[UA] New Law on News Agencies

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On 28 February 1995 President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine has signed a new law: the "Act on News Agencies", which had been adopted by the Supreme Council (Parliament) of Ukraine that same day. The Act defines news agencies as "subjects involved in information activities that are registered in accordance with the rules for the registration of legal persons that have as their statutory objective the provision of information services" (Art. 1). According to the Act, they are involved in the "collection, processing, creation, preservation, editing, production and dissemination of information products" (Art. 5). This Act provides the news agencies with rights and obligations similar to those provided in the Press Act (1992) and the Broadcasting Act (1994) respectively to the print and electronic mass media. It follows the general and restrictive quota for foreign participation in the capital of national media. "The establishment and operation of news agencies by foreign legal and natural persons and persons without citizenship are prohibited in Ukraine. The establishment and operation of news agencies with foreign participation exceeding 30% of their capital stock are prohibited" (Art. 9). It should be noted here, that incidentally the most reliable and fast news agencies operating in the country today are probably Interfax - Ukraine (a joint venture between Moscow's Interfax news agency and a Ukrainian citizen), and Reuters with its huge network of correspondents all over the country. State run agencies have a priority over other agencies in access to communication lines if the information they intend to disseminate is "of special importance for the state and society" (Art. 29). The Statute also safeguards the news agencies' copyright and rights related to copyright in relation to their products. "Unless stipulated otherwise by law, news agencies are the owners of their products". Their property rights are safeguarded by laws that are currently in force in Ukraine. (Art. 26). Illegal use of the news agencies' products will be prosecuted (Art. 34). According to the Statute the physical appearance of the product (in electronic, print, photo, film, audio and/or video format) is not relevant (Art. 27).

Act on News Agencies of 28 February 1995.
ЗАКОН УКРАЇНИ Про інформаційні агентства.

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