

## **Section: Journalism**

### **MEDIA IN CHINA: FEATURES OF FUNCTIONING**

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It is difficult to find a more pressing problem than the Chinese media (in the broadest sense of the word – including newspapers, magazines, file storage, blogs, etc.) today, because the fate of the unstable world depends on the positions and activities of these mediators of the opinions of the Chinese politicians and population. And if the information sphere of other countries is mostly filled with hopes and assumptions about China's prospects and strategies, the media space of the Celestial Empire is the only primary source and carrier of the most reliable data, the production of which, unfortunately, is still perceived in a stereotypical way: with references to secrecy, cooperation with Russia and the communist regime. Meanwhile, even a brief review of the sites shows radically the opposite: informative richness, reliability, balance, and strict adherence to international standards. Focusing on the media, which is the target of many negative accusations, can completely dispel doubts. The state media, of course, are adjusting to the system: the front pages often appear in the form of reports and speeches by Chinese President Xi Jinping and other biased and editorialized materials, but the content of the media of all forms of ownership (unlike Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, etc. [1; 2]) is quite high quality [6]. The problem is mainly that the potential readership is not only in the grip of stereotypes, but is also media illiterate because it is unable to perceive pretexts, subtexts, contexts, intertexts. They should keep in mind at least the following: when producing information, journalism puts it into the genre of three blocks, among which the informational one (a note, a report, an interview, a news article) claims to state facts and absolute reliability; analytical (correspondence, a commentary article, a review, a press conference, a talk show) requires the presence of opposition speakers and a balance of opinions (a common substitute is the use of non-experts and lack of parity); journalistic (a critical review, a sketch, an essay and its varieties – a documentary, a squib, a pamphlet) can naturally contain fiction, fakes, author's approaches, etc. So, for example, documentaries should not be expected to tell the truth. This genre is used when it is necessary to put pressure on emotions and mislead. This is exactly what we are observing in situations of legally declared “cooperation” between Chinese and Russian journalists while covering the war in Ukraine.

China naturally claims to be the leader of the civilized world, so establishing relations with China is extremely important. As Ukrainian and Chinese media have not cooperated since the founding and prosperity of Harbin (1898-1945), media experts have to revive this opportunity from scratch. There are two obstacles; on one hand, it

is the Great Chinese firewall (a set of tools for internal restricting access to the Internet) as well as lack of research not only in strategies of media partnership but total and complete absence of them. Nevertheless, the purpose of this study is to record bilateral discussions on the possibilities of media cooperation between China and our country during the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022-2025, identify their main trends, challenges, strategies and conclusions, and outline, if possible, some perspectives.

The study focuses on the conclusions made in the author's published works (2022-2025); the analysis of roundtable discussion "How the Chinese speaking media cover the war in Ukraine" (Kyiv, 2022) [7]; publications and a speech by Chinese theorist and practitioner of journalism Xiaoyu Lu at the first Global Ukraine seminar held by the Ukrainian Catholic University (2023-2024); the interview on "Armiia TV" platform given by Viktor Konstantynov [5], head of International Relations and Foreign Policy Department at Institute of International Relations, Kyiv National University (2024); summary of the final monitoring "What media of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan write about Ukraine and Russian aggression" conducted by the independent NGO Detector Media (2024 p.) [8] and others.

As a result of the comprehensive discussion, it was found out that the mainland media of China are still dependent on the regime (although this does not greatly affect their attitude towards our country). International media with Chinese-language branches (including Taiwanese and Hong Kong) are 100 per cent pro-Ukrainian. They are exactly those media that use balanced expertise and call a spade a spade, provide comprehensive information about military confrontations. However, in order to improve the situation, it is necessary to accredit Chinese journalists directly to the war, to establish cooperation with local bloggers, freelancers and the vast diaspora, while engaging new generation Ukrainian-speaking experts who are not linguistically linked to the pro-Russian lobby. So far, as of 2025, even the Chinese state media, unlike Russian propaganda, do not insist on official rejection of territories or changing the political regime, so effective cooperation with the Chinese media is a key to building a positive image of Ukraine.

Our previous research (not published yet) focusing on the state of the leading modern media in China (Xinhua News Agency, The People's Daily and others) showed the rather high level of self-organization of media content that refutes the preconceived notions of the Chinese media space as propagandistic, pro-Russian, biased and tightly controlled by the Communist Party. We believe that this journalism should be treated like any other. But it is worth checking whether the above opinion also applies to the activities of international organisations for the protection of media law.

To make sure that the documents allegedly demonstrating China's violation of international obligations on freedom of expression are not mythical, this publication not only reviews the existing expertise of specialised media organisations, but also carefully checks their validity and accuracy. As a result, it was found that all media professionals are indeed required to undergo training to obtain and renew their press cards, but this is a normal practice in most countries. Despite the significant ideological

component, the instruction raises the level of professionalism and removes people without professional education from the profession. Regarding the news that China is the world's 'largest kidnapper of journalists', there is no comprehensive information - data from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) [3] and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) [4] contain major discrepancies.

The article also states that the status of Uyghur journalists in China is the same as that of Kurds in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey and Afghanistan. Media professionals from Hong Kong and Taiwan should also be considered less status and, accordingly, more controlled. They are the target of the 'watchful eye' of censorship. However, for some reason, almost all of the accusations relate mainly to business activities, social issues, personal positions and migration policy rather than journalism itself. It has been determined that sensitive topics such as Covid-19, anti-sexual violence movements, etc. are also the reason for bans.

It was found out that Chinese media have recently attracted the interest of scholars as well. Following the numerous discussions, a number of recommendations were made that will contribute to a better understanding of Chinese journalism and the establishment of international contacts.

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