wording for a long time in situations connected with the Law on Information in which they have introduced an article about disrespect for power.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

No, I haven't.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

Fortunately, they have not affected in any way so far. But I'm not at all confident that will not affect me in the future. All Russian journalists today are under the sword of Damocles of these laws.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Have you (your mass medium) ever been fined by Roskomnadzor (the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media)? What for? How big was the fine?

I think my mass medium has been fined more than once. As far as I know, the fines were related to the coverage of suicides, but I think this was not the only reason.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

Roskomnadzor has repeatedly issued warnings to our publication ‘for abuse of freedom of speech’ and fined editor-in-chief (3 or 5 thousand rubles). It’s an official wording. Once we mentioned the name of the organization which is regarded extremist in Russia, but the text didn’t contain a reference to that. Once the moderator did not notice filthy language in the comments and the edition was also fined. But if a medium gets two warnings a year from Roskomnadzor this can lead to the revocation of medium’s registration.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Roskomnadzor fines us regularly. The reasons are different: filthy language in the video published, lack of marking “a sign of information production”, usage of photos of naked people (the department saw genitalia where nobody else could see them. The fines vary from 5,000 to 30,000 roubles.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes. It was for the violation of the publication frequency.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, our edition was fined many times, for example, for lack of age marking. One of our authors was fined 100,000 rubles for the fact that next to his name there was not written that he heads an organization recognized as a foreign agent.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

I don’t know. I have never been fined.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, our newspaper is a socio-political publication, which means that it is exempt from setting a sign for information products (age restrictions). But our regional Roskomnadzor considered this newspaper not being a social and political publication. Their main complaint was that the issue they had chosen to check had 12 pages, seven of which contained a program. This means we had more household information. And it didn’t matter that during

the year there were issues of 16, 20 pages. I was fined 1000 rubles.
Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

I don't know it for sure, but notifications of violations from the RKN come regularly. Recently, the editor-in-chief was also summoned to the RKN due to the fact that the poster in the newspaper 'threatens the life and health of children'. The newspaper is marked 16+, and in the theatre guide there was information about performances such as 'for children from 2 to 4 years', 'for children from 4 to 6 years'. Some electronic system of the RKN saw a danger in that. It was necessary to put the icon 0+ or 6+. However, the performances could not be specified in that way, so it was not logical to put age markers prescribed in the law. However, the RKN is obliged to respond to this stupidity. In the end, the editor-in-chief ordered not to publish the theatre guide any longer not to receive fines. Though many readers are waiting for it. Sometimes there are notifications that a method of suicide has been described. The information is required to be removed. These articles are deleted from the website though it is not registered as a mass medium.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

There were no such fines.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

We are constantly fined by Roskomnadzor, mostly for filthy language in external links. For example, an article has a hyperlink to a YouTube video, and the video might have obscene words. We get fined for it. The last fine was 200 000 rubles. For us, this is a substantial amount which is partially recovered from the salary of the editor-in-chief who has missed the words.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

My articles have never been fined. But the publication received a warning for a comment on the website.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

There were warnings from Roskomnadzor, they concerned bureaucratic nuances. There were no big problems, and this was not connected with journalistic activities.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No, we haven't

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

No.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

No, I haven't.
Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Oh, yes. For copyright to someone else's photo.
Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

No? we haven't.
Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No, I haven't
Interview #18 Regional freelancer

In my experience, no.
Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, for the lack of age marking on the Miner's Day poster, which we even didn't make up ourselves but received it from our advertiser. Now we are going to be fined for the fact that we did not send electronic newspaper issues to TASS and the Russian Library. We didn't do that because Roskomnadzor is not able to give clear instructions how to do it. The first time we were fined five thousand and now, apparently, the fine will be 20 thousand.
Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Not yet, only warnings so far.
Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I don't know. Probably not.
Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

In June 2018, Roskomnadzor fined the publication 7x7-Horizontal Russia 800 thousand for discussions about drugs in one of the blogs. But by that time I had not worked there. Personally, I have not been fined yet.
Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned National newspaper
A few years ago we were fined for a domain name incorrectly indicated in the documents. To register a website one should use a second-level domain name while ours was third-level. We registered a second level domain, but kept staying at the initial one which was more familiar to the readers. Roskomnadzor sued and won the case for the discrepancies between documents and reality. The fine was discharged to an individual (within 10 thousand, as far as I remember). I also remember being fined for publishing a photograph of a bottle of vodka in a newspaper. At that time the distillery was reopened in the republic after a long downtime. The fine was small as we managed to convince the court that it was a socially significant event and the distillery's products were a brand of the region.
Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

From recent experiences it was a fine to the editor for the lack of age marking in posters. This extends to any messages that can be considered to be invitations to public events.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We haven't, but the second project of our publishing house received either a warning or a penalty from Roskomnadzor for using obscene language. There were attempts to bring us to court for disseminating information about minors who are victims of violence, but we received parental permissions and fought off. The previous mass medium where I worked was fined for personal data of the person who had committed suicide. It seemed to be 5 thousand.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Of course I have. I can't name the amount as I didn't deal with that. It was for personal data about minors who committed crimes.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

Yes, we have. It was for a purely technical oversight of the layout designer. Everything was a hundred times verified, but at the last stage of layout the label of advertising disappeared from the advertising module. And we did not notice. I paid a fine of 10 thousand rubles. The fine, in my opinion, was huge for such a mistake. But, here you will not stand against the law. If it's your fault you have to pay for it. Though, I have to clear up that Roskomnadzor was charged by the mayor of our city to constantly haunt our media. And on the day of our newspapers publication Roskomnadzor rushed to them with a magnifying glass and a ruler, and was looking for something to cling to. And we went to many courts. Though, there was only one fine which I remember. We usually managed to prove our innocence.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you write about suicides and other sensitive topics, even if those words can't be used, and, if so, how?

Yes, we (and me in particular) write about suicides. There are strict instructions developed in the editorial office about covering the topic, I consult them and write without mentioning the method of suicide, any cruel details, etc.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

After the enforcement of the Russian legislation, suicide got to the category of taboo topics. The news about suicide can be published but in a highly veiled way. We can write that someone committed it but we will never men-

tion the suicidal style.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we do. We follow the Roskomnadzor's recommendations here. We do not specify the method and cause of a suicide; we try to write between the lines.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We cover such issues, just being rather careful with the wording.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, we do. We come up with wordings that allow us to convey the essence of the news as reliably as possible without breaking the law. I wrote a story about a gay pride parade. It was 'cleaned' by editors and lawyers so that there were no details that could be regarded as propaganda. There were no phrases like 'people are kissing', 'they declare love for each other' - that made the report more vivid, but those phrases applied to people of the same sex.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, I report on suicides. I do it only within the crime section quoting some officials, medical examiners or police.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

No, we don't write about that. If only in a casual way, within another topic. The reasons are the restrictions, any words can be interpreted as anyone likes; we prefer not to take risks.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, I do, thought without details such as 'a woman fell out of a window' or 'the death is not criminal'. It is possible to write about suicide without mentioning specific details and describing the method of suicide. As to minors we write about them so that it would be impossible to tell their personal data. If we go to the opening of a kindergarten or to a school camp, we can take a comment from a child. Usually these shootings are organized by the press service of the regional administration and parents are informed about the shooting.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

We do not write in detail about suicides. But we give official information from police when this happens. We try to avoid detailed information and don't mention methods of committing suicide.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

When it comes to suicides and possible extremist issues, such materials are carefully read by our professional lawyers. The most striking case was in 2016, it was about an investigation involving a group in social networks where children and adolescents were provoked to commit suicide. As a result of the investigation, journalists linked the latest suicides to this group. We realized that the following week, under the terms of this group's game, another mass suicide was planned. We understood that if we wrote about what was happening, we would have to break all the restrictions of Roskomnadzor in this point. We knew we could lose the paper. And we took the risk considering it calculated if that could save at least one teenager. The story described the methods of suicide and all the details – this was the essence of the story. We prepared a disclaimer where we explained that we were taking a calculated risk and we could not do other than we were doing. The material had a huge number of views. Criminal cases were initiated against the administrators of the group in the VC. Our newspaper got no legal claims.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

These topics are not in my field of expertise. These restrictions are not a publication problem; this is the editor's problem.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

We do write about it, but in roundabout ways, indirectly describing what has happened. All have already got used to it.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No, there are no these topics in our state assignment.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

Such topics are forbidden in our company.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

We write about that, but very carefully, never talking about methods of suicide. Sometimes the news is simply not published because it is not clear how to write so that it is clear: this is suicide. It takes a lot of time. We consult with lawyers. We lose a lot in photo reports because we do not put photos with children at rallies.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We do. It is difficult to answer this question since the topic is not mine.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, but we do not use the word 'suicide'; we do not describe the method of suicide. We are learning to write between the lines. We cannot write 'A person jumped from a bridge'. We write 'Rescuers found a corpse of a girl under the bridge'. We cannot say 'jumped from the roof', we write 'fell from

the roof’.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

The topic of suicides is very relevant, especially for the north. The suicide problem is a major challenge here, especially in terms of teenagers. But the topic is not exactly mine, I have not dealt with that.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

We do, but very carefully. We use and select careful phrases; this topic is thin ice, here everything is checked and controlled. It takes a lot of time, sometimes a journalist and the editor are searching for the right expressions together.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

We have not written about suicides since 1991 because we do not consider this information to be news. It’s the choice of a particular person and there is nothing to write about. With extreme caution we write about rape and pedophilia. We recheck every word looking for metaphors and analogies - the Russian language is huge! We often use official messages referring to the investigative committee.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, we indirectly describe what happened. For example, a girl committed suicide by swallowing sleeping pills. I had to write that they found a body of a girl and there were a lot of pills nearby. We are already used to writing that a person did not jump out of the window, but had a terrible fall. We cannot describe suicide methods but we can report that it was suicide by saying that a note was left or an investigation is underway, etc.

Religious issues and ethnic hatred are another extremely sensitive topic. Once I wrote a story about a person who had posted a story in his social networks about the plans of Muslims to destroy Russians. He was fined for inciting ethnic hatred. And I, too, got an administrative case for the same reason since I quoted several sentences from his story which seemed to me the most harmless. In the second attempt to write about such issues, a criminal case on extremism will be started against me.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

Yes, we cover such topics. We had a long discussion in the editorial office how to break that kind of news more carefully.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

No, I have not yet dealt with sensitive topics but I don’t exclude that it will happen.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We write if this is a socially significant event, but not everyday life. We do

not specify methods of suicides, and we have to be very inventive.
Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

In fact, everything depends on the conscience and courage of a journalist and an editor. You must not be silent about some dangerous or resonant things if it is important for society, such as was the case with the Blue Whale. If I write about suicide I try not to put words about suicide in the headline but to add something life-affirming into the story: there is a way out (something like that) and give some recommendations and explanations without describing the way to die.

Even before any requirements of Roskomnadzor I met a specialist for a talk about teenage suicides (what makes them do that, how other people can recognize the signals, what to do, etc.). And when the article had already been sent to the print shop it became known that a schoolgirl jumped out of the window of the tallest house of the city. I contacted her mother; she surprisingly did not refuse to comment. As a result, I had a story following a recent event and having some explanations, not specifically about this situation, but in general meaning.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We sometimes write about suicide when the topic is resonant and socially significant because of the reason that has prompted this. When, let's say, a man committed suicide after falling into bondage to a construction company that sold apartments are not in rubles, but in currency. Naturally, we don't write about the way of committing suicide.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

We do and we call a spade 'a spade' that is we use the word 'suicide' in the text. I know that it's forbidden to mention the way of killing oneself so as not to provide instructions to others. But if a person fell out of the window or rushed under the train then we just write so.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

We do it very delicately. We give plain information, recommendations of specialists for relatives (how to recognize, how to stop) without savoring or provoking.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you moderate comments on the website and social media? How long? Do you moderate comments on articles published in past years?

