[BY] Amendments on the protection of minors from information detrimental to their health and development adopted

IRIS 2016-7:1/9

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On 11 May 2016 the President of the Republic of Belarus signed into law the Statute earlier adopted by the national Parliament that aims to protect children from harmful information. Most of its provisions come into force on 1 July 2017.

The Statute significantly amends the 1993 Statute О правах ребёнка (On the Rights of the Child) (see IRIS Plus 2006-3) through the addition of Chapter (4-bis), “Protection of Minors against information harmful to the health and development”.

The Statute prohibits the dissemination among minors (persons of below 18 years of age) of 12 categories of information. They range from erotica to information that “calls for a wish to consume alcohol, light alcoholic drinks, [or] beer”, or which contains “bad language” and the “negation of family values and marital relations” (now a new Article 37-1 of the Statute On the Rights of the Child). Owners of Internet cafes and similar establishments are obliged to make efforts to prevent their clients among which children accessing harmful websites, while parents shall now be informed by Internet service providers about “organizational and software methods” to block harmful information.

The statute introduces ratings of the “informational products” related to the age of their consumers that shall be as follows: 0+ (below 6 years old), 6+, 12+, 16+ and 18+ (Article 37-2).

The 2008 Mass Media Statute (see IRIS 2008-8/9) is amended with a new provision (Article 17, part 5-2) that stipulates mandatory specific labelling of products, including TV programmes, in accordance with their age rating. The exceptions include live TV broadcasts, TV broadcasts of informational, informational/analytical, cultural/educational, spiritual/educational, reference and statistics character, sports TV programmes, and foreign TV broadcasts if distributed without change of their content or form.

Online information reports and materials are also exempt from the obligation to use ratings.

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О внесении изменений и дополнений в некоторые законы Республики Беларусь

http://www.pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=12551&p0=H11600362&p1=1

The statute of the Republic of Belarus of 11 May 2016.N 362-З "On amendments and additions to certain statutes of the Republic of Belarus". Adopted by Chamber of Representatives 4 April 2016, approved by the Council of the Republic on 21 April 2016

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