



NEWS

Trump Signs Executive Order For Major Cuts To 7 Agencies, Including RFE/RL Overseer USAGM

By RFE/RL

March 15, 2025 19:06 CET

U.S. President Donald Trump has signed an executive order that aims to reduce seven federal agencies – including the US Agency for Global Media (USAGM), which oversees Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other federal broadcasters.

The **order**, signed late on March 14, also targets agencies that deal with homelessness, labor disputes, and community development.

“Within 7 days of the date of this order, the head of each governmental entity listed [in the order] shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget confirming full compliance with this order and explaining which components or functions of the governmental entity, if any, are statutorily required and to what extent,” the order says.

Hours after the executive order was published, media reports circulated a letter from the USAGM saying the Congress-approved grant that funds RFE/RL had been terminated.

The letter was signed by Kari Lake, who lists her title as senior adviser to the (USAGM) acting CEO with authorities delegated by acting CEO.

Lake has been nominated by Trump to take over as head of Voice of America, though her nomination must still be approved by the International Broadcasting Advisory Board.

RFE/RL President and Chief Executive Officer Stephen Capus said cancelling the grant agreement would be "a massive gift to America's enemies."

"The Iranian Ayatollahs, Chinese communist leaders, and autocrats in Moscow and Minsk would celebrate the demise of RFE/RL after 75 years. Handing our adversaries a win would make them stronger and America weaker," he said in a statement.

"We've benefitted from strong bipartisan support throughout RFE/RL's storied history. Without us, the nearly 50 million people in closed societies who depend on us for accurate news and information each week won't have access to the truth about America and the world," Capus added.

The USAGM is an independent US government agency that oversees the broadcasting of news and information in almost 50 languages to some 361 million people each week.

The total **budget request** for the USAGM for Fiscal Year 2025 was \$950 million to fund all of its operations and capital investments.

This includes media outlets such as RFE/RL, Voice of America, Radio Free Asia, the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio Marti), Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) and the Open Technology Fund.

According to media reports, VOA employees were informed early on March 15 that they had been put on administrative leave with pay, though if they are asked to work, they must do so.

The situation at the other broadcasters was not immediately clear.

"It is outrageous that the White House is seeking to gut the Congress-funded agency supporting independent journalism that challenges narratives of authoritarian regimes around the world," Carlos Martinez de la Serna, program director at the Committee to Protect Journalists, said in a **statement** on March 15.

"We call on congressional leaders to protect this critical agency, which provides uncensored news in countries where the press is restricted."

Trump, who has taken several moves to slash government spending since taking office for a second term in January, clashed with the USAGM over editorial independence and the direction of programming during his first term.

He has reiterated those concerns again since retaking office. Supporters of the broadcasters say they are an important arm of US diplomacy.

In addition to the USAGM, the order targets Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund; and the Minority Business Development Agency.