[RU] Election Campaigning Regulated in New Law

IRIS 1997-10:1/11

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Duma On 5 September 1997 the State of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (the Lower House of the Parliament) adopted the Federal Act "On Basic Guarantees for Citizens of Russian Federation of the Electoral Rights and the Right to Participate in Referenda" (No124-FZ). It was signed by President Boris Yeltsin on 19 September 1997 and came into force on 30 September 1997.

The Act consists of 66 Articles dividing over eleven Chapters. The concept of election canvassing is given in Article 2 of the Law and is defined as the activity of the citizens of the Russian Federation, candidates, and public associations for the purpose of making voters to participate in balloting for or against a candidate. Chapter 7 (Articles 37-45) regulates canvassing during election and referendum campaigns. The Law guarantees all registered candidates, electoral associations, electoral blocks, equal rights of access to the mass media in the form and manner that they independently determine (Article 37). The statute establishes uniform time limits for the campaigning: it shall start on the day of registration of a candidate and end 24 hours before the election day. Within three days before the election day and on that day itself no public opinion polls' results, forecasts of the election results, or any other research related to the election or referendum's possible outcome shall be released by the mass media (Article 38).

The Act establishes special rules for the media set up by the government (State) or municipal bodies, all State-subsidised media, as well as all media that enjoy benefits or tax reliefs from the State that are not enjoyed by other media. Article 40 stipulates that at least one hour of free air time on weekdays during prime time hours shall be made available by such federal broadcasting companies to all registered candidates and parties. Local stations of such type shall provide 30 minutes of free air time a workday. At least a third of the free time shall be reserved for debates and roundtables of the candidates. All other mass media have the right to participate in campaigning, but shall charge the candidates on uniform terms (Article 39). Both in case of free and paid air time every candidate and party shall have right to obtain an equal share of the time reserved for political campaigning (Article 40).

Federalnyi zakon Rossiyskoy Federatsii "Ob osnovnykh garantiyakh izbiratelnykh prav i prava na uchastiye v referendu-me grazhdan

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Rossiyskoy Federatsii". "Rossiyskaya gazeta", 25 and 30 September 1997

Federal Act "On Basic Guarantees for Citizens of Russian Federation of the Electoral Rights and the Right to Participate in Referenda" (No124-FZ). Rossiyskaya gazeta, 25 and 30 September 1997

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