

News Outdoors Sold to VTB, Investors

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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All 2,118 banner advertisements stretching across Moscow's streets could be removed as early as next month. **Vladimir Filonov**

Embattled global media group News Corp. said Friday that it has sold its 79 percent stake in News Outdoor Russia and News Outdoor Romania to a group of investors led by VTB Capital.

The deal completes News Corp.'s divestment of its outdoor advertising business, with the exception of News Outdoor Czech Republic, the media company said in a statement.

VTB Capital said it had bought the News Outdoor stake with NOOH Investments Cooperatief and Marathon Outdoor Cooperatief, representing the interests of Peter Gerwe and Alfa Capital Partners, respectively.

VTB Capital said in a statement that the deal was part of its strategy to broaden its asset management business through direct investments in private firms.

The parties did not disclose financial details but Kommersant said the Russian business,

which had been up for sale for several years, was worth about \$350 million, excluding debt.

News Outdoor Russia is the country's largest outdoor advertising operator selling advertising on billboards, public transport and other surfaces in more than 50 Russian cities.

News Corp., part of the Rupert Murdoch empire, is currently at the center of a phone-hacking scandal at its British operations that forced it to abandon a bid to buy the whole of broadcaster BSkyB and sparked public anger.

Employees of News of the World, the now-defunct News Corp. Sunday tabloid, have been invited to apply for positions across the media company's businesses, including a posting in Siberia, three people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Openings presented to the more than 200 News of the World employees who discussed their severance terms with human resources last week included a materials manager for Fox News' theatrical departments in Siberia and 74 positions globally at Dow Jones, said the people, who declined to be identified because the talks were private.

(Reuters, Bloomberg)

Moscow authorities have banned advertising banners and intend to dismantle all 2,118 ads that stretch across Moscow's streets next month, Kommersant reported last week. The banners' operators will be compensated to the tune of 90 million rubles (\$3.2 million), but they are demanding that the banners be left up until current contracts with the city run out and have threatened to sue city officials.

The resolution passed Tuesday by the city government amended a 2006 law setting out rules for installing and operating the banners, which is now completely prohibited. While Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has not yet signed the resolution, the department of media and advertising insists that it will demand the dismantling of the banners next month.

Despite commercial operators' determination to challenge the early dismantling, their claims would be "quite problematic," since road safety concerns would trump advertisers' interests, said Ivan Chemichev, head of the legal department at MEF-Audit, Kommersant reported.

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