



Latest update date 19 July 2021

Echo of Moscow

Institution

All actors • Russia

Official position/function regarding the conflict

[Echo of Moscow \(EM\)](#) is the most famous and popular information political talk radio station. [In 2009 - 2013, it was recognized as the most cited radio station in Russia.](#) The owner of 66% of the radio station's shares is [JSC Gazprom-Media](#).

The general direction of the broadcasting ideology is the liberal systemic opposition with the "permitted" level of criticism of the authorities. From the very beginning of its existence in 1990, EM has adhered to the principle of providing all meaningful points of view on events (including pro-government and non-democratic). The non-systemic opposition tends to regard EM as the mouthpiece of the Kremlin, as EM often gives the floor to representatives of the Russian government and broadcasts the pro-Kremlin position.

However, EM has a significant impact on oppositional audiences. The coverage is also supported by the fact that it is the only radio station criticizing the authorities, giving the floor to opposition politicians, which still operates in the FM band. Also of great importance for the audience is the

[EM website](#), registered as a separate media outlet, on which popular critical opinions are published.

The official position of EM regarding the events in Ukraine can be called limitedly independent. The editorial board does not recognize the annexation of Crimea, does not call it Russian, but does not openly call it Ukrainian either. EM covered Euromaidan in detail and fairly objectively. With regard to the downed Boeing MH17, EM also provides all alternative points of view, openly covers the trial in the Netherlands, talks about journalistic investigations, which in general can be called a rather bold position in the face of lack of freedom of the media.

On the one hand, functions regarding the conflict can be defined as playing the role of an independent media with a critical position in relation to the authorities. On the other hand, to convey to the target audience (educated middle class) the Kremlin's position. Apparently, this function is the condition for the continued existence of the radio station.

Interests/goals in the conflict region

EM tries to provide independent information on the military operations in Donbas, but is bound by commitments with the Kremlin, which include not directly criticizing Putin and presenting the authorities' point of view on events. The fulfillment of these obligations and other compromises with the authorities seem to enable EM existence as a relatively independent liberal media.

Thus, it is in the interests of EM to provide objective information to the audience, while not giving reasons for a sharp reaction from the authorities. [This corresponds to the position of Aleksey Venediktov, Editor-in-Chief of EM, "to maneuver between two sides."](#) However, in an environment where even simple silence and disapproval of the Kremlin's actions can be extremely risky for the media, EM can be considered the freest FM radio station in Russia.

Actions regarding the conflict region

EM is criticized from both sides: [the authorities and their supporters accuse the radio station of "pro-Ukrainian" coverage of events in Donbas](#), while opposition critics often accuse editor-in-chief Venediktov of duplicity. [Igor Yakovenko speaks of EM as follows: "The Venediktov's Echo of Moscow is a very effective and sophisticated unit of the Kremlin's information troops." In an interview at the beginning of 2018, Venediktov called the military conflict in Donbas "internal."](#)

At the same time, EM quite openly and objectively talks about the military conflict, fakes of propaganda media, investigations of war crimes, gives the floor to opposition authors and representatives of Ukraine. On the other hand, EM tries to avoid direct criticism of Putin by staying "above" the conflict. Most of the criticism of EM is directed against the regular propagandists of the state media outlets and Putin's odious "information guardians." EM actively quotes and gives the floor to representatives of the authorities ([for example, Putin's press secretary D. Peskov, whom EM editor-in-chief Aleksey Venediktov calls his friend](#)), the systemic opposition or liaison mediators between the Kremlin and the opposition (K.Sobchak, A.Krasovsky, etc.).