I do not have access to moderation of comments.
Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

All comments on the website are moderated by the editor on duty in real time. Comments containing obscene language, inciting hatred or containing the prosecution of crimes are removed. There's no political censorship in comments.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

We moderate them but only to observe of the legislation, there should be no filthy language or incitement of national hatred. What is more, we moderate all comments for all years, but only on the website.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We do not have a website; we moderate comments in social networks so that there are no calls for extremism and so on.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, we have a moderator who is constantly online. On his day off or during his vacation, we have to turn off comments because the newspaper is responsible for them. Provocative comments that contain abusive language or extremist statements are removed.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, we have a special Internet department.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Our website is located on the domain of the Federal publication, so moderation is done in Moscow. But, of course, they do.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

We try to respond to comments if there is a question or a reader needs clarification. We remove only insults or statements that incite hatred and enmity, etc. Now we don't have a person to deal with it. I track my texts and comments to them personally. We do not moderate articles published in past years. On the website we have no comments at all.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Our VKontakte group has a filter for obscene words and expressions which can appear in the comments. If people write offensive and obscene comments regarding people participating in our programs we remove them.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

No, we don't. We did it before without fail. But now all comments are completely disabled. It's a very easy way to catch us and put up a serious penalty. In social networks comments are not controlled as they are not media according to Russian law.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

We have no comments on the regional website, and we do not moderate them in social networks.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Yes, we moderate comments. And no, we do not moderate articles over the past years, but apparently we are wrong here.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, we do. We remove insults from people or officials and photos of children.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

I don't know.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Previously we did that, but now the comments are closed. But this is only connected with technical reasons. When we moderated the comments we removed only filthy words and downright insulting of the person whom the article is about.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

There are no comments on our site and there is no one to moderate them.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

Comments are moderated later from the publication. But we keep a close watch on them.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

I do not do this.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

Yes, we do, but not very tough. And we do not monitor every comment.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we constantly monitor them, remove obscene language and calls for violence.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, we have a person who moderates comments on the website so as not to allow obscene language. In social networks there are filters against obscene language and spam.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

Yes, there is a little moderation to remove obscene language.
Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

I used to moderate comments on the 7x7-Horizontal Russia website three years ago. It was necessary to monitor compliance with the Russian law, remove hostility calls and hate speech, profanity and offensive statements. We did not have what can be called political censorship considerations.
Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We had to disable comments on the website, because it is very difficult to follow everything. All editorial staff members participate in moderating comments in social networks as to extremism, insults, porn, etc.
Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

We look through the published stories (sometimes old ones) and if we see something controversial for which they may ban the group we can delete it. Comments were previously moderated, then there was no one to do this and the function was simply turned off. When I worked in another outlet, we also removed offensive comments and curse words in the group. The users perceive our interference negatively considering it to be censorship. Although the rules of the group refer to that, but who reads them? In the current group it's more about some flagrant cases. In some media they believe that the offensive words in the comments do not need to be deleted, otherwise the resource will have fewer readers. It may be, but nobody has cancelled the laws yet. And if somewhere in the comments of a person or a bot something extremist will slip through, even in old texts, the resource and its owner will suffer. That's why in the group there is a filter for certain words. And we can promptly track comments in live broadcasts of rallies, for example.
Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

Several years ago we decided to disable comments on the sites of our publishing house to avoid unpleasant situations. In social networks groups we sometimes delete comments. The last time I did this was connected with an attempt to incite ethnic hatred. The regional Minister of Health, Yakut by ethnicity, was called 'a cross-eyed dummy' in our comments. We are only following comments under fresh posts.
Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Now there is no way to leave comments on our site; basically all discussions take place in social networks. And if there are insults or profanity we just delete them.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

Yes, we do. Otherwise, one can violate the law. We make sure that there are no insults, obscene language, illegal calls or incitement of various disorders.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you report on street protests? If so, how do you do it? Is there any danger for you to be accused of calling for protests?

Yes, we cover mass protests. We attend them personally, request official information and write about detentions. I have never thought of any danger. Perhaps, because I write standard news about these actions and just describe facts.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

Yes, our edition covers almost all the protests in the news block and reportages without calling to take part in them.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we do. The danger to be accused exists, but we never call for protests and read every text carefully before publication. We inform about the fact: there was/is an action.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, we do. Upon the fact. We use a lot of visualization.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, we certainly do. I do not see any danger in this, because we always try to write about it as honestly and objectively as possible.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We do, just informing about such actions but without journalists' comments.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Sometimes, yes. If I find it interesting. I always ask the local authorities comment on the situation. And I never call for protest actions - this is not my task. I think it's important to show why people go to go out to protest. The northerners are very inert; they will stay at home on the couch until something pushes them too far. But sometimes it happens that they go out on single pickets.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

No, we don't. The editor of our newspaper does not consider this topic interesting.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

We cover all protests that take place in the region. We do not call to participate in them, we just inform about them and whether they were agreed and

not agreed with the authorities.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Yes, we cover them. Information about an action is given in the form of regular news; calls to participate in it are not used. There are no problems at all in this point.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

Yes, we do. And journalists or freelancers are given journalistic certificates and editorial tasks so that they are not accidentally detained. We do news about rallies and publish photos with slogans, but the stories do not call for anything.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

We cover protest actions and understand that there is danger in this work. We report on all meetings online. We cover as fully as possible, with direct inclusions. We give activists and government officials the opportunity to speak out, but the government does not like to comment on such things.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We try not to do this. It's easier for our editor and management to not notice street protest than to write and try to defend every phrase, photo and heading. For example, once a city holiday 'coincided' in time and place with a protest action. Our media had the task to write about the holiday which was practically frustrated because of the rally – it lasted only 20 minutes. Thousands of people joined the unauthorized rally (all federal mass media wrote about that), but our editorial staff prepared a whole page about the holiday and did not notice the rally at all. The article about the holiday was removed at the last moment, because it actually did not take place.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

This topic is prohibited. Only 'positive' processions, demonstrations and celebrations.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, we even announce a future rally (we write what, where and when), we take comments from the organizers. We attend the rallies and make photo stories and online translations. There is such a danger, sometimes there were attempts to detain journalists working at rallies and pickets. We have a journalist's identity, but usually they do not have an editorial task and special vests signed 'Press'.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Yes, we attend actions and report on them. We attend all meetings. I do not see any danger here, we do not call for anything but only report the news.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

If we inform about a rally in advance, we do not mention where and when it is going to take place. But of course we write about rallies and protests.
Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Of course. I do. I don't think there can be any consequences, I usually I emphasize the forced nature of the protests. It is difficult to accuse me of agitation here. I do not see, in principle, such a danger. I understand the necessity to emphasize the violation of the law by the authorities in case they do not agree to coordinate protests. There should be an emergency reason for the event's disagreement, and with us this happens for any reason, organizing a city festival at the same time, for example. There should be places for protests to be held anyway.
Interview #18 Regional freelancer

It's more likely no than yes. Firstly, there are almost none, even single pickets. We can go there, but covering the event one is to show not only the protesters' opinion but also the opinion of officials. After it is done with comments and a completed text officials will decide that it's better not to publish the story and either forbid publishing or remove the text. Journalists see how it turns out and don't report on it.
Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we do. We report from the place. We just write quotes: who is saying what at the rally, just a selection of quotes and photos. The danger is that we definitely may be blamed for this or that. We are afraid of it. And we've been living in a permanent state of fear, just for years.
Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, we do. We attend rallies, do streaming and reporting. If the action is not agreed we cannot write where and what time it will take place, though we can report from there. But if journalists come to cover unauthorized protests, they are also detained and included in protocols for participating in rallies. It happens that you have to spend a night at the police station and receive a fine of 30,000 rubles. Neither journalistic IDs nor editorial assignments work in court; the court does not consider this to be evidence.
Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

Yes, but very rarely and not all of them. In this case one will have a discussion with the editor about each specific point. Journalists suggest covering every action but do not always get consent. It is extremely rare to cover Opposition rallies are very rarely reported on. There is such a danger. But we have general requirements; we do not shoot large posters. We shoot the faces of the participants; news coverage will be as neutral as possible. There's official information about how many people were present and what the general demands were.
Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, I'm reporting on them. I often write about rallies and pickets. This is done in way of reporting with quoting speakers. Sometimes they demand the resignation of Putin, but this is within the law. I would not quote anyone who calls for hatred and enmity or for violent actions, but our people usually prepare for rallies, and speakers keep within the limits of the law. There were calls for violent action on Shies, it was said that a peaceful protest is not cost-effective. But it came from the provocateur well-known to all regional reporters and activists.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Sometimes we do. It is purely informational, without analytics and appeals.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Yes, we do. Being journalists we don't carry posters or shout slogans. We are to bring information to the society, to tell what people are dissatisfied with, but not to urge to go to the barricades. We record what is happening without siding one group or another, although our personal position may be indicated - explicitly in private conversation or indirectly in the story.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We do if this is really a protest rally and not a bare PR of parliamentary parties. We inform where and when the actions are held, the reasons for them and requirements of the participants, the approximate number of visitors, what they do and say during rallies, which posters they have, how the police react, whether they carry out detentions. I don't feel any dangers that we can be accused of calls for rallies, we just inform. In my memory, there have never been any consequences for this.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

The editor allows covering protests very carefully. Consideration is always given to the way of reporting. When at a rally or a picket the journalist first looks around, assesses the situation, thinks how to write about the event and what comments to take in addition.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

We do. We always have identification cards and badges. We try to be objective. And we report and take photos and videos. We always take comments and make surveys. However, people for the most part refuse to participate in surveys. They are afraid to be prosecuted. We can be blamed, too. One can always find what to arrest or fine a journalist for.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you write about LGBT people? If not, why?

I have never written about issues related to sexual minorities. I do not want to; I do not like these subjects. Maybe I do not know how serious these problems are in Russia, and actually I do not know how to write about them. I do not really understand the attention of some media to gay parades and LGBT actions. I think if the matter concerns specific stories of human rights violation I will write about one's human rights. Although I'm not sure it will be published in my medium.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

Because of the enforcement of Federal legislation on the so-called 'gay propaganda', in our media there are almost no publications about LGBT people, this is a taboo for us.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, I do.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No, we do not consider this topic relevant to our region. And in addition, the Federal edition of our newspaper will not allow such kind of a story.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

We write about them.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

I do not remember such reports in our publication. I do not think that this is an acute issue for our region. Perhaps the LGBT community does not give a serious information ground to tell about them.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

No, we don't. This is definitely not the topic for my readership whose age is 50+. They are basically veterans and pensioners with their own ideology and their own views. Some years ago in a story about May Day demonstration it was casually mentioned that representatives of the LGBT community took part in the march. There was no photo, just the enumeration of participants. We received a great number of dissatisfied calls from our readers questioning 'Why do you write about them?'"

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

We do not write about them, because this topic is not close to our publication. Our readers are over the age of 45 and they censure topics related to the LGBT community. In addition, the editor-in-chief is extremely intolerant to this issue and this group of people.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

We do not cover the topic of LGBT people because there was nothing about it in our town, not a single action that they have held. If such an event is organized, then we will consult our lawyer on the way to cover it, so as not to violate the law banning the promotion of gay relations among minors.
Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

We constantly do it. Our newspaper's audience and policy is closely related to human rights. LGBT rights are among the most vulnerable in Russia, and we are raising this issue. It is impossible to say that in our country this topic finds understanding among all readers, it is the least interesting for the mass audience. This is due to the mentality.
Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

I do not write, but the website publishes such stories. This topic is not interesting to me. I do not write about this not because I am afraid of it, but because I do not see a topic here. A gay or a heterosexual - this does not mark one as a person.
Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Yes, we do, but this topic doesn't have an eventful agenda. We wrote about problems with LGBT organization, there were no more subjects on this issue. A couple years ago, lawyers advised me not to publish a text about a girl getting ready for sex reassignment surgery. It was very disappointing, but in the text there were many moments that could be considered propaganda.
Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No, because this topic is not included in the state assignment.
Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

No, not a single story has been done over the decades of my work. They pretend that the topic does not exist and there is a more important agenda.
Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Rarely, because there is nothing to write about. Once we wrote about a woman who was going to do sex change operation. The article was about her problems with documents and photos in her passport. We had no problems. There were no more special topics in this area as there are no press events.
Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No. 'The less shit you touch, the less it stinks', any mentions of them are propaganda. They are all crazy.
Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

We used to write about them. But we stopped doing it because we can easily fall under the law on propaganda, and besides, this news is extremely negatively perceived by our readers.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Sometimes I do, but rarely. LGBT organizations themselves are not very willing to cooperate with media. The Media Propaganda Act severely impedes the development of journalism related to gender issues. They should be written and talked more about, as well as about sexual upbringing.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

We can write about it, but for some reason no one does or suggests the issue. We will not write about people who go out with posters. If there is an interview with a person on this topic this will be published, there are published, there are no bans here..

