

Policy Statement of the Svoboda Satellite project

The Policy Statement of Svoboda Satellite project describes the aim of the project, its legal framework and organization and provides guidelines for the partners of the satellite platform established by the “Reporters without Borders”.

Aim of the project

The Svoboda Satellite project aims to provide free, uncensored and reliable information to the Russian-speaking audiences in the Russian Federation and Belarus, which might be deprived of this fundamental human right, as well as all over Europe (including Moldova and Ukraine).

The project is based on the principles of the following documents:

- *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
- *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,*
- *Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*
- *European Convention on Transfrontier Television,*
- *Convention of the European Satellite Telecommunication Organization*
- *European Audiovisual Media Services Directive*
- *European Media Freedom Act*
- *Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists*

The project is managed by the French association “Reporters sans frontières” (RSF), acting under French law.

The Svoboda Satellite package is provided in the context of a contract between RSF and Eutelsat S.A. signed as at 16 October 2023.

Activities

The Svoboda Satellite project includes five kinds of activities:

- The provision of the package, as a coordinated collection of TV and radio services. According to the French Loi du 30 septembre 1986, RSF acts as a “distributeur de services de communication audiovisuelle »
- The provision of radio or television services by “broadcasting partners”. The broadcasting partners are responsible of the whole content included in their respective schedule, under the law of their country of origin. In this case, Svoboda would simply retransmit their channel, without using the Svoboda playout services. The broadcasting partners should obtain authorization from their respective national regulatory authority, if required by national law.

- The provision of radio or television services by RSF. RSF act as “éditeur de service de radio ou de télévision”, according to the French Loi du 30 septembre 1986 ; when assembling content from various partner providers of content.
- The regular provision of content by “partner providers of content” to the radio or television services included in the services provided by RSF
- The provision of a single or limited number of content (e.g. a film, a documentary) by “individual providers of content”.

Organisation

The project includes the following bodies :

- The Project team composed of the RSF employees or contract providers involved in the project, under the supervision of its General Secretary or whoever he delegates to supervise the project
- The Advisory Committee composed of two representatives of RSF (including the Director of the Svoboda project) and of at least five personalities chosen by RSF. The Advisory Committee shall:
 - Adopt these guidelines by a majority of three quarters of the members,
 - Adopt any other policy recommendations for the Svoboda Satellite in order to avoid conflicts of interest, proportion, and to contribute informational, educational, cultural and entertainment responsibilities to its viewing Russian-speaking public of the broadcasting partners and partner providers of content.
 - Whenever requested by RSF, the Advisory Committee will provide an advisory opinion on content-related subjects.
- The Content Committee is composed of the broadcasting partners and partner providers of content.

Procedure of selection of new broadcasting partners or partner providers of content

- Candidate broadcasting partners have to accept the following guidelines and to provide the requested information.
- The formal application is communicated by RSF to the Advisory Committee which provide an advice no later than one month after the communication of the communication by RSF
- The decision of accepting the application is taken by RSF.

As for the selection of partner content providers or individual content provider, it is done by RSF under its own responsibility. However, in case of uncertainty over the eligibility of a content provider candidate, RSF requests the advice of the Advisory Committee, which provide its advise no later than after one month after the request.

This Statement specifies the following guidelines of conduct for the providers of services and the provider of content using our platform for the production, editing, transmission and/or dissemination of the media content.

The Svoboda Satellite project promotes and applies the following principles:

- Our responsibility towards the public takes precedence over any other responsibility, in particular towards the public authorities.
- We defend the principle of free flow of information, with the exceptions provided by the international law.
- Mutual respect and dialogue, non-discrimination, a collective work spirit, concern for professional and personal accomplishment, respect for the environment.
- Transparency of decision-making processes and accounts, refusal of corruption and conflicts of interest.

We pledge:

All items of our programmes, as concerns their presentation and content, shall promote and not endanger media freedom and media pluralism. The broadcasting partners and the partner content providers for the Svoboda Satellite shall not engage in the propaganda for war of aggression, nor they shall advocate hatred or prejudice that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence on grounds such as geographical, social or ethnic origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, political and other opinions.

The broadcasting partners and the partner content providers shall ensure that news fairly presents facts and events and encourages the free formation of opinions. Broadcasting partners and the partner content providers for the Svoboda Satellite shall demonstrate their respect for the facts and for the right of the public to truth as their duty. In pursuance of this duty, their journalists shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and dissemination of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism.

The broadcasting partners and the partner content providers will make sure to clearly distinguish factual information from commentary and criticism. They shall not suppress essential information or falsify any document. They will be careful to reproduce faithfully statements and other material that non-public persons publish in social media.

They agree that the notion of urgency or immediacy in the dissemination of information shall not take precedence over the verification of facts, sources and/or the offer of a reply.

They shall do the utmost to rectify any errors or disseminated information which is found to be inaccurate in a timely, explicit, complete and transparent manner.

They will respect privacy and the dignity of the persons named and/or represented, demonstrating particular consideration to inexperienced and vulnerable persons, such as minors.

All items of our programmes, as concerns their presentation and content, shall respect the dignity of the human being and the fundamental rights of others. In particular, they shall not: a) be indecent and in particular contain pornography; b) give undue prominence to violence or be likely to incite to racial hatred.

All items of our programmes which are likely to impair the physical, mental or moral development of children and adolescents shall not be scheduled when, because of the time of transmission and reception, they are likely to watch them.

Transparency

The *broadcasting partners* shall make the following information directly and permanently accessible in an easy manner to the *management of* Svoboda Satellite, in English and in Russian:

- the name of the programme service
- the name of the company or entity responsible for this programme service (to be identified in the programme service itself, at regular intervals by appropriate means); the text of the authorization by a national regulatory authority, if required by the law of the country of establishment,
- whether and to what extent their direct, indirect or beneficial ownership is held by a government, a State institution, a State-owned enterprise or another public body;
- the name and professional contact details of the natural person who bears editorial responsibility in accordance with the law of the relevant State;
- details concerning the ownership structure and how they are related to their parent and sister companies and their subsidiaries;
- state advertising and state financial support allocated to them.
- text (or link to) of the editorial charter with clear guarantee the professional autonomy of the journalists

The Advisory Committee will oversee transparency of the broadcasting partners.

The *partners providers of content* should provide to RSF and to the Advisory Committee :

- the name of the company or entity responsible for the regular provision of a programme

- whether and to what extent their direct, indirect or beneficial ownership is held by a government, a State institution, a State-owned enterprise or another public body;
- the name and professional contact details of the natural person who bears editorial responsibility in accordance with the law of the relevant State;

Relations with Eutelsat

Broadcasters already providing a channel transmitted by Eutelsat may apply to be part of the Svoboda Satellite package at the condition that they accept to maintain their current contract with the operator. In this case, the service provided will just be a duplicate signal of the existing service.

In the selection of services, RSF gives the priority to newly created services, taking account of a balanced composition of the package in order to satisfy the various needs of the Russian speaking audiences.

-