TV Channel Removes 'Out of Bounds' Photo From Facebook Page

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The Soviet monument painted in the colors of the Ukrainian flag. **Euronews**

Television channel Euronews has removed a photograph of a Soviet monument painted in the colors of the Ukrainian flag from its Russian-language Facebook page, following outcry from the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The publication of the Reuters photograph, which Euronews had selected as its Facebook cover photo, was intended to reflect one of the most debated topics of the day, the television channel said Tuesday on its social network page.

An unidentified person painted parts of the Soviet Army memorial in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, in the blue and yellow colors of the Ukrainian flag over the weekend.

In the photo, a woman dressed in a blue T-shirt extends her hand to touch the outstretched arm of the figure of a Soviet soldier, whose military shirt has been painted blue.

"We in no way intended by this to show support for any of the forces in Ukraine — and most certainly not for the act of vandalism," Euronews said in a Russian-language post.

The Russian Foreign Ministry expressed outrage at the prominent display of the photograph, saying Monday on its own Facebook page that the publication was "out of bounds.

Some of the Russian visitors agreed. But many others expressed support for the publication and said that the "out of bounds" expression would be more fitting to describe the "nonsense" that Russia's state-run television channels broadcast about the Ukrainian events.

"Stop distorting reality!" Facebook user Dima Peterzhak said on the Foreign Ministry's page.

In another comment, Facebook user Kirill Filimonov asked the ministry whether its "loafers" might have considered "creating some department already for combating journalists' vandalism against memorials."

Euronews said it had removed the photograph because many viewers had misinterpreted it as an expression of the channel's editorial policy or found the image offensive.

"However, we reject the accusations of insulting the memory of war veterans," Euronews said in a Russian-language statement.

The photograph remained featured as Monday's "picture of the day" on the Euronews English-language Facebook page.

The Foreign Ministry also issued a statement on Monday expressing its "deep indignation" about "the news of yet another act of vandalism against a monument to the Soviet Army," and saying that it had sent a note of protest to Bulgaria to demand a "thorough investigation into the incident of hooliganism."