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# Germany Shutters Berlin Bureau of Russian State Broadcaster, Moscow Says

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Channel One studio at Ostankino television center. **Vyacheslav Prokofiev / TASS**

Authorities in Moscow on Wednesday accused Germany of shutting down the Berlin bureau of Russia's state broadcaster Channel One over national security concerns, though German officials later denied the allegations.

Channel One correspondent Ivan Blagoi said he and cameraman Dmitry Volkov were ordered to leave Germany by mid-December.

"The decision was motivated by Germany's national security interests," Blagoi said, citing a 10-page document said to have been issued by German authorities.

According to Channel One, the document claims the broadcaster poses a "significant and direct threat to German and EU public order and security" through its ability to influence public opinion.

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Officials in Berlin reportedly argue that Channel One has fostered distrust among Russian-speaking migrants in Germany toward German and EU institutions by promoting a narrative of the "declining West."

Despite restrictions on Russian state-backed media, Channel One retains significant viewership among former Soviet Union migrants in Germany, the document allegedly said.

Blagoi claimed the order to close the bureau came "almost immediately" after Channel One aired a report on the recent arrest of a German citizen in Russia's Kaliningrad region on charges of sabotage.

Germany's Federal Foreign Office spokesman Christian Wagner later dismissed the reported closure as "false" and said he could "only assume that this is related to questions of residence rights."

"Russian journalists can report freely and unhindered in Germany," Wagner said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry announced that two employees of Germany's ARD public broadcaster would be expelled from Russia in a tit-for-tat move. Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Moscow could accredit their replacements after Germany fully restores Channel One's Berlin bureau.

Wagner said that Berlin rejected the expulsion of the ARD employees "in the strongest possible terms."

When reached for comment, Germany's state media regulator told The Moscow Times that it had "no knowledge" about the alleged closure of Channel One's Berlin bureau. The Moscow Times also contacted ARD for comment.

In late 2021, Germany successfully lobbied to block the German-language version of Russia's RT broadcaster from Europe's satellite network, prompting Russia to shut down Deutsche Welle's Moscow bureau in retaliation.

The United States sanctioned Channel One over its ties to the Russian government.

*AFP contributed reporting.*

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