

## Interview

— The total amount of financing regional projects in 2019 exceeded 11.5 billion roubles. In the past year, within the scope of the national project “Public Health Service”, new medical equipment was purchased for 23 medical institutions. By April, the construction of a new kindergarten with the admission of 280 children in “The Zhigulina Roscha” micro-district in the village of Mirny should be completed. The construction of an 1100-seat school in the same micro-district is nearing completion. Within the framework of the national project “Culture”, a major overhaul of five village halls will be completed by the end of the year. In addition to the introduction of an automated fare payment system in public transport, which is being implemented as part of the “Digital Economy” national project, it is planned to create a unitary control center, launch a transport portal and a mobile application. The republic needs to involve 47 enterprises before 2024 in the process of implementing the regional project “Targeted Support of Labor Productivity Increase at Enterprises”. 11 enterprises have been attracted to cooperation so far. I can go on with the examples.

**— In July this year, the Law of the Republic of Crimea “On Investment Policy and State Support of Investment Activities in the Republic of Crimea” was adopted. The document determines the objectives and principles of the investment policy carried out on the peninsula. Special attention is paid to the development of this sphere. How do you evaluate the work in this direction on the whole?**

— As you know, there are no limits for perfection. This year, Crimea was among the top 10 Russian regions in terms of the investment climate growth dynamics and the creation of comfort conditions for business. Crimea rose by 16 points in the national rating of the investment climate in the

constituent territories of the Russian Federation. 182 agreements were concluded with a total of 148.9 billion roubles volume of investment and the creation of 13,208 working places. 58.2 billion roubles have already been invested and 3070 working places created.

On my instructions, a working group will be formed under the Crimean Council of Ministers that will involve business representatives from each region of the peninsula.

This measure will make it possible to bring the most acute problems to any level and, accordingly, eliminate them much faster. In my opinion, the potential of any businessman is determined by the approachability of authorities and the management of different agencies and departments. I am ready to provide such an opportunity. What is more, a special function should be available on the government portal of the Republic of Crimea, which

will enable the entrepreneurs to contact me directly.

**— How many participants does the free economic zone number today and are there any positive effects of its work?**

— At present, 1346 agreements on the terms of activity in the free economic zone have been concluded and 1294 participants have been registered. In general, the declared projects' volume of investment totals about 128.2 billion roubles, including capital projects to the amount of 73.1 billion roubles. It is planned to create 43.3 thousand working places.

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**MIKHAIL AFANASYEV:**

“TODAY 411 MASS MEDIA  
ARE OFFICIALLY REGISTERED  
IN CRIMEA”

**Text: Mariya Ustinova**

The Minister of Domestic Policy, Information and Communications of the Republic of Crimea Mikhail Afanasyev told the Crimean Magazine about the way the media operate in Crimea and the changes in the media sphere of Crimea since 2014.

### **Freedom of Speech in Crimea**

Reproaches about the absence of freedom of speech are repeatedly pronounced with reference to Crimea. But basically, they come from those who do not represent any media on the peninsula. These are the journalists of unknown newspapers and TV channels who allegedly were not allowed to go anywhere, were not accredited for some reason and so on. To illustrate the situation, I will present a real-life example. One well-respected publication submitted a request to us, saying that during a visit to the center of the Crimean capital – Simferopol – journalists must be accompanied by representatives of the people's militia or just

people in military uniforms. At first, we could not understand – what was the point of that? Later, judging by the journalists' actions, it became clear that it was the only chance for them to take pictures next to people in camouflage uniforms and then interpret it as if the journalists, almost handcuffed, were being led around the city by military men. These are foolish provocation attempts in operation.

In Crimea, everything is good and clear with freedom of speech. If you ask me as a former journalist, and now as an official, I will say that I do not regard freedom of speech as a tool of bargaining at the international level, not as a

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kind of “unshakable norm of journalism”, but a philosophical issue. Freedom of speech is a criterion of own competence and responsibility for a professional of any level.

### “Freedom of speech” in the West

In fact, freedom of speech does not exist neither in the USA nor in Europe. If you talk to Western journalists who have visited Crimea since 2014 and see the materials they have prepared and published afterwards, it will become clear that their work is being censored by the time of publication. In the West, there is a unified political order for the propaganda and destruction of the image of Russia as a just and free nation. The decision of the Crimean people, which was made in 2014, is especially discredited.

Unfortunately, our American and European colleagues often violate themselves the norms that they encourage us to apply

### Censorship

Neither the federal media that operate in Crimea nor the Crimean media submit their materials to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Information and Communications of Crimea for censoring. But a lot of appeals come to us from media personnel to ask for qualified advice, expert opinion or comment. In this case we can act as experts who have something to supply a clue. Surely, in Crimea there is no such censorship which existed, let's say, in the times of the Soviet Union. It is technically impossible to censor TV channels in a live broadcast. All the Crimeans, authorities and journalists have common values and objectives. In Crimea, one can criticize an official for negligence, criminal activity and disregard of the citizens' opinion... But sometimes journalists criticize if, for example, the identity of a new leader is unpleasant to them. The latter, just like a public affront, is not allowed. Criticism is important for officials

because sometimes there is no understanding of where to move on.

### The Crimean Media

In 2014, the media sector was reformed for natural reasons. All the media that ceased their work during that period did it for reasons of their own: some did not want to register within the bounds of Russian law, others lost Ukrainian investors. As a result, two regional media holdings appeared in Crimea. The first one is Television and Radio Company “Crimea”, which currently includes five TV channels and several websites. The second one is “The Crimean Newspaper”, which, in addition to a hard-copy publication, has an official website, a glossy edition “The Crimean Magazine”, and a website “The Crimean News Agency”.

Since the peninsula has become an integral part of the Russian information space, Russian media have also appeared in Crimea.

Today 411 mass media are incorporated in Crimea

One thing should be clarified: for a considerable number of media, electronic ones in particular, the presence of mass media registration certificate is not a necessary condition. Undoubtedly, the registration by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media grant the editorial board the right of the media, the ability to send requests for information and, of course, responsibility. But many online publications are not following this pattern. They open websites with a few signs of media or pages on social networks but do not formally register. Therefore, the number of media in Crimea, including representative offices of federal media, correspondent's offices and aggregators, exceeds 500.

Almost all federal, republican and municipal mass media have presence in Crimea

*We feel like one*

# CHANGES IN *the* WORLD MAKE MEDIA CHANGE

Text: Mariya Savina

Over the past few years, **the topic of human rights in Crimea in general and freedom of the press** in particular has been discussed at various international forums by some “experts” who are thousands of kilometers away from the peninsula and don’t have the slightest notion about the way our media function. **“The Crimean Magazine” talked to Crimean media executives about censorship and the freedom of speech**