

Lithuania Bans Russia's RT Television Channels

The ban echoes a move by neighbor Latvia, after finding a key RT figure is on an EU sanctions list.

By [AFP](#)

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EU and NATO members Latvia and Lithuania are stepping up their efforts to combat Russian propaganda. **Arseni Neskhodimov / TASS**

Lithuania's media watchdog on Wednesday banned Russian broadcaster RT, echoing a move by neighbor Latvia, after it found a key figure at the station was on an EU sanctions list.

Lithuania's LRTK media regulator said the television station previously known as Russia Today was controlled by Dmitry Kiselyov.

Regarded by critics as Russia's chief spin doctor, Kiselyov was sanctioned by the European Union in 2014 for leading a media campaign in support of Russia's annexation of territory from Ukraine.

LRTK chairman Mantas Martisius told AFP the media watchdog had "decided today to suspend the 5 RT group TV channels... controlled by Kiselyov."

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Martisius said the media figure was on an EU sanction list "for his role in Russian propaganda supporting the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Russia's ongoing military operations in eastern and south-eastern Ukraine."

Fellow EU and NATO member Latvia took RT off the air last week, the latest in a string of moves by Vilnius and Riga against Russian media owing to propaganda concerns.

A spokesman for the Russian embassy in Vilnius said Moscow dismissed allegations that Kiselyov was in charge of RT.

"This hostile decision by the Lithuanian government is another move against alternative opinion and media freedom," spokesman Alexander Kudriavcev told AFP.

The Baltic states that include Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania spent five decades under Soviet occupation until 1991 and have strained relations with Russia.

They have repeatedly warned against Moscow's renewed assertiveness, notably in the wake of Russia's offensive against Ukraine.

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