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

No, because we haven't had any press events.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Once a local LGBT organization was searched and a case was opened about LGBT propaganda because inside the NPO's room there was a poster showing three couples kissing: 2 boys, 2 girls and a boy and a girl. And beneath each couple there was written 'OK'. I wrote about this case, but could not illustrate the article with a photo of this poster otherwise we would also have been fined for propaganda. I had to put it into words.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

No. I don't know exactly why, probably, this is not quite on the agenda of our television company. It is believed that our viewers are not interested in the problems of the HLBT communities.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, I do. Usually about the actions they hold or about their appearance in some projects.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned National newspaper

We write only if there are real press events. For example, we recently reported that a gay activist complained to European court about banning an LGBT picket in one of the cities in our region.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Once upon a time there was a story. I do not remember if it was published, perhaps, the editor did not let it out, he did not share such views. Recently, we haven't had any. Once there was an attempt to write about them, but

then it became clear that one would need to navigate skillfully in connection with the law on the promotion of LGBT people. The journalist refused.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We write when there are such topics. For example, about their trying to hold a public action and the prohibitions of the authorities.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

No, we are not writing about LGBT people, somehow we haven't had a chance, there were no people to interview and write about. But it is not a forbidden issue.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

I'm okay and tolerant with these people. And I have nothing against them. But I do not cover this topic since I consider these phenomena being expression of the disease. And if I write about it as a disease I can run into resentment of these unfortunate people.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you use anonymous sources of information and how do you protect them?

I carefully use anonymous sources, only if I absolutely trust one and understand the reasons why a person wants to remain anonymous. I don't remember having to defend any of them, but rather myself and my trust in these sources.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

Our edition uses information from trusted sources on the condition of their anonymity, but it's the journalist who takes complete responsibility for this information. As a journalist I guarantee anonymity to my source and take full responsibility even in case of litigation.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we do. And we will never tell anyone where the information comes from.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We often use them. I do not remember anyone asking to reveal a source.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, according to the media law we have the right not to reveal the sources

if we are not obliged to open the name by the decision of court. The sources are sacred to us.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

For me it's a reason to deal with the topic. But if we do not find any comment on the topic, which an anonymous source suggests, we will not break the news.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes. I never name sources of information, even if it is required by the security services or the military. There were such precedents. In this case I take a principled stand, I always say: 'I'll meet you in court'. However, no one has yet called me to the court on this issue.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

We not use them a lot, just in some special cases. When I was doing investigative journalism, I referred to them. I didn't protect them in any particular way. No one spoke to them but me. Only I knew who they were.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Yes, we do. In our practice, there have been no court decisions that obligated the editorial to disclose information sources. As a rule, we ask for official sources comment on the information from an anonymous source. Next we broadcast it.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Yes, all the time. The main condition of contact with sources is to ensure their anonymity. I do not remember a single case when a source was revealed by our journalists. But here the editorial board also takes risks; the sources may have their own goals why to employ media leak, and the journalist cannot always calculate them. It is important that we never pay for such information. We refuse to work with such anonymous sources as they can simply be provocateurs.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

I regularly use anonymous sources, but have never betrayed them. I have not even been asked to. According to the law on mass media, only a court can oblige someone to open sources. This has never happened.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

We do, and just do not disclose them. Nobody sued us for disclosing sources.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

No, I don't. That makes no sense since the stories and subjects suggested by sources will never be aired.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, we do. Sometimes the administration where the news came from tries to ask how we have found out about this or that, but we never answer. Sometimes we immediately get unfounded accusation that since the source is not named it's a fake piece of news. But no one yet has tried to open sources in court.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, we use them after careful verification of their information. No one has ever asked us to open the source's name.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Sometimes I do. But I have never been demanded to open a source.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

Yes, sometimes it can be a problem. And very often we are asked 'Who told you this?' or 'How do you know?' But no one has ever revealed the sources so far. No one has been put through the courts, but sometimes they press very hard to make us tell who the source is.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

We do but check their information and do not refer to them directly. We protect the sources according to the law, we do not have the right to give them out. But, in fact, no one asks.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, with double-checking the information. Nobody has asked to name our sources yet, otherwise we would send them to court.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I do not remember this. Probably, not.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

I use them if only the information is very important and they are reliable

enough. I do not disclose the sources.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Of course, and we constantly do that. We write, 'according to source'. We do not give up our sources.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Yes, sometimes. How do we protect them? By not disclosing them. We work on the agreed conditions. There were no cases of talking on a fake phone or playing mask shows.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

We do it if the information is of public interest and is confirmed at least indirectly. To protect them we do not name the sources and try to present the information so that it cannot be identified.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Yes, we often use anonymous sources, according to the Media Law even in court we can refuse to give out our sources.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

We do. And we do not let the sources do not give them up.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



How do you cover the news if someone insults the authorities? How do you avoid the risk of being accused of an affront?

Such news is covered if a criminal case has been initiated. We can refer to those who have initiated the case or human rights defenders; in each case, we apply two sides. I remember several examples when I wrote about cases of insulting the authorities; they were published in our online edition.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

If it is a direct insult or a charge of a crime but the news has a social significance, we publish it without direct quotes. For example, 'a well-known opposition leader was extremely negative speaking about the President of the country.' But we won't state what exactly he said. Personally, I try to operate either with facts or word pictures. For example, 'this reminds me of a famous joke, or a comedy film, or the plot of such-and-such a book' which are known among all Russians.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

We write that something has happened, as a fact. But we haven't had this in the region yet, so we haven't written about it yet.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We will use the wording very carefully. For example, we make quotes of such phrases as 'This is a stupid power' and name the author.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

I do not quote verbatim; I use a descriptive way of writing. Such texts are examined by the lawyers before publication.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

State media tend not to discuss such topics. I'm not sure that would be the subject of our report.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

You just need to be a polite person. I think it's disrespectful to yourself if you write insults in a newspaper, even while quoting your interviewee. A journalist should always be able to choose words. In the end, in my opinion, the situation itself when told in detail can be "offensive" to the authorities. To do this you do not need to use a low-cost vocabulary.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

Since our newspaper is an official city newspaper and is financed from the city budget, we, on the contrary, explain why the city authorities did so and not otherwise, especially if someone criticizes them. We do not insult the authorities. When it comes to high officials and office battles, the editorial board acts very carefully and plays safe; it is better not to write about something than to provoke fining.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Ordinary people are not protected from fines, and the media are even more so. In my head this law, of course, leads to self-censorship. I have to choose words so that no one get offended. With this law they are trying to put pressure on eco-activists who oppose the construction of a landfill in our region. A few administrative cases are opened for comments, including the case for the phrase 'They have grown completely impudent'. Lawyers say the law is crude, with very vague concepts.

I talked on this subject with the famous Moscow media lawyer Fedor Kravchenko. He says that it's not yet possible to decide, for example, who will be an expert in such cases. Is the phrase 'They have grown impudent' an insult? One philologist will say yes, and another will object that this is a common speech. A clear line is not drawn, and this raises questions and concerns. When an official sits in my studio and I criticize him saying 'It's a short-sighted approach'. He may take offense. Which side will the law with vague wording take is now not entirely clear. Quite often people write to me in social networks: 'Why are you constantly criticizing the power and the

governor?' There is a category of people who consider it indecent to criticize anyone. So they can generally be offended for any reason.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

The criteria for insulting power are very vague. There are general concepts that, for example, one cannot trample the national flag or kick the national coat of arms, that is one cannot insult state symbols. But sometimes small officials set themselves equal to those symbols, the courts side with officials, not journalists. If the news that someone has insulted the government is of a public significance, we will write about it. We will not publish photos with phrases that are offensive to the authorities, but we can quote people who utter offensive statements.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

We write such news, just give speeches and statements that might seem offensive in quotation marks.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

It is very difficult. If there is a protest rally full of slogans which are offensive to representatives of regional and federal authorities, we take a general photo of the protest so that the poster takes up no more than 15-20 percent space, not the whole photo, so that it would not be interpreted as the opinion of the editorial staff.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We do not notice this kind of news.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

In principle, there are no stories with insults to the authorities on our TV channel. Our company has information service agreements with all governmental agencies.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, off course. We write about the courts if they start a case against a person who somehow offended the authorities. If there's a protests action we write all the slogans in quotation marks and publish photos with slogans. So far, there have been no complaints against our media.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Probably we will write about the news, the way we write about rallies. We haven't had such cases yet.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

If a piece of news is socially important and resonant then we will find a way to write about it without any risks.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

What does it mean to insult the power? I don't remember anyone in the region insulting any authorities. I cannot speculate in the abstract.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

We won't cover this.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Honestly, at the city level we have not had this yet. Probably we would have asked the authorities to comment upon. We try not to cover such topic except for breaking news, but neither analytics no essays.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

If the case does not reach the court, or does and the court finds that there is an insult, then we partially quote the content of the insult. For example, 'They're getting bold! Complete ignorance of the laws or, even worse, complete lawlessness! Aren't there a single decent policeman and a judge in the city? Are those repressions of 1937? What makes these people turn into scum?' a man wrote in comments in a group on social networks. The court considered this an insult to authorities. We cited only part of the quotation, 'They're getting bold! Complete ignorance of the laws or, even worse, complete lawlessness!' And we paraphrased the rest of it.

Or, for example, a person was tried for a comment with an insult to the authorities which ran, 'Deputies are a bunch of idiots'. We wrote that the person spoke unfavorably against deputies. But this was not recognized as an insult, so later we could quote in full.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

We either do not cover such topics in principle, or we choose the most neutral piece about the insult itself.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

I always try to act within the law. I have mentioned above that people at meetings usually try to behave so that not to let down the organizers or discredit the rally. If someone says 'idiots, villains, enemies of Russia' I can give such a quote, especially if a person speaks substantively and justifies the opinion. But if someone says 'Vasya Pupkin' is an idiot, a scoundrel and an enemy of Russia – this is an insult or may even turn out to be slanderous. If they say about the head of the region that he hasn't coped with certain problems or has done nothing for the republic and accuse him of incompetence, this is what I include in the report.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We write without evaluating, only information, and always with reference to the source, speakers or documents.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

If such a message appears the direct speech is not used, we convey general meaning with reference to the speaker.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

After toughening the legislation regarding insulting the authorities, we did not have obvious noteworthy cases of insult. There only were posters of Putin with ironic captions affixed by unknown people in the city. Eager authorities could have tried to interpret them as an insult to the president. We were safe deleting a photo of one poster, the one about the Crimea. And, of course, in our texts we do not allow direct insults.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

We just do not write about it or we choose expressions without insults.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

If everything corresponds to reality, but a person has used obscene language, then we can give an interpretation of the statement, not a quote. We try to be based on real facts and documents confirming what we're writing about. And at the same time we try to be objective. We use the direct speech of the people we write about and comments of officials.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



Do you think it is possible to professionally perform the work of a journalist within the current restrictions in Russia, and if so, how?

