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Russia's Ekho Moskvy to Draft Social Media Guidelines After Twitter Incident

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Ekho Moskvy is one of the leading independent media voices in Russia.

Independent radio station Ekho Moskvy has until Dec. 25 to draft amendments to its charter, adding guidelines for using social networks under an agreement with its state-run corporate owner Gazprom, the journalist in charge of the project said.

Setting down the rules for staff using social networks was part of a deal reached last week with Gazprom-Media Holding to resolve a dispute that spiraled out of an insensitive tweet sent by an Ekho Moskvy radio host.

In the post, host Alexander Plyushchev commented on the recent drowning of the 37-year-old son of the Kremlin's chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov, asking whether his death was "proof of the existence of God/higher justice." In 2005, Alexander Ivanov hit and killed a 68-year-old pensioner with his car.

Ekho Moskvy's editor-in-chief Alexei Venediktov has appointed his aide Lesya Ryabtseva as the "coordinator" of the journalistic team that will draft amendments to the charter, she

wrote Sunday in a blog on her employer's website.

The agreement gives journalists until Dec. 25 to draft their proposal, Ryabtseva said, adding "there is no room for delay. Because at stake is the freedom of speech."

The recent dispute has cast doubts on the future of the radio station, the leading Russian-language independent media outlet in the country, which has already received a government warning for a supposedly inappropriate newscast about battles in eastern Ukraine. A second warning within a year would give the government the power to shut down the station.

Ryabtseva said that in addition to representatives of her employer and Gazprom Media, she would also bring in officials from the Communications Ministry, the Roskomnadzor media watchdog and the office of the media freedom representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to consult on the proposed amendments.

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