

# U.S. to Spend \$500,000 Training Baltic Journalists to Counter Russian Propaganda

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The U.S. government has unveiled a \$500,000 grant to train Russian-speaking journalists in the Baltic states in effective measures to counter Russian media propaganda, according to an announcement posted on the website of the U.S. Embassy in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

The tender, titled “Investigative Journalism Training to Counter Russian Messaging in the Baltics,” calls for proposals from public and private non-profit organizations to design and operate a training program for Russian-speaking journalists in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

“As Russian propaganda and misinformation multiplies, the media in all three countries need the skills and tools to counter it with fact-based, credible news reporting,” the grant notice on the embassy's website said.

The ideal \$500,000 program would achieve these goals by offering workshops in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, cash rewards for investigative journalism projects and study trips to newsrooms in the U.S.

The goal of the program is to train journalists to counter what the West sees as an aggressive propaganda push through Russian media outlets targeting the sizable Russian-speaking minorities in the three former Soviet Baltic states.

Some state Russian television channels are banned from broadcasting in the region over their portrayal of Crimea's annexation by Russia and fears they could be used to stoke Russian nationalism in the region.

Latvia and Estonia are due to launch their own Russian-language channels to counter Moscow's narrative of events amid the crisis in Ukraine.

The planned training program, according to the embassy notice posted at the end of last month, envisions a 12-month course attended by “early- and mid-career Russian-language journalists and other media professionals working on Russia's periphery.”

The program also aspires to create an alumni base “to spread the strengths of the program beyond the 12-month period.”

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