I think if you don't believe you can do your job professionally you'd better leave the profession. Indeed, there are a number of limitations which have to be considered and borne in mind. The work of major media is often influenced by political forces and economic difficulties. The matter of survival is very often associated with loyalty to the authorities. You can remain a professional if you understand that you do not violate your intrinsic principles, that is you do not lie, do not distort facts, do not adjust to anything but you can refuse what contradicts these principles. Today, journalists need to learn to write between the lines again – a skill that was well mastered by previous generations of journalists in our country.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

In my opinion, professional and independent journalism under the conditions of today's Russian legislation and within regional media is almost impossible. The alternatives in the current situation are social networks and journalistic blogs.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Yes, I think so. You just have to do your job. Restrictions appear, and the

task of journalists and editors is to find new formats, turns, phrases. It's just much more complicated. There are no forbidden topics; there is a question of how to write about it.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We try to do our job professionally. There is less and less room for maneuvering left. Sometimes you have to use writing between the lines and word-play. The latest example: clearing out the peaceful protest in Shies by the police was under the headline 'Garbage won't pass'. 'Garbage' in Russian slang means 'a policeman'.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Yes, it's possible. We have been doing this for more than 20 years. We observe the law on mass media, the standards of journalistic ethics and requirements of the profession. If the authorities think that we cross a line, then we have legal proceedings with them.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

It's possible. Much depends on the subject a journalist works with, his ability to write in the 'Aesopian language' and the inability of the editor to read between the lines. One can pick up the opinions of people in the story in such a way that the viewer and the reader could think of what the journalist hasn't said. Making portraits of popular people a journalist lets them express their opinion so that the reporter needn't add anything more. There are significant dates: 1937, 1941, 1945, 1991, 1993 – everyone knows perfectly well what happened during these years, there is no need to add anything else.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Sure. It is important to work in the interests of your readers: to help people fight against injustice, to write interesting stories and to ask inconvenient questions to officials. And to respect, first of all, yourself and your readers.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

It's possible. But one has to be legally qualified and able to express ideas in undertones.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

I think that is possible. How? For me, the examples are radio Echo of Moscow and the TV channel Dozhd (Rain).

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

It is possible under a series of conditions: a team and protection. If you are a journalist of a small municipal newspaper you have almost no protection. If the reaction to a story is negative, the journalist will not be able to oppose it. If you are a journalist of the Federal editorial office in Moscow, the level

of protection is different. The risks are enormous; such journalists are killed sometimes.

Media in Russia ceased to be a business. This is either a social work or a desire to promote one's own agenda. The further away from Moscow the more difficult it is to imagine independent media where the owner does not interfere in journalistic work. There is no buffer between journalists and city or regional officials or large companies.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

It is still possible. The space is narrowing, it has become more difficult to work, you have to work with caution and think what words are precise enough to describe this or that news.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

If the media exists on state money, then this is almost impossible. You can write stories about people but writing something objective or critical about authorities, about life in the city and the region or making investigations is impossible. A year ago, in one of the regions of our country a young man blew himself up inside FSB buildings. Several journalists from different parts of the country were accused of acquitting terrorism for their stories in which they tried to reason or discuss the reasons that could have motivated a young man to such step. In addition, the media that wrote about the tragedy itself, faced the same problems if comments supporting the young man had not been removed on time.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It is quite possible, but not in state media. It's not about limitations but about others measures of influence the journalist that are not described in the laws: the threat of dismissal, pressure on relatives (it is possible to organize excessive attention of controlling structures to the sphere of your relatives' activities), decrease of salaries.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

No, it is impossible, especially in a regional state media. Journalists are willing to work professionally, as it was in the 1990s but they are not allowed. If you do not like something that means you do not fit the company, you can look for another place. I consider myself a true journalist who makes professional stories and reporting, it's interesting to watch them. I work deeply and honestly, but I only take specific, topics which are permitted.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

It's possible. Sometimes because of these limitations we spend a lot of time on formulations and neat phrases so as not to get fines, but in general we write on any topic.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

I do not understand the question. I see no obstacles to the activities of journalists in Russia.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

I am sure it is possible. The main thing is to remember the rules and not

break the law. There's always a way, a loophole, that allows to find the right words and catchphrases to write a story on the most difficult topics. Journalists and editors who are afraid to write on sensitive topics are simply lazy and unprofessional. Or they don't have time to sit longer and find safe ways of presenting information.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It is very difficult. Not all restrictions are reasonable. The problem is that it's possible to carry out the work professionally but the result of this work is not seen. Journalists and their work ceased to influence the situation. They get no reactions from the authorities; they are just not noticed. The power is closed and very far from the people. We have a situation in which besides the fact it's really hard for a journalist to do the job, it's pointless.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

I think this can always be done. If there is an outlet in which you can publish your stories feeling free to choose topics and speakers, then yes. There are very few sites of this kind left, but there are. Even in our medium we sometimes manage to publish very serious and problematic stories which are professionally done. There is no much of inner freedom. But to remain a journalist, there are many other issues that one can report on, except for politics and rallies. To cover these topics you need to go to another media.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

It's almost impossible. You need to either live and work in Riga (here is a funny smiley), or, like us, in a bear's corner, which is fucking uninteresting to anyone. We chose a very narrow niche for ourselves, we cover events in a tiny town, and therefore our funny small local journalism despised by all somehow carries on. But in general I don't see much sense in this profession in this country and in this historical period of time.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, you just have to be extremely careful. Now journalism in Russia is in the situations when you can be fined for anything.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

For myself, I do not see such an opportunity. I don't know a single independent media in our region where journalists would be objective in their stories. Everywhere there are centers of influence: regional or city governments, interests of business or opposition where news is also presented in a certain way, - they become hostages of the situation and also have to adapt to their media's policy.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

It is still possible, although it is difficult to make money and the risks are great. For example, one of my relatives was called for a conversation by FSB officers; they wanted him to tell me that the reason for the call was

my writing for different publications about the construction of Shies landfill. My relative did not agree to come for the conversation since there was no official notification from the FSB. I was also informed that I'm under special FSB control and they monitor my journalistic activities. Of course, it's stressing me out a bit. But this does not mean I will stop writing on topics that I consider important.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Sometimes it's difficult, but it's possible. Though there are always some risks. It's important to work with sources carefully checking information, trusting only documents and not saying that someone's common opinion or rumor is a fact.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

There are many restrictions on activities today, but a journalist should always aim to work professionally which means to search for possibilities to delivering valuable information to the society without doing harm to the media. However, this may not always work out. I know that some media (and even bloggers, even more so) write everything on their own fear and risk until sanctions have come. Though, this is more likely not professionalism because the information is not always true.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

Yes, it is quite possible. More often journalists or founders turn on self-censorship. There are some restrictions, as with child victims of violence, with insult authorities, with various secrets protected by law, with refusals to deliver information, and answers that hide it anyway. But even with all that it's possible to work professionally, if desired.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

Perhaps it's possible if one has studied the laws very carefully and is able to use them, and one should work in opposition media, not in state ones.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

It is possible, but very difficult because power institutions are aimed to PR, and they can't stand the spirit of journalists. Only courtly, lured media are considered high-quality truthful press. The rest are called enemies and they try not to contact them. Our governor's press secretary has recently announced to our agency that he doesn't think that the governor should give us an interview because we are 'yellow press' as regarding three topics: garbage reform, power and Shies (a place, cleared for landfill for Moscow garbage, against which there has been a year protests both from the region and the country). Journalists were simply divided into friends and foes.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media

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Is anything changing for the better in your work? If so, what is it?

I don't notice changes for the better. I get more and more disillusioned with my profession and I seriously think of changing my occupation.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

No. Unfortunately, I do not notice changes for the better.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

Everything is fine.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

What is changing for the better is the technical aspect of work: fast Internet, good gadgets, etc.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

We have to improve our legal skills and be as professional as possible in the word usage.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

A real change for the better is that experience accumulates over the years. I cannot say that I get more interested in my work, because the scope of journalist's work is very rigid.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

It is important to understand what to compare with and for what period. It has become more difficult to work, there are more restrictions. It is increasingly difficult for the media to protect their budgets and plan commercial activity. Remember Lewis Carroll's, 'We must run as fast as we can, just to stay in place. And if you wish to go anywhere you must run twice as fast as that'.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

Things are changing for the worse. My work today and 10 years ago are two different things. After the latest changes, I cannot be sure that after another trip within a Barents Press project I will not be recognized as a foreign agent as an individual.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Internet development helps in work, and that cheers a lot.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Yes, there are changes. The restrictions motivate us to develop in the still accessible Internet in all available formats: social networks, messengers and various platforms. We are motivated to look for new forms of audience attraction and new ways to present information.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

Probably, it is. There seem to appear more sources and stories.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

Our edition is expanding. We are not a state-owned media, and we are rather an exception. We can exist as a media - and this is good news.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

No.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

In terms of journalism, there is no improvement. 50-60% of our work constitute custom-made stories from officials and enterprises. We were pleased by student journalists who refused to practice on our channel because the main hot topics of the region's life are not covered here.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Yes, technical points. It's easier to get information; there are more possibilities to verify it. No need to hang on the phone for hours, the Internet solves a lot of problems. We are able to work with different formats.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Thanks to technological progress, it has become possible to work at any convenient time of the day, you can chat with sources on Skype and so on.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

Our media is developing, we have more and more readers, and we are generating greater confidence.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It's a very sad question. I don't see any improvements; we're slipping to the bottom. If earlier there used to be a format for communication between authorities and journalists, which is important for political journalism, today there is no such format. Really the governor cannot be asked anything unauthorized. The authorities have built a wall and do not communicate with reporters who may ask them 'wrong' questions.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

I would not say that something is changing for the better. The screws are being tightened and reinforced control is ongoing, the leash is getting shorter. Looking back to what we wrote about 5-7 years ago, I realize how much the time has changed.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Nothing.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

No, it's not.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I really wish I could affirmatively answer this question! Oh, I've found it! Over the last year, the topic of environmental protection has become an urgent topic on our agenda. Earlier we didn't speak on this important issue.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

I've been a freelancer for a year and a half and this has its advantages. Speaking specifically about journalism, the opportunity to work with professional editors of different media is a very good thing that helps to develop professionally.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

It's hard to say if the changes are for the better or not. But something is constantly changing. There are no inadequate PR managers in the government – and it's good enough.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Positivity is not great as a whole. Media, especially printed ones, are now in a difficult financial situation. We created a new outlet to be able to do what we feel is right. But working under market conditions is very difficult.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

I think there are not many changes for the better. The pursuit of traffic journalism and its standards, but this is not the fault of Russian law, but of our economic situation and state policy. Technology development brings something new into journalism; we now get a lot of information through social networks and that is probably a change for the better, objective progress.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

I have less editorial tasks and projects; I can choose my own topics and people to write about. My initiatives are supported.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

There are only changes for the worse. Media with a century of history disappear or remain as appendage to power. And being set free they can't survive. Advertising does not make money for them. On regional level there are no qualitative, independent media with a good staff, with a decent salary and with a social package.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



How do you think our western colleagues perceive journalism and journalists in Russia? Are they right or wrong? Why?

Someone despises, someone regrets; probably, the Russian journalism is not well spoken of in the West. I think that's fair enough in most cases. On the other hand, in the Western media we can also find 'crooked' stories about Russia, not always balanced and reasoned. But this is an information war which has its own rules; someone willingly gets 'under arms' and is guided only by ideological, pseudo-patriotic consideration.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

In my opinion, the way Western journalists percept Russian media and the way Russian journalists percept Western media both have strong stereotypes. One should realize that Putin is not entire Russia. Not all Russian journalists write positively about the Kremlin's actions, not all journalists in Russia are propagandists. I would say that every journalist is a separate person, with his/her own name. Some of them are trustworthy, some are not. But the situation in the Western media is exactly the same. For me, the main thing in a story is signing it with no shame. Such journalists are few, but there are some.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

I believe that most foreign colleagues understand that in Russia there are journalists and there are propagandists. But sometimes it happens that all journalists are evaluated 'under one comb'. But in general, I think we are seen as colleagues.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It seems to me that they often do not understand us, the specifics of our work. They do not imagine how you can work under constant pressure of law enforcement officers and that for some publication in the media they can withdraw all the computers. They look at the events that are happening here with very naive eyes. Let them stay under our conditions of work and remain professionals.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

Speaking about our Western colleagues, we shouldn't generalize. Those who were in Russia are more aware of the working conditions of Russian journalists. The media which have never faced our realities, can suppose that there are no professional journalists in our country, only propagandists. Western journalists live and work in different realities. Probably, we do not objectively perceive the Western media either; we can perceive them in a more idealistic way, and their view of us can be more critical.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

I've been communicating with Western journalists for a long time and evaluate their work very respectfully. But I see that, after all, when the political situation changes, their attitude towards Russian journalists and Russians in general changes. This is less true for journalists who visit Russia and work on Russian topics (for example, journalists from the Barents Region). A completely different attitude comes from those who study Russia via media or social networks, because there is propaganda from all sides and in all countries.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

I think that propaganda is strong in Russia as well as in the West. Many sayings about our work, about the country as a whole are myths from the 90s. Over the past 30 years, Russia and the information field in our country have changed a lot. There was much more press freedom in the 1990s, but no media responsibility for any fakes that they published. Now such headings as 'Groans come from the Kola superdeep well' would not be possible. But, on the other hand, now there are excesses with the restrictions of Roskomnadzor. In my opinion, only those Western journalists who have worked for a couple of years in Russian cities can judge about the situation in our country more or less objectively. So how do they perceive our journalism? And are they right?

