

## Two Russian Journalists Barred from Entering Country

According to the European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties, the European Union and its structures recognize that the Russian Government is employing a wide range of tools and instruments to disseminate disinformation and propaganda, "including pseudo-news agencies and multimedia services" (for example, "Sputnik" and RT)<sup>1</sup>.

Platforms that constantly distribute biased, distorted or false information may not be considered as acting in accordance with the Council of Europe recommendations, in particular, Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of 13 April 2016<sup>2</sup>.

Namely, they do not meet the following norm:

"The exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it duties and responsibilities, as stated in Article 10, paragraph 2. In the context of journalism, the relevant duties and responsibilities are understood to include including acting in good faith to provide accurate and reliable information in accordance with the ethics of journalism".

Given this and based on the abovementioned European Parliament resolution, in 2017 the Estonian state authorities denied accreditation to representatives of the Russian State International Information Agency "Russia Today" and stated that they reserve the right to deny access to media events to individuals or organizations, which have proven not to follow the principles of journalism<sup>3</sup>.

It has to be taken into account that in 2014, journalist of the Russian edition of RT Paula Slier filmed the shelling of positions of Ukrainian troops near the Kalininsky district of Donetsk from the side of representatives of the terrorist organization "DNR". The shelling itself was carried out from Russian multiple launch rocket systems "Grad". ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1i\\_fUqbdLE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1i_fUqbdLE))

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<sup>1</sup> EU strategic communication to counteract anti-EU propaganda by third parties // <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0441+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4[1] of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors // [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806415d9#\\_ftn1](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016806415d9#_ftn1)

<sup>3</sup> Response of the Estonian authorities to an alert dated 28 August 2017 on the Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and the Safety of Journalists // <https://rm.coe.int/estonia-reply-en-russian-journalists-refused-accreditation-to-cover-eu/168073e9a5>

Before the shelling, the correspondent of RT took a comment from Mikhail Sergiyovich Tolstykh, who took an active part in the battles on the side of the terrorist group "DNR". According to suspicion notice issued by the Military Prosecutor's Office of Ukraine, Ukrainian citizen Tolstykh, besides conducting an aggressive war, also engaged in kidnapping of people and ill-treatment of prisoners of war. In this case, the elements of torture were recorded.

In addition, while filming the very rocket-fire volley from the "Grad" system, RT journalist smiled at the camera. She posted the relevant photos on the Twitter network.

Moreover, during the meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the head of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, explained that he did not let RT and Sputnik employees into the election headquarters in connection with the fact that "they disseminated false information". Among these journalists was the aforementioned employee of RT - Paula Slier.

Regarding the second person who was not admitted to the territory of Ukraine, the following should be mentioned. On 4 May 2018, on his Facebook page, a member of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, the advisor to the Chairman of the State Duma, the head of the Russian Humanitarian Mission, the author and host of programs on Russia 24 TV channel Yevgen Primakov, suggested that the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the military, as well as civilian infrastructure of Ukraine, be completely destroyed by missile strikes from the territory of the Russian Federation<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, the actions of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies were taken on grounds of reasonable expectations of organizing and conducting provocations against the national interests of Ukraine in the information space. These actions were carried out in full compliance with European standards and the practice of their implementation by the EU countries.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbid=10214565299998548&id=1602777439](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10214565299998548&id=1602777439)