

Public Broadcaster OTR to Cut Staff Due to Financial Hardship

By [The Moscow Times](#)

January 21, 2014

The  Moscow Times

Russian public broadcaster OTR will soon be forced to cut its staff in half due to a difficult financial situation, the channel's chief, Anatoly Lysenko said Tuesday.

The cuts will mostly affect the broadcaster's non-technical personnel, Vedomosti reported.

"We have many plans, but all of them are based on one thing: our current financial situation is such that we will have to cut the company by half within two months," Lysenko said at a meeting with the Public Chamber, Interfax reported.

He added that trying to run a national channel on the money that were provided for it was "ludicrous."

He said that high production costs and expensive travel for the channel's employees were the main reasons behind its dire financial situation.

Lysenko also said that he was proud of being behind the channel's creation and expressed hope that it will continue to exist "no matter what," Itar-Tass reported.

He appealed to the Public Chamber to take part in the discussion of OTR's future, while regretting the lack of government's interest in the channel.

"If the government doesn't need it, it would be better if it said so," said Lysenko.

"But I believe it is needed."

The channel was created in 2012 by a decree of then-president Dmitry Medvedev. OTR was initially to be financed from the budget with gradual transition to financing by donations from viewers.

But the idea has never been realized as the total amount of donations did not exceed 50,000 rubles (\$1,480), while initial budget subsidies amounted to 350 million rubles per year.

Last July Lysenko said the broadcaster's budget was all but drained, which forced the management to rely on external borrowing.

In November the State Duma turned down a bill that would provide an additional 300 million rubles for the channel's operation, effectively sealing the OTR's fate.

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