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

It seems to me that western journalists do not at all understand the conditions in which we work. They do not understand how the editor-in-chief of a newspaper can be a deputy at the same time. Once I visited a Swedish TV station and one of its journalists mentioned that she herself chooses issues to cover and can do the task either for a week or a fortnight. It was a shock for us. We have a quota to make which means a daily number of texts. Not always there is time to develop a topic as you like to.

Also, I think western journalists do not understand how difficult it is to obtain official information, not the one presented in victorious press releases. In Norway and Denmark journalists can see the official correspondence of officials, in Norway one can officially see how much any citizen earns, what kind of property a person has and how much he has paid for it. With us it all is practically hush-hushed. Thank God, you can at least see an extract from the national registry of legal entities. Officials often answer questions just for the record, that is not on the merits, but just to fulfill the formality of giving an answer.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

It seems to me, they often perceive it as an element of the propaganda machine of the state. At the annual meeting in Tromsø, which began with a speech on propaganda in Russia (which certainly exists, especially on central state channels), I heard the opinion that our foreign colleagues do not believe in independent journalism in Russia. There were no alternative facts mentioned.

'That's what you have', such was the only point of view presented. But this is not true. The media in which I work does its job independently; we do not have forbidden topics in criticizing the authorities or in publication of alternative and opposite opinions. Foreign colleagues judge Russian journalism, probably, only by central federal media, and not by small publications working in regions. There is propaganda in the regional media as well, but there are also independent media, freelance journalists and bloggers. But foreign colleagues see one side of the situation and it's only the negative one. Meanwhile, Russia and the United States have been running a long-term cold war against each other. And both countries use media propaganda for this purpose. However, the colleague who spoke in Tromsø mentioned only propaganda in Russia. Maybe, the nuances of information policy should be covered more objectively. Either they have no real information about what is happening or the objective picture does not interest them.

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Based on my experience, many foreign journalists tend to dramatize the situation in Russia, but not where it is necessary. I am 'touched' by questions, whether we are afraid to write e-mails as they are read by special services. And they do not understand that in Russia there are issues for which one can simply be killed.

They see Russia as a combination of North Korea and China. They forget that we still have an unblocked Internet and all social networks and messengers are not considered mass media. They do not understand the real role of journalism in Russia, where once the social contract was violated. Officials stopped responding to requests from the media, law enforcement agencies stopped responding to media publications about the crimes of officials. Though under the media law, reporting a crime is equal to reporting it to the police. The Prosecutor's office should immediately respond to such articles. Officials realized that nothing would happen to them if they did not respond to a media request. Law enforcement agencies will not be punished if they do not respond to the media report about the crimes of officials. And then everything broke and the media ceased to be the fourth power. It is no longer inscribed in the system of work of the state. The media is not paid attention to. It turns out that journalists should constantly ask the President during direct lines or ask press secretaries of the President whether he has seen the report about this and that and how he can comment on the issue, whether there will be any reaction.

Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

Those journalists who work in Russia and visit the country know something. If they know their Russian colleagues, the latter are well perceived. Whereas the rest of western journalists regard Russian colleagues with a share of arrogance. I would even say they don't perceive us at all until something bad happens to a journalist, as it was with Politkovskaya or Golunov.

They probably believe that we a priori have no independent press. They neither know nor understand both the country and the language, and stories about Russia have no nuances for them. For them everything in Russia is bad and very bad, without shades, without explanation of reasons and nuances

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

I get the impression that they imagine Russian colleagues as slaves of the systems who can't write anything. I often communicate with foreign colleagues, and I see that they do not really understand the processes taking place in Russia. But they have respect for their Russian colleagues. They are often only interested in negative news and trends related to life in Russia and work of journalists. Sometimes it seems that they are sure we live in a totalitarian dictatorship and that there are no independent media and independent journalists. But this, of course, is not so. Each region has independent media and bloggers (they are few but their stories are the most read), and they do real journalism.

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It seems to me that they do not understand all the anxiety of our situation. They do not understand that we don't have the same journalism as in democratic countries. They have other principles, they work for the reader, no one has the right to interfere in what they write about. We still have some segments in the regions (journalists, bloggers, small independent publications), but we do not have journalism as a system.

In press tours they tell us such things about investigations, where to find information or how to objectively cover events that our journalists may start suffering from depression. Because it is not applicable in most state media; the system itself is designed so that it is not necessary.

People continue to work in such media as ours because they cannot work anywhere else. There they get a decent salary and social guarantees. This is not journalism, of course, and since the beginning of my work in this newspaper I have stopped considering myself a journalist, although many of my colleagues sincerely consider themselves as such. We have a large staff shortage, but nobody is going to work for us, it seems to me, precisely because of moral and ethical aspects. We have not been able to recruit new employees for more than a year. This, by the way, is one of positive items.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

I've never thought about this. They probably perceive their Russian colleagues differently. Our meetings show that false and shallow judgments are numerous enough. It seems to some of them that our journalists are full of fear, afraid to be fired or beaten. And they are right. We are coward. We want stability, we have children and loans, and we are afraid of losing the same low-paid job that we have.

Some people think that we don't see much and that our vision is blurred as we get a lot of news from the federal media. And when we go to press tours, we have our eyes open to see many things clearly. There's a feeling that we cause kind of dislike as people who do not fight for their rights. Our Western colleagues are probably wondering why we tolerate that and con-

tinue to work under such conditions. Why do we sink in chanting military victories, army merits, military-patriotic education of children? And they do not understand that this topic is already repelling us. But there is truth in it, too. Life is far expensive, hard and full of problems. Only a few are ready to fight for something. Young people do not choose a journalistic career. Regional journalism is uninteresting and underpaid.
Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

In different ways, I guess. It's very difficult for me to judge since I don't have big experience communicating with foreign colleagues. It would be interesting for me to meet them and have a chat.
Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It's probably different for everybody. Journalists who were in Russia are less susceptible to their propaganda and they are more adequate to what's going on in the country. The rest of them, probably have more confidence in official media where presenting information about Russia is very unbalanced.

I can't judge about all the journalists. Once in Oslo, about 10 years ago, I was in the editorial office of Aftenposten where the editor-in-chief was a man who had lived in Russia for 20 years and he understood Russian. I remember it was a very interesting conversation.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

I haven't talked to so many foreign colleagues. I don't know what media they read, I don't know how they perceive us.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

It seems to me that our Western colleagues have an opinion that we are afraid of everything and live under constant fear. They have this stereotype after the murders of journalists such as Anna Politkovskaya. It's hard to explain to them that it's not like that and we don't live in fear. Our main problem is that of financial self-sufficiency, newspaper distribution, etc. But they have the same problems. It's hard to explain what exactly journalists were killed for since none of the murders was solved. We ourselves are to blame for the fact that they have such stereotypes.

Another stereotype is that all media in Russia are state-dependent and not free. They don't understand how media can be state-owned and at the same time be partly independent. This is possible with the right editor who will fight for each article, headline and phrase. That also depends on how well the editor understands the situation. Of course, not everything can be written, but, nevertheless, it is possible.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

It seems to me that our Western colleagues, to put it mildly, have exaggeratedly bad impression of the working conditions of Russian journalists, that our hands are hit for every word, that we are scolded for everything and do not publish anything critical. Things are not so hopeless.

I have a feeling that the reason for this opinion of our Western colleagues is that they also subjected to propaganda of their media. I don't want to say that they are victims of propaganda, everything is thinner and more sensitive there, but this factor also matters. They communicate with Russian journalists. Moreover, I'm sure that straight-up propagandists would not even agree to communicate with normal reporters.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

It's hard to say for everyone. Longtime colleagues who live, like us, in the border region, understand everything perfectly. Sometimes they say that journalists in Russia are heroes because the working conditions are difficult. Sometimes there's kind of 'bossy' attitude, though I personally felt it only in 'terms of use of new technologies. I don't I know what is 'big' Journalists think about 'big' Russian media or individual personalities. And I can't know because in Russia there are two kinds of journalism - propaganda and canonical; or even three (with bloggers). I do not touch propaganda as I take care of myself, so I cannot judge here.

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

I have never talked to foreign journalists, so I don't know.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

I have the impression of a somewhat biased attitude towards us. There is a thesis, 'In Russia there is no freedom of speech'. And it is usually confirmed by any arguments, they are sometimes far-fetched. But there are two levels: federal journalists (journalists of major national media) and regional ones. Federal journalists can see only propaganda and lack of speech freedom. This is not always and not quite true. They either do not understand the situation or it's just beneficial for them to present the situation in Russia just like that.

The cooperation of regional journalists eliminates template thinking. Nordic regional colleagues having contacts with Russian journalists do not divide the situation into black and white, but they see more nuances and are more aware of the specifics in our work.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

Western colleagues are very different people. Those who are closely engaged in Russian problems and write about them, in my opinion, they understand everything perfectly, both our risks and our motivation and problems of the country. A couple of years ago I was in a training course and a foreign journalist told us that the main problem of journalism was copyright; it was clear he did not know what was happening to journalism in our country. But this, perhaps, is the only case in my memory. I read some articles in the foreign press about issues that I'm familiar with, they are usually professionally written and I have no complaints here. In general, journalists understand each other well and find a common language very quickly, regardless of where they come from.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper

Our Western colleagues are sure we are oppressed and infected with propaganda. This is not true. They are mistaken because they also have their own propaganda which paints us in a very unsightly light. I think it is more difficult to work here, but not everything is so bad.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

I think they have a lot of prejudices and horror stories about journalism in Russia and the country in general which they draw from their sources. Some of that is true. Something is hard for them to understand simply because with us everything works in a totally different way. Though, I know that in the West not everything is as rosy as they try to present (especially in the USA).

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

I did not experience any special attitude of Western journalists to Russian journalism neither negative nor hyper positive. It is usually neutral. If they take are interested they simply ask about life in Russia and working conditions.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

I think that they consider us being under-journalists who work for money, rarely go to the courts to assert their rights and allow the authorities to narrow the scope of the Media Law. Partly they are right.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

In my opinion, they don't understand how we work, under what conditions we have to get information and what it means to transfer it to readers. How can I explain to them that the mayor can call the heads of enterprises and prohibit advertisements in certain media outlets and threatening them with sanctions? And that the head of the education department may call the principal who gave us interview and shout at her, threatening to fire if he doesn't like something in the interview. And that the mayor may call the director of Rospechat (a publishing house) and prohibit selling our newspapers. And that we can wait for the response to our request for comment on the current event from seven days to infinity. And that the governor's press secretary may insult you in social networks with complete impunity. That the media simply doesn't have any money for anything, neither for business trips, nor for food. And journalists have to work feeding their families and educating their children.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media

18

This project's aim is to convey information about the way Russian journalists work to colleagues from the Nordic countries. What would you tell them as a journalist to a journalist?

I would say that journalists, like doctors and teachers, are all different. And not only in Russia. Today, unfortunately, people often turn to journalism without education, without basic knowledge and strong moral convictions. In my opinion, journalism is a profession like any other, not a way of thinking, not a way of life – just such a job. In any country, one's approach to work, first of all, depends on themselves, on their own beliefs and the boundaries they set for themselves. In today's Russia it is more difficult to be a journalist than in many other countries because, first of all, most of the media today belong to the state, there are very few independent ones. The propaganda machine works at a very high speed; and the system is usually stronger than the individual, with rare exceptions. Therefore, blogs and social networks constitute a serious competition to traditional journalism, many people trust them more.

