

Reference: 01468133

Information Rights Team  
[Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

18 July 2022

### Freedom of Information: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information asking for any relevant documentation about the substance of the 29 investigations into RT complaints and the outcome of the subsequent investigations. We received this request on 20 June 2022 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

### Your request

You asked:

*The March 18th decision to revoke the licence of RT cited '29 ongoing investigations by Ofcom into the due impartiality of RT's news and current-affairs coverage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine' - <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/bulletins/content-sanctions-adjudications/decision-ano-tv-novosti>*

*Point 51 of the in-depth document noted that these investigations had been launched 'following monitoring and complaints about RT's coverage of the conflict in Ukraine' but that Ofcom had 'not concluded on any of these investigations' at the time [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/234023/revocation-notice-ano-tv-novosti.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/234023/revocation-notice-ano-tv-novosti.pdf)*

*Please could you provide any relevant documentation about the substance of these complaints and the outcome of the subsequent investigations, ie: whether RT was found guilty of spreading documented falsehoods about the war in Ukraine in addition to the rather subjective judgement that it was considered not 'fit and proper to hold a UK broadcast licence.'*

## Our response

We have today published the outcome of our investigations into 29 news and current affairs programmes broadcast on RT between 27 February and 2 March 2022. All the programmes were broadcast in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine which began on 24 February 2022. Ofcom was alerted to these programmes by a combination of complaints from viewers and Ofcom's own monitoring.

Under the rules in Section Five of the [Ofcom Broadcasting Code](#) ("the Code"), broadcasters must maintain due impartiality in news. When dealing with matters of major political controversy and major matters relating to current public policy such as wars or areas of conflict (in these cases, specifically the ongoing conflict in the Donbas region), broadcasters must also comply with the special impartiality requirements in the Code. These rules require broadcasters to take additional steps to preserve due impartiality – namely by including and giving due weight to an appropriately wide range of significant views.

Today we have published our decisions finding all 29 programmes broadcast by RT<sup>1</sup> to be in breach of Section Five of the Code.

The full text of each of our decisions and our reasoning for them can be found [here](#). These decisions were taken in accordance with our published [Procedures for investigating breaches of content standards for television and radio](#).

In response to your request to provide "*documentation about the substance of these complaints*" – our decisions summarise the relevant complaints, and we do not usually disclose information relating to the substance of a complaint where this information exceeds what is published in our decisions. This information is exempt from disclosure because it falls within section 44 of the Act, which exempts the disclosure of information where this is in turn prohibited by another enactment. Ofcom is prohibited by section 393 of the Communications Act 2003 from disclosing information about a particular business (in this case, ANO TV Novosti) which we have obtained in the course of exercising our functions (in this case, the investigation of broadcast standards complaints), unless we have the consent of the business or one of the statutory gateways to disclosure under section 393(2) is met, neither of which applies here.

If you have any queries, then please contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk). Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team

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<sup>1</sup> The decisions refer to Autonomous Non-profit Organisation TV-Novosti ("TV Novosti") because the licence for the RT service was, at the time of broadcast, held by TV Novosti.

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

#### **Timing**

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire

SK9 5AF