

## [LT] Information Act adopted

**IRIS 1997-3:1/19**

*Andrea Schneider  
Institute of European Media Law (EMR), Saarbrücken/Brussels*

On 02.07.1996 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted a new Act on the provision of information to the public, which was amended on 22.08.1996. We reported on the bill in IRIS 1995-6: 12.

The Act regulates the creation and broadcasting of information to the public, the rights and duties of those who produce and broadcast such information, the owners of mass media, and journalists.

Section I of the Act contains general provisions on the aims of the Act and a list of definitions. The basic principles of the provision of information to the public are set out in Section II. Freedom of information and opinion are guaranteed; censorship and monopolisation are prohibited.

Section III covers the State's duty to provide information, with the basic principle that state and local offices must ensure that public authorities are able to report on their activities.

Section IV contains the rights and duties and auto-supervisory regulations of producers of information to the public, such as publishing houses, broadcasting stations, cinema and video studios, and journalists. In the event of dissemination of false or defamatory information, the subject has the right of reply and in certain cases may also claim damages (Articles 20-22).

The Act also provides for the setting up of an ethical committee for journalists and publishers to supervise compliance with the basic ethical principles of journalists as set out in the code of ethics of Lithuanian journalists and publishers and in the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the professional ethics of journalists (Article 24).

The Act also contains provisions covering the creation, field of activity and financing of a broadcasting commission with responsibility for issuing licences for setting up private broadcasting stations on the basis of tenders and for their supervision. (Articles 26-28).

With reference to the Lithuanian National Radio and Television Act, Article 29 covers the financing of the national Lithuanian radio and television channels and the setting up of the National Broadcasting Council as its highest supervisory

body.

Section V of the Act contains regulations on the procedure for broadcasting information and the registration of producers of information.

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*Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania of 2 July 1996 as amended by 23 January 1997.*