Probably, the profession of a journalist will soon be dramatically transformed, or its significance will sink even more. In Russia professional solidarity is not very strong, everyone is on his own (the example with Golunov is rather an exception); journalists are more often protected and supported by social activists or human rights activists than by colleagues. It seems to me that for journalism to become strong and independent in Russia more than one generation is to change, the system itself and the attitude of both society and journalists themselves to the profession must change.

Interview #1 Journalist, state owned news agency

We needn't be taught to work according to the realities of other countries. The realities and working conditions of journalists in your countries are dramatically different as compared to those which Russian journalists try to work under. It can be broken only by personal contacts and deeper study of the media market, including social networks. Even getting information from the officials in Russia is akin to a journalistic investigation of full value. But such difficulties bring one up as a professional.

Interview #2 Journalist, regionally owned media

I think that the existing relations between journalists of Russia and the Nordic countries should continue to develop and strengthen. The central TV and propaganda has nothing to do with journalism. On the other hand, such propagandists in the Barents region of Russia are very few.

Interview #3 Editor, privately owned regional online media

They were very lucky with the working conditions for journalists in the Nordic countries. Let them come here to work – their professional potential will fly incredibly high.

Interview #4 Editor, party owned regional newspaper

I would tell them that they are lucky people as to their working conditions and the fact that their profession can influence the processes taking place in society and the behavior of the authorities. They are in a less risky situation in terms of personal safety. Independent Russian journalism, despite the fact that there is not much left of it, remains very professional. The new restrictions force independent journalists to go up professionally.

Interview #5 Journalist, privately owned national newspaper

We need to continue fruitful cooperation in order to better understand each other.

Interview #6 Journalist, state owned TV

Despite the borders of states, the boundaries of thinking and the boundaries of mentalities, we're doing the same: we inform our readers about life in a city, region or country. Each day we do the same work, so we have something to talk about and argue.

Interview #7 Regional editor, privately owned national newspaper

I would say there are two different worlds. It's different here, especially when we're talking about investigative journalism. In those countries after the publication telling that the Minister of education owed for the kindergarten the official lost the post. With us everybody would voice outrage but nothing would change. Navalny's Foundation has conducted so many investigations! Has at least one official lost his position? Have any verifications been started by our law enforcement? There hasn't been a question yet, but the work of the media is also influenced by the UFAS (the Federal Antimonopoly Service). Periodically, they consider plain text as adverts. Sometimes it's really not a marked ad or there are more advertising than the law allows. In fact, we have another controller.

Interview #8 Journalist, state owned municipal newspaper

Dear colleagues, welcome to a dialogue, let's exchange experience. And I'm always ready to have a good argument with you.)))

Interview #9 Journalist, privately owned TV company

Russian journalists need European experience and communication with foreign colleagues. After returning from press tours, after visiting foreign editions, we always feel more professionally motivated. This aspect is psychologically more important to us than any limitations. For a journalist of a little local newspaper it is important to understand that we are seen as colleagues, equal partners of a large European editorial office and that we all work for one purpose – access to information for our readers, freedom of speech and development of democracy. This is the most important professional motivation. We should understand that for the Barents region Moscow is far away; Europe is much closer to us. Our journalists are fueled by the principles of freedom of speech and democracy, it is important that we continue to feel we are part of a common international network, a common

global community. Without free press there can be no free state.
Interview #10 Editor, privately owned national newspaper

We need to meet more often and learn more about each other. Journalistic trips and press tours that allow journalists from different countries to communicate are very important. At least for me, such events are very important for understanding how another country lives and thinks. If they need a Russian professional speaker on this or that problem let them turn to us, we will always give them some hints on experts who can make a balanced comment, not just those who adhere to a certain point of view on the problem.

Interview #11 Journalist, state owned news agency

You shouldn't trust all publications about Russia. Double-check everything you read about. Come here yourselves, talk to people, talk to Russian colleagues and make up your mind. You are journalists, aren't you?

Interview #12 Editor, privately owned regional online media

They should be happy they can work in such conditions. I wish we were under the same conditions – to achieve that global changes should occur in society.

Interview #13 Editor, regionally owned media

Judge not, that ye be not judged. We are set in a tight framework, but we cannot find different jobs as journalists. I would be very curious to imagine our foreign colleagues to be put in our scope of work. If you want to be a journalist here are the rules of the game for you. I don't think many of them would become heroes or fighters for the rights and freedom of speech with the risk of losing a job, an apartment and social guarantees. I would like to work for at least a day in the working environment of the colleagues from the Nordic countries. I think they face their own censorship and problems, but it would be interesting to experience that.

Interview #14 Journalist, state owned TV

Professional journalism remains the basis for us despite any laws and restrictions. If a media is independent of the government then journalists can perform their duties professionally.

Interview #15 Editor, privately owned regional online media

Do not listen to anyone, come to us and see for yourself with your own eyes, make up your own mind.

Interview #16 Journalist, regionally owned media

Do not watch Russian television, there is biased information, and basically the stories of Russian television are not about Russia, but about Ukraine, the protests in France, the situation in Syria. Come to Russia, we will show

and tell you everything. To understand Russia, you need to see it for yourself. We are ready to help you with this. We try to work professionally and objectively.

Interview #17 Editor, privately owned regional online media

We need cooperation. First of all, on climatic and environmental issues. These are the most global problems at present. We need to know democratic European practices, the rights of communes, regions and local communities.

Interview #18 Regional freelancer

Let's meet, talk and communicate. We have a lot of subjects to cover together. And personal communication is very important, it breaks stereotypes.

Interview #19 Journalist, regionally owned media

Dear friends! I am convinced that we are doing the best job in the world, we tell people about other people in a good, correct and interesting language. I'm dreaming about the day when we will be respected by the authorities, the oligarchs, and, of course, our readers. I dream about the day when people will not be executed for public expression of their own opinion, neither metaphorically nor literally. I'm sure people in the whole world are alike; we are separated by nothing else but the lines drawn on the globe, which are not visible even from the nearest space. And I hope someday journalism will forever cease to be the voice of anything and anyone else and we'll turn back to tell our stories to some people about other people. (Sorry to sound grandiose.)

Interview #20 Editor, privately owned city newspaper

In Russia, perhaps, things are not very good with freedom of speech. You have a much better situation in this regard. Our journalistic activities may be threatened with severe fines or even detention of a journalist.

Interview #21 Journalist, privately owned online media

There are also journalists in Russia as well, people who independently and voluntarily have chosen this career. They work professionally and do the job the way it is possible, as circumstances allow them. It may be thought that we and our foreign colleagues do different journalism, but we work under different conditions. Joint activities and communication help to understand each other's motives and how the systems in our countries work.

Interview #22 Journalist, state owned TV

'Let's hug', I would say. But seriously, despite different standard of living in our countries and the difference in freedom for the media, we have common topics to report on. We can proceed with collaborative projects, for example, in the field of ecology or culture, or we can unite to reveal the scheme of some companies. A vivid example of collaborative work of jour-

nalists from different countries is the Panama Papers.

Interview #23 Freelance journalist, privately owned national newspaper
Civil society in Russia is in the stage of being formed. It's not an easy process. And journalists play an important role in it. For example, the fact that we stood up for our colleague Ivan Golunov speaks about positive developments. We are fighting the cult of power in society and, most importantly, in the heads. Our power is differentiated, as elsewhere. There are corrupt security forces, and there are honest ministers. The fact that many people in Russia now hate officials as a phenomenon is an abnormal imbalance, I think. This needs to be changed, and this is not a one-way process. Now working in Russia is not easy, but very interesting. Look at the websites such as Takie Dela, 7x7, Fontanka and on many others. They exist quite openly and are very successful.

We are ready for constructive criticism from abroad and cooperation with Western colleagues. Globalization will force us anyway to resolve many problems together. But I would like to see a more balanced and more honest attitude from colleagues. The difference in geopolitical interests and some historical background still spoil our ties and do not let us communicate openly and on equal terms. I hope that we will overcome this at least inside our journalistic community.

Interview #24 Editor, regionally owned online media

Russian journalists work in different conditions and in a different legal field, but this does not mean that they are less professional. There are those who try to convey important things to their audience and make interesting projects which are in demand.

Interview #25 Journalist, privately owned city newspaper

I would ask what it's like working in their media. I would listen to any entertaining stories. Although it seems they are doing so well that it would be boring to listen. We have more problems and they are deeper, so we have more fun.

Interview #26 Editor, regionally owned online media

We have different types of journalism. We often write about minor local issues trying to help people to solve even social problems. Such is Russian journalism of actions. I think that in Europe correspondents do not do this; they cover more large-scale processes and global trends.

Interview #27 Journalist, regionally owned online media

I'd like to say that I am very happy for the journalists of the Nordic countries that they have Freedom of Speech! And that they are sure of tomorrow. And they have powerful protection as to professional activities. Is it so important! We don't have all this. But we do not give up. And we do not just love our profession – we understand that Russia cannot be without it. Without us the power in the country can do everything it likes. And while there are still real journalists it is not so easy to do.

Interview #28 Editor-in-chief, privately owned regional online media



The Law

**Legislation explained
by media lawyer
Damir Gainutdinov**

Brief overview of legislation
and law enforcements risks



Accepted abbreviations

CoAO – Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation of 30.12.2001, N 195-FL

CC RF – Criminal Code of the Russian Federation of 13.06.1996, N 63-FL

CivC RF – Civil Code of the Russian Federation (Part I of 30.11.1994, N 51-FL, Part II of 26.01.1996, N 14-FL, Part III of 26.11.2001, N 146-FL and Part IV of 18.12.2006, N 230-FL)

CPC RF – Civil Procedure Code of the Russian Federation of 14.11.2002 N 138-FL

Information Act – Federal Law of 27 July 2006, N 149-FL On Information, Information Technologies and Information Protection.'

Media Law - Federal Law of 27.12.1991 N 2124-1 'On mass media'

Act on Narcotic Drugs – Federal Law of 08.01.1998 N 3-FL “On drugs and psychotropic substances”

Child Protection Act - Federal Law of 29.12.2010 N 436-FL “On the protection of children from information detrimental to their physical and spiritual development”

Anti-Terrorist Financing Act - Federal Law of 07.08.2001 N 115-FL “On combat the legalization of income derived from criminal activity and the financing of terrorism”

Law on Extremism - Federal Law of 25.07.2002 N 114-Φ3 “On combating extremist activities”

RCS (Roskomnadzor) – Federal Service for Monitoring Communications, Information Technology and Mass Communications

RCPS – Federal supervisory service for consumer protection and human welfare

PG RF – Prosecutor-General’s Office of the Russian Federation

Existing risks

RCS’s warning of the inadmissibility to abuse freedom of the media.

Registration for preventive registration with the police.

Administrative liability in the form of a fine, arrest, confiscation of the subject of an offense, suspension of the organization.

Criminal liability in the form of a fine, correctional labor or imprisonment.

Blocking the website, including network media.

Closing the outlet of the media.

Recognition of the organization or citizen as a foreign agent.

Inclusion in the list of persons of organizations and individuals in relation to which there is information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism, which entails the restriction of banking operations and the freezing of accounts.



Obscenity in media

Legislation

Ch. 4 and 16 of the Media Law and Ch. 13.21 of the CoAO.

Points of limitation

The use of obscene language in media is an abuse of freedom of media (Article 4 of the Media Law), along with the disclosure of state secrets and propaganda of terrorism. The law does not provide a definition of obscene language and does not contain a list of specific words, but RCS refers to them as 'obscene language for the male genital organ, obscene language for the female genital organ, obscene language for the process of copulation and obscene language for women of promiscuous behavior [cit. according to the recommendations of RCS], as well as all language units formed from these words. Deficiencies of the law are offset by explanations of the law enforcer (Roskomnadzor) in which the standards are clearly formulated, their compliance protects the editorial board from prosecution.

Responsibility

In practice, this applies only to media registered by RCS since only in this case does the agency have a way of influencing in the form of a warning about the inadmissibility of abuse of freedom of media. The issuance of two written warnings to the editorial office or the founder of the media within 12 months gives the RCS reason to apply to the court with a statement on the closing the media.

In addition, a journalist, an editor and an editorial staff can be held administratively liable under Part 3 of Article 13.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses.

Sanctions

A fine of up to 3 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 20 thousand rubles for officials, up to 200 thousand rubles for legal entities, as well as confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.)

