# R.E.M. re-releases 'Radio Free Europe' to back pro-democracy media on World Press Freedom Day



Alternative rock band R.E.M. has issued a re-release of their debut single, "Radio Free Europe," as part of a five-track benefit EP titled "Radio Free Europe 2025," aimed at supporting the pro-democracy media outlet Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). The EP was launched on the eve of World Press Freedom Day, an occasion intended to remind governments worldwide of their obligations to uphold press freedom.

Originally released in 1981, "Radio Free Europe" draws its inspiration from the US government-funded media service RFE/RL, which strives to provide independent news reporting in regions where press freedom is limited. The EP features a remixed version of the single, among other tracks, to appeal to both long-time fans and new listeners.

The motivation behind this initiative comes amid controversial moves by the administration of former US President Donald Trump, which sought to dismantle the US Agency for Global Media, the umbrella organisation overseeing independent news services such as Voice of America and RFE/RL. These entities were established to foster independent journalism globally and operate in societies that often restrict press freedoms.

R.E.M.’s lead singer, Michael Stipe, remarked, "Whether it’s music or a free press – censorship anywhere is a threat to the truth everywhere." He specifically noted the courage of the journalists working at RFE/RL, stating, "On World Press Freedom Day, I’m sending a shoutout to the brave journalists at Radio Free Europe."

Bassist Mike Mills added his support, mentioning, "Radio Free Europe’s journalists have been pissing off dictators for 75 years. You know you’re doing your job when you make the right enemies. Happy World Press Freedom Day to the ‘OG’ Radio Free Europe."

Stephen Capus, president and CEO of RFE/RL, expressed appreciation for the band’s music, stating that it embodies “a celebration of freedom: freedom of expression, lyrics that make us think, and melodies that inspire action.” He highlighted the challenges faced by their journalists, including efforts to obstruct their work through signal jamming and other means, as well as the imprisonment of some colleagues.

Recent developments included a federal judge's order in April, compelling the Trump administration to restore $12 million (£9 million) in funding previously appropriated by Congress for RFE/RL. Established during the Cold War, RFE/RL broadcasts in 27 languages across 23 countries, specifically targeting eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Its corporate headquarters are located in Washington, D.C., while its journalistic centre is in the Czech Republic.

In recognition of its impact, Radio Free Europe was inducted into the Library of Congress’s National Recording Registry in 2009. R.E.M., comprised of members Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mills, and Stipe, is known for notable alt-rock hits such as “Everybody Hurts” and “It’s The End Of The World As We Know It (And I Feel Fine).” Having been inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame last year, the band reunited for a performance in New York City, marking an ongoing legacy in the music world despite announcing in 2011 that they would disband, following the release of their final studio album, "Collapse Into Now."

The "Radio Free Europe 2025" EP tracklist includes:

**Radio Side:**  
1. Radio Free Europe 2025 (Jacknife Lee Remix)  
2. Radio Free Dub (Mitch Easter 1981 Remix)

**Liberty Side:**  
1. Radio Free Europe (Original Hib-Tone Single)  
2. Sitting Still (Original Hib-Tone B-Side)  
3. Wh. Tornado (From Cassette Set)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://apnews.com/article/55f2525dc2061db80773449288ae2c3e> - This article reports on R.E.M.'s re-release of their debut single 'Radio Free Europe' as part of a five-track benefit EP titled 'Radio Free Europe 2025,' aimed at supporting Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).
* <https://www.udiscovermusic.com/news/r-e-m-radio-free-europe-reissue/> - This source provides details about R.E.M.'s reissue of their debut single 'Radio Free Europe,' including the tracklist and the significance of the release.
* <https://www.nme.com/news/music/r-e-m-announce-40th-anniversary-reissue-of-debut-single-radio-free-europe-2943191> - This article discusses R.E.M.'s announcement of the 40th-anniversary reissue of their debut single 'Radio Free Europe,' highlighting the original recording and its historical context.
* <https://www.musicradar.com/news/rem-reissue-their-original-hib-tone-debut-single-radio-free-europe-plus-limited-edition-81-demo-cassette> - This source details R.E.M.'s reissue of their original Hib-Tone debut single 'Radio Free Europe,' including information about the limited edition 1981 demo cassette.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_Free_Europe/Radio_Liberty> - This Wikipedia page provides comprehensive information about Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), including its history, mission, and recent developments.
* <https://www.stereogum.com/2153487/rem-radio-free-europe-turns-40/music/> - This article celebrates the 40th anniversary of R.E.M.'s 'Radio Free Europe,' discussing the reissue of the original Hib-Tone mixes and the significance of the track.
* <https://www.irishnews.com/entertainment/rem-re-release-debut-single-radio-free-europe-to-aid-threatened-news-service-7GXUH5RCZNPOJBC3MKYH6VR6DY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data