[TM] New Law on Mass Media

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The new Act "On Mass Media" adopted by the parliament on 22 December 2012 entered into force in Turkmenistan on 4 January 2013. It replaces the Act of Turkmen SSR “On Press and Other Mass Media”, which was adopted in 1990 at the time of the Soviet Union and had never been amended since.

The Act proclaims a number of basic principles of state policy in the media area. It declares the freedom of the media and the freedom to choose the forms in which one expresses one’s views and convictions, prohibits censorship and promotes journalists’ self-regulation. It bans interference in the activities of the media, the creation of monopolies and guarantees economic support, including the right to receive tax incentives and state subsidies.

Nevertheless, the Act does not lay down trigger mechanisms for their implementation, and many of its principles may be considered mere formalities. However, the declarative character was fundamental to the previous Act, which on paper also enshrined the right to establish media for political parties, non-governmental organizations, for creative, religious, and other associations, as well as for adult citizens of Turkmenistan.

A distinctive feature of the Act is the expansion of its scope and the introduction of provisions on Web publications, which henceforth must be registered by a state body as legal entities. The Act also requires any content produced for public distribution to be registered. Thus, the Act allows for the possibility to hold responsible those who distribute user-generated content on the Internet without special registration.

Закон Туркменистана «О средствах массовой информации»

http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=3063

Act of Turkmenistan "On Mass Media" of 22 December 2012

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