Law enforcement examples

They can be held accountable both for the use of obscene words directly in the media and for hyperlinks to such materials or for refusing to remove obscene users' comments from the website. For example, Taiga.info was fined for publishing news about the beating of a teenager accompanied by hyperlinks to videos published on social networks. The RCS's warning is usually accompanied by a protocol on an administrative offense.

2

Description of the methods and causes of suicide

Legislation

Article 15.1 of the Law on Information, Article 110.1 of CC RF

Points of limitation

The Law on Information provides the possibility of restricting access to information on methods of committing suicide, as well as calls for committing suicide; the relevant pages of the RCS includes in the Registry of Prohibited Websites, and a notification is sent to the hoster for transmission to the owner of the resource who has one day to delete the prohibited information. Otherwise, telecom operators will be obliged to start blocking access for their subscribers to the pages included in the Register. The existing regulation raises two main problems.

Firstly, many of them choose the simplest, but also the most ‘non-selective’ way of blocking the IP address. As a result, due to one story that the authorities recognized as illegal a media site may be completely blocked including many other resources that use the same IP (the so-called collateral blocking). In this situation, the editors are faced with a choice either to unconditionally fulfill the RCS’s requirement which then can be appealed in court, take months and very rarely end in victory or risk to be blocked.

Secondly, the existing criteria for evaluating information are formulated extremely broadly. The Russian authorities refer to the recommendations of the World Health Organization but in practice the RCPS, the RCS and courts prohibit in principle to mention the method or causes of suicide. The uncertainty of the law gives rise to unpredictable and arbitrary practice.

Law enforcement examples

In December 2019, the RCS demanded that Media Zone edit the article named ‘Reasonable Initiative and Creative Approach’. The material described the criminal case of the police of Nizhnekamsk who tortured the detainee Inaz Pirkin who, unable to withstand torturing, committed suicide by jumping from a high building. The RCS claims were caused by the words ‘climbed onto the roof of a ten-story building and jumped down’, as well as a photograph from the criminal case file where the most likely place to jump was shown with an arrow. All this was regarded as an instruction for suicides. And the news that a person with cancer has committed suicide due to the lack of painkillers is being blocked for indicating suicide as a way to solve life’s problems.

Curiosities also happen. Recently, the RCS demanded a Twitter user to delete a message published a few years ago which ran, ‘A man hanged himself on a tree near the Gallery. With a beard, looks like a priest. Nearby there are several ambulance doctors, they don’t know how to get him off as he hangs high’.

Criminal liability

In 2017, the CC RF was supplemented by Article 110.1 (incitement to committing suicide or assisting in committing suicide). Part 2 of this article establishes liability including for promoting suicide through advice, guidance, and giving information. The punishment is up to 3 years in prison, and if they are committed against a minor or in the media here comes part 3 of

the same article implying up to 4 years in prison. So far, only 7 sentences are known under this article, but its very existence threatens public debate on the topic of suicide.

3

Information on juvenile offenders and victims

Legislation

Art. 4, 16 and 41 of the Media Law, part 3 of article 13.15 of the Code of Administrative Offenses, part 3 of article 137 of the Criminal Code, article 15.1 of the Law on Information, article 5 of the Law on the Protection of Children.

Points of limitation

Dissemination in the media and on the Internet of information about a minor injured as a result of unlawful actions (inaction) including names, photos and video images of the minor, their parents and other legal representatives, date of birth, voice recording, place of residence, studies or work or other information that allows directly or indirectly to establish an identity is recognized as abuse of freedom of the media.

It is also forbidden for the media to disseminate information directly or indirectly indicating the identity of a minor who committed a crime or an administrative offense or any other 'antisocial' action, without the minor's consent or that of his legal representative. Under Russian law, minors are considered to be persons under the age of 18.

Such information is prohibited to be disclosed without the consent of the parents or legal representatives, or the children if they are already 14 years old. An important disclaimer is that it is possible to disseminate information without the consent of the legal representative if he is himself a suspect or accused of committing unlawful acts against a minor.

The point of the possibility to publish information about a minor who had died by the time of publication without the consent of relatives, including after a long time, remains debatable. Such publication may result in liability.

Responsibility

As for any abuse of freedom of the media, the editorial board may receive the RCS's warning for disclosing information about a victim, and if repeated, lose the certificate of registration of the media. It can also be qualified as an administrative offense or a crime. Another possible consequence is the blocking of the resource by telecom operators in case of a refusal to fulfill the RCS's requirement to delete prohibited information (the RCS itself makes the decision in this situation).

Sanctions

According to part 3 of article 13.15 of the Administrative Code it is a fine of up to 5 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 50 thousand rubles for officials, up to 1 million rubles for legal entities, as well as confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.)

According to part 3 of article 137 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is imprisonment of up to 5 years (however, since 2013, when the article appeared in the Criminal Code, not a single sentence has been passed).

4

Information on drugs

Legislation

Article 4 of the Media Law, Art. 15.1 of the Law on Information, Art. 6.13 Administrative Code, Art. 46 of the Law on Narcotic Drugs.

Points of limitation

The general norm is contained in the Law on Narcotic Drugs, which prohibits the dissemination of information on the ways and methods of development, manufacture and use of (a) narcotic drugs, (b) psychotropic substances and (c) their precursors, (d) new potentially dangerous psychoactive substances, (e) places of their acquisition, (f) methods and (g) places of cultivation of drug-containing plants, including the promotion of any advantages in the use of certain narcotic drugs, as well as the promotion of their use for medical purposes. There is no legal definition of the term 'drug propaganda', therefore, it is illegal to discuss substitution therapy (including methadone and heroin), the legalization of certain types of drugs in foreign countries, and similar issues, as well as fiction describing the manufacturing process and drug use. Drug propaganda is considered an abuse of media freedom.

The Law on Information, in its turn, establishes grounds for restricting access to any information about the ways and methods of development and use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, new potentially dangerous psychoactive substances, places of their acquisition, methods and places of cultivation of drug-containing plants. However, the criteria for evaluating prohibited information approved in 2017 contain a much broader list of prohibitions. This is not only a description of the procedure required for the manufacture or use of drugs, the cultivation of drug-containing plants, but also a description of ways to evade liability associated with their illicit trafficking, as well as 'creating a positive image of the people involved in the manufacture, development and use of the target audience' narcotic drugs.

Responsibility

As for any abuse of freedom of the media, the editorial board may receive a RCS's warning for drug propaganda and in case of repetition they may lose their certificate of registration of the media. It can also be qualified as an administrative offense. Another possible consequence is the blocking of the resource by telecom operators in case of refusal to fulfill the RCS's requirement to delete prohibited information (the decision in this situation will be made by the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the RCS if the publication is made in the registered media).

The introduction of criminal liability for such acts, including the form of prolonged imprisonment, is currently under discussion. By order of Vladimir Putin, the relevant proposals to amend the legislation should have been prepared by the government before January 10, 2020.

Sanctions

A fine of up to 5 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 50 thousand rubles for officials, up to 1 million rubles for legal entities, as well as confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.) and administrative suspension of activity for up to 90 days.

Law enforcement examples

In 2013, at the request of the Moscow Federal Drug Control Service, the domain name registrar stopped delegating the domain name to Andrei Rylkov's Foundation website because of the publication of official documents of the WHO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the role of methadone replacement therapy in HIV / AIDS prevention. This information was considered drug propaganda and a statement about the benefits of methadone over heroin.

In December 2018, the RCS demanded that the editorial staff of self-published 'Guy, you are a transformer' delete the article 'Heroin is the property of a model' about a girl who lived an ordinary life, despite the fact that she had been using heroin every day for ten years. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, which made the decision on the ban, considered that the publication creates a positive image of a drug addict.



Mentioning LGBT

Legislation

Article 5 of the Law on Protection of Children, Art. 6.21 of the Administrative Code, Art. 15.1 of the Information Act.

Points of limitation

It is forbidden to disseminate information that denies family values and promotes non-traditional sexual relations among minors. Traditional Sexual relations are those between a man and a woman. In practice, any positive or neutral reference to LGBT people may be prohibited, regardless of the target audience of the message, including addressed to adults and having an age mark of 18+.

Responsibility

Propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors expressed in the dissemination of information aimed at the formation of non-traditional sexual minors' attitudes, attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relations, a distorted idea of the social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relations, or the imposition of information on non-traditional sexual relations causing interest in such relations is an administrative offense. In this regard, the court at the suit of the prosecutor may recognize such information as prohibited which leads the restriction of access to the Internet resource in the manner described above. The presence on the website with age marking does not guarantee protection. The European Court in the recent statement on the case of Bayev and Others vs Russia admitted that the statements of Russian legislation on the prohibition to promote non-traditional sexual relations among minors with their vagueness of the terminology used and the potentially unlimited scope of their application create the possibility of abuse..

Sanctions

According to Part 2 of Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offenses it is a fine of up to 100 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 200 thousand rubles for officials and up to 1 million or administrative suspension of activity

for up to 90 days for legal entities.

Law enforcement examples

In 2019-2020 activist Yulia Tsvetkova was fined three times for propaganda of non-traditional sex on social networks due to the conduct of the publication which discussed issues of feminism and LGBT rights. For example, the reason for the persecution was a picture with the caption 'Family is where love is. Support LGBT+ families'.

6

Information on terrorist acts and terrorists

Legislation

Article 4 of the Media Law, Part 6 of Article 13.15 of the Administrative Code, Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Article 6 of the Law on Combating the Financing of Terrorism.

Points of the limitation

The media are prohibited to disseminate information containing public calls for terrorism or publicly justifying terrorism. When reporting on a counter-terrorist operation, it is prohibited to disseminate in the media information on special means, techniques and tactics of such an operation. Thus, in fact, they only allow an unambiguously negative assessment of the identity and actions of those accused and suspected of terrorism, as well as the most generalized description of the events and actions of law enforcement agencies; quoting of perpetrators of terrorist acts and leaders of terrorist groups is prohibited.

Responsibility

The editorial board or the founder of a registered media outlet may receive the RCS's warning if such information is published; and if it is repeated it may lose its certificate of media registration. The editorial office or the founder of the media which published stories calling for terrorism or justification of terrorism, which are legal entities, may be held administratively liable.

A journalist and (or) an editor are subjects to criminal liability and may also be included in the List of organizations and individuals in respect of which there is information about their involvement in extremist activities or terrorism. This means that their bank accounts can be frozen and all financial transactions are subjected to mandatory control. It is allowed to spend 10 thousand rubles a month on a family member.

Sanctions

According to Part 6 of Article 13.15 of the Code of Administrative Offenses it is a fine of up to 1 million rubles, as well as confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.).

According to Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 1 million rubles or imprisonment of up to 7 years.

Law enforcement examples

Journalist Svetlana Prokopyeva is accused of propaganda of terrorism because of a replica on the air of Ekho Moskvyy in Pskov radio station speak-

ing about bombing staged by Mikhail Zhlobitsky in the reception room of the FSB's Arkhangelsk Directorate. Prokopieva spoke of the responsibility of the state for the fact that the generation to which the Arkhangelsk demolition belonged did not see any other way out. Linguists and psychologists called an indication of non-compliance with the 'rights and freedoms of citizens' in Russia in her text as the sign of the justification of terrorism, a comparison of a teenager who had blown himself up with Narodnaya Volya activists and the absence of negative evaluation of his actions. In addition, the editors of Echo of Moscow in Pskov were brought to administrative responsibility for publishing the transcript of the broadcast on their website and the editors of the Pskov News Feed which reprinted the information. Both publications also received the RCS's warnings about the inadmissibility of abuse of freedom of the media.

7

Mentioning extremist organizations

Legislation

Article 4 of the Media Law, Law on Extremism, Part 2 Article 13.15 of the Code of Administrative Offenses.

Points of limitation

In the Russian Federation, it is forbidden to disseminate information about a public association or other organization included in the published list of organizations prohibited or liquidated under the Law on Extremism without indicating that the organization has been liquidated or its activities are prohibited. The list of extremist organizations is published on the website of the Ministry of Justice of Russia and currently includes 74 entries, including the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, Ukrainian nationalist organizations Right Sector and UNA-UNSO, the National Bolshevik Party, the religious association Tabligi Jamaat, regional organizations Jehovah's Witnesses, the Karelian branch of the Youth Human Rights Group, as well as a number of Russian ultra-right movements and associations.

