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Gazprom Media Head Announces Meeting to Decide Fate of Ekho Moskvy Radio

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The head of Gazprom Media said Friday that board members of the opposition-minded radio station Ekho Moskvy would meet next week to discuss its fate, sparking concern on Russia's blogosphere that the meeting could signal a crackdown.

Mikhail Lesin, head of Gazprom Media, which owns a majority share in the radio station, listed three items on the agenda for the Nov. 21 meeting in a letter sent to members of the board of directors: Editor-in-chief — and member of the board — Alexei Venediktov, the radio station's editorial team and the format of its coverage, a report on the Ekho Moskvy website said.

No further details were provided. The news was being actively discussed on social networks Friday, with users expressing concern that the meeting could result in Venediktov's dismissal or resignation.

Last week, Lesin warned Venediktov it was "quite possible" that the editor could be fired after Venediktov refused to recognize Gazprom Media's firing of one of the station's journalists, saying that "lawyers would figure out" how to justify the editor's dismissal, RBC Daily newspaper reported.

Ekho Moskvy was also recently given a warning by the federal media watchdog for broadcasting "information justifying war crimes" in a talk show discussing the fighting in eastern Ukraine. If the station gets another warning within a year, it could be shut down.

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