Responsibility

If the name of any organization from the list is mentioned without reference to the prohibition the editorial office or the founder of a registered media outlet may receive the RCS's warning; and if repeated, they may lose the certificate of registration of the media. This is also an administrative offense.

Sanctions

It is fine of up to 2.5 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 5 thousand rubles for officials, up to 50 thousand rubles for legal entities, as well as confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.)



Information about the Second World War, the rehabilitation of Nazism, negative information about memorials and national holidays

Legislation

Part 4, Article 13.15. Administrative Code, Article 354.1 of the Criminal Code.

Points of the limitation

The denial of the facts established by the verdict of the International Military Tribunal for the trial and punishment of the main war criminals of the European Axis countries, the approval of the crimes established by the specified verdict, the dissemination of knowingly false information about the activities of the USSR during the Second World War in the media, as well as the dissemination of information expressing clear disrespect for society about the days of military glory and the memorable dates of Russia related to the defense of the Fatherland, or the public desecration of the symbols of military glory of Russia forms corpus delicti, and for legal entities (an editorial or a founder) is an administrative offense.

Responsibility

Practice shows that any information which goes beyond the officially approved concept of the history of the events of the Second World War, as well as criticism of the actions of the USSR, the Soviet leadership and the command of the Red Army bears the risks of being held accountable. The most dangerous topic are May 9th and everything related to the discussion of the celebration.

Sanctions

According to Article 354.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 500 thousand rubles or imprisonment for a term of up to 5 years.

According to Part 4 of Art. 13.15 Administrative Code it is a fine of up to 1 million rubles.

Law enforcement examples

Perm resident Vladimir Luzgin was found guilty and sentenced to a fine of 200 thousand rubles because of a repost of the article '15 facts about Bandera, or what the Kremlin keeps silence about' which described the joint attack of the USSR and Germany on Poland in September 1939 and the unleashing of the Second World War II. Magadan scientist Igor Dorogoy was prosecuted for commenting on social networks in which he called Georgy Zhukov 'a scavenger' and he called Roman Rudenko, the USSR representative at the Nuremberg trials, 'a killer'.

A variety of informal pressure ways is also possible. For example, after there was a publication on the website of the Dozhd TV channel of a vote on the question "Should I have surrendered Leningrad in order to save hundreds of thousands of lives?" the prosecutor's office began checking the editorial office, and large cable and satellite TV operators excluded Dozhd from service packages.

9

Insulting the feelings of believers

Legislation

Part 2 of Article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses; Part 1 of Article 148 of the CC RF.

Points of the limitation

It is forbidden to insult the religious feelings of believers, as well as to publicly desecrate religious or liturgical literature, objects of religious veneration, signs or emblems of ideological symbols and paraphernalia, or their damage or destruction.

Responsibility

It is an administrative and criminal liability, both for journalists and for the editorial board (the founders). Such actions, due to vague wording, may also fall under the definition of extremism; and relevant publications are qualified by the RCS as an abuse of freedom of the media. There is a possibility of a prosecutor's requesting a ban on information in court and subsequent blocking of the website by the RCS.

Sanctions

According to part 2 of article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses it is a fine of up to 50 thousand rubles for citizens and up to 200 thousand rubles for officials.

According to part 1 of article 148 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 300 thousand rubles or imprisonment for up to 1 year.

Law enforcement examples

In 2015 the RCS published clarifications according to which the publication of cartoons on religious subjects (including Soviet anti-religious posters) could be regarded as incitement to hostility and abuse of freedom of the media.

The Grani.ru publication which illustrated the news on the attack on the editorial board of Charlie Ebdó by photographing the cover of the magazine received the RCS's warning about the inadmissibility of using a media to carry out extremist activities.

Artist Artem Loskutov was fined for publishing posters depicting the so-called 'Pussy Riot Icon'; and some media which reported on that received the RCS's warnings.

10

Insult, including representatives of the authorities

Legislation

Ch. 2 and 3, article 5.61 of the Code of Administrative Offenses, article 319 of the CC RF.

Points of the limitation

The insult, which means humiliation of another person's honor and dignity, expressed in indecent form, is an administrative offense. In case another person appears to be a representative of the government and the insult is

inflicted during their performance of official duties or in connection with their performance, such actions are considered a crime. It is also a crime to disrespect the court in the form of insulting the participants in the process, as well as the judge or other persons involved in the administration of justice. A journalist or editor may also be held administratively liable for not taking measures to prevent insult in the media. However, this rule has not been applied yet.

Due to the uncertainty of the wording, in most of these cases the expert's opinion will be the defining evidence. Since the sign of 'indecent form' is indicated only in the corresponding article of the Code of Administrative Offenses, the limits of appreciation in cases of insulting representatives of the authorities are even wider.

Sanctions

According to Part 2, Article 5.61 Administrative Code it is a fine of up to 5 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 50 thousand rubles for officials, up to 500 thousand rubles - for legal entities.

According to Article 319 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 40 thousand rubles or correctional labor up to 1 year.

According to Article 278 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 200 thousand rubles or an arrest of up to 6 months.



Сведения о несогласованных митингах и демонстрациях

Legislation

Article 15.3 of the Information Act.

Points of the limitation

Calls for riots, extremist activities, participation in mass (public) events held in violation of the established order are prohibited. Internet resources that contain such information can be immediately blocked at the request of the Attorney General or his deputies. The site owner (including the network of the media outlet) will be notified only after telecom operators begin to restrict access to the resource.

Responsibility

Extremely severe restrictions of the legislation on rallies combined with the vagueness of the provisions of the Information Law lead to the fact that any reference to the place and / or time of a public rally, including a picket, rally or procession, can be recognized as a call to participate in it. If by the time of the publication such an action had not been agreed with the authorities (for example, the announcement is published before the legal deadline for submitting a notification to the municipality) or the authorities refused approval, the media web site may be blocked at the request of the prosecutor. Moreover, the systematic coverage of protests may appear to be a basis for blocking.

Law enforcement examples

In 2014, at the request of the Deputy Prosecutor General, the websites of the independent publications Grani.ru, Kasparov.ru and The Daily Journal

were completely blocked. The reason was the publication of the dispersal of demonstrations in Moscow, as well as the protests of Crimean residents against the annexation.

12

Information about privacy, personal and family secrets of people, officials including, and image right

Legislation

Art. 152, 152.1 and 152.2 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, Article 140 of the Civil Procedure Code of the Russian Federation, Articles 137 and 315 of the Criminal Code, Article 15.5 of the Law on Information, Article 49 of the Media Law.

Points of the limitation

The legislation on the media establishes the obligation of a journalist to obtain consent (unless it is necessary to protect public interests) to disseminate in the media information about the personal life of a citizen from the citizen himself or his legal representatives.

It is also prohibited to use the image of a citizen with the exception of the use of the image carried out in state, public or other public interests; the image is to be obtained during the shooting which is carried out in places open for free visits or at public events, with the exception of cases when such an image is either the main object of use or a citizen posed for a fee. The civil legislation allows a citizen to demand the removal from the Internet of relevant information obtained in violation of the law, the confiscation of tangible media and the cessation of the dissemination of such information. As part of the consideration of such a claim it is possible to apply measures in the form of blocking the resource.

Information legislation establishes the procedure for the removal of such information on the basis of a court decision executed by the bailiff service. There are no special exemptions for images and information about the private lives of officials in the Russian law which allows government officials to demand to remove from the Internet publications on, for example, the property of their spouses and children.

Responsibility

Illegal collection and dissemination of information about private life constitutes a crime and also gives a citizen the right to apply to the court with a claim for compensation for moral and material damage. Not complying with a court decision to delete information may also result in criminal liability.

Sanctions

According to Part 1 of Article 137 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 200 thousand rubles or imprisonment for up to 2 years.

According to Part 2 of Article 315 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation it is a fine of up to 200 thousand rubles or imprisonment for up to 2 years.

Law enforcement examples

Concerning the director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, Ivan Zhdanov, a criminal case has been instituted about maliciously failing to comply with a court decision in connection with the refusal to remove from the Youtube channel the film about Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's corruption 'He is not Dimon for you'.

In February 2018, several Russian media outlets, including Mediazona, Radio Liberty, NEWSru.com, and Znak.com, received requests from the RCS to remove publications dedicated to investigating the possible corruption of businessman Oleg Deripaska and Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian government Sergey Prikhodko. Subsequently, it became known that the Ust-Labinsky District Court of the Krasnodar Area ruled on interim measures against the claim of the oligarch against Anastasia Vashukevich (Nastya Rybka) for the protection of privacy and the right to an image, within the framework of which it decided to block several dozens of Internet resources. The media editions were not notified of the judicial act and subsequently they were denied access to participate in the case.



Disrespect for power and fake news

Legislation

Art. 15.1-1 and 15.3 of the Law on Information, Parts 9-11 Art. 13.15 and Art. 20.1.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses.

Points of the limitation

It is forbidden to disseminate knowingly inaccurate socially significant information under the guise of reliable messages, as well as indecent information that offend human dignity and public morality, obvious disrespect for society, the state, official state symbols of the Russian Federation, the Constitution of the Russian Federation or bodies implementing state power in the Russian Federation.

Indecent form, as a rule, refers to the use of obscene language (see paragraph 1 of this review), however, the decision ultimately depends on the expert.

Responsibility

Distributing such information is an administrative offense, and it can also be the basis for restricting access to the Internet resource. All cases of initiating cases of an administrative offense must be notified to the prosecutor within 24 hours to take response measures and promptly block information.

Sanctions

According to Parts 9-11, Art. 13.15 of the Code of Administrative Offenses it is a fine of up to 400 thousand rubles for citizens, up to 900 thousand rubles for officials, up to 1.5 million rubles for legal entities, and in all cases the confiscation of the subject of an offense (a circulation, a server, etc.) is possible.

According to Parts 3-5, Art. 20.1.3 Administrative Code it is a fine of 30 to 200 thousand rubles or administrative arrest for up to 15 days.

Law enforcement examples

By now 79 cases of contempt of authority (including cases of repeated prosecution) and 14 cases of fake news are known.

For example, the editor of the Nizhny Novgorod edition KozaPress, Irina Slavina, was fined 70 thousand rubles for a post on Facebook in which she commented on the installation of a memorial plaque to Joseph Stalin in one of the regional centers, 'After in Shakhunya (Nizhny Novgorod area) the muzzle of Stalin was hanged it's proposed to rename the settlement in Shahuynya'. (The last word sounds obscene)

An activist of the Chelyabinsk Stop-GOK environmental movement, Sergei Belogorokhov, was fined 40 thousand rubles for posting on VKontakte a message about a sinkhole in the village of Roza that could have been formed from blasting operations carried out at the Korkinsky coal mine. The court basing on a certificate provided by the company building the plant considered the deliberate inaccuracy of the publication to be proven. The certificate stated that there were no explosions on that day.

14

Recognition as a foreign agent

Legislation

Art. 6 and 25.1 of the Media Law, part 7 of article 10 and article 15.9 of the Law on Information, Article 19.34.1 of the Administrative Code

Points of the limitation

In 2017, the Ministry of Justice of Russia received the authority to recognize foreign media as foreign agents. Listing means the obligation to provide the Ministry of Justice with quarterly reports on the financial and economic activities of the organization, to accompany all published materials with a clause that they are distributed by 'a foreign agent', to conduct an annual audit.

In 2019, the statements of the Media Law in this part were supplemented with the possibility of recognizing as a foreign agent not only editorial offices, but also individuals, including Russian citizens distributing information created by foreign media agents.

Sanctions

According to Article 19.34.1 of the Code of Administrative Offenses it is a fine of up to 100 thousand rubles or an arrest of up to 15 days for citizens, up to 5 million rubles for legal entities

Law enforcement examples

The list of foreign media agents includes Voice of America, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE / RL) and its projects. By now no cases of prosecution for violation of the above standards are known. Also, not a single individual was recognized as a foreign agent.