

Federal Decree by Law No. (55) of 2023 Concerning Media Regulation

We, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates;

- Upon reviewing the Constitution;
- Federal Law No. (15) of 1980 Concerning Press and Publications;
- Federal Law by Decree No. (57) of 2022 Establishing the UAE Media Council;
- Based on the proposal of the UAE Media Council Chairman of Board of Directors, and the approval of the Cabinet;

Have promulgated the following Decree-Law:

Article (1)

Definitions

In application of the provisions herein, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each of them, unless the context otherwise requires:

- State** : United Arab Emirates.
- Council** : UAE Media Council.
- Chairman** : Council Chairman of the Board of Directors.
- Competent Authority** : The local government body concerned with licensing or permitting the practice of media activities and supervising and controlling them, or the Council for the Emirates where there is no competent local body.
- Concerned Authority** : Any federal or local government entity, other than the Competent Authority, from which the institutions, establishments or persons are required, before practising the media activity, to obtain the necessary licences and approvals in accordance with the legislation in force in the State.
- Media** : Broadcasting, publishing, printing and distributing printed and digital information and news that reaches the public and does not have the characteristic of private correspondence.

Media Outlets : Any read, audio or visual means, or any system, website or electronic communication platform, including, but not limited to, read, audio, visual, electronic and digital media, electronic games, television and radio production, journalism, printing, and regular and electronic publishing, and other available media and publishing outlets, or any modern or future technology that may be integrated into the media sector.

Media : The activities stipulated in Article (8) of this Law by Decree.

Activities

Newspaper : Each paper, electronic or digital publication with a fixed title and that includes informational content issued periodically or non-periodically.

Publications : Every writing, drawing, musical composition, photograph, or other means of expression in any material, whether read, audio, or visual, if it can be is circulated in any way, including electronic or digital methods, or any other technical means.

Circulation : Selling or showing publications or audio or visual materials, or distributing them for the purpose of selling, advertising, or marketing, as well as every other act that makes them in any way accessible to people, whether for or without compensation.

Foreign : Publications issued outside the State.

Publications

Artistic Works : Films, series, and other visual and audio releases and electronic video games that are shown in cinemas or played using any specialised electronic device, such as computers, smart phones, and televisions through networks that rely on the presence of private servers that can be accessed through the Internet.

Advertisement : Showing visual, audio, or printed content, whether electronic or paper, by any means, to the public for the purpose of marketing a product or service, for or without compensation.

Electronic Media : All platforms that make media and advertising content available across all electronic and digital media and means through which media content is shared to reach the public, and issued by natural or public or private legal persons.

- Media Content :** Read, audio, visual, or digital material that contains information, data, opinions, and any intellectual, artistic, cultural, social, economic, cinematic, or musical production, or any similar humanitarian, or promotional or advertising production, which is published through the media in all its forms for expression, distribution, marketing, publication or broadcast, for or without compensation; and it does not include what has the characteristic of private correspondence.
- Foreign Media Content :** Read, audio and visual media content that is produced outside the State and is published through various types of media inside the State.
- Media Institution :** The legal person licensed to engage in media activities exclusively.
- Establishment :** A sole proprietorship, company, club, centre or association that is authorised to practise one or more media activities.
- Media Free Zone :** The existing economic zone in any Emirate of the State as a media free zone in accordance with the legislation in force.
- Licence :** The licence issued by the Council or the Competent Authority, as the case may be, for the Media Institution to practise any media activities.
- Permit :** The permission issued by the Council or the Competent Authority, as the case may be, for an establishment or natural person to practise a specific media activity during a specific period.
- Person :** The natural or legal person.

Article (2)

Scope of Application

The provisions of this Law by Decree shall apply to all persons, media establishments and institutions, media outlets and media free zones that practise media activities within the State.

Article (3)

Law by Decree Objectives

This Law by Decree shall aim to achieve the following:

1. Regulating all media activities in the State of all types and forms in a way that enhances the State's media status and establishes a stimulating environment for the growth of the media sector.
2. Developing a modern media legislative and investment environment that keeps pace with global changes in the media sector and enhances the attractiveness of the media sector in the State.
3. Improving media content in the State in a manner that contributes to the development of the media sector.

Article (4)

Ownership of Media Institutions and Media Outlets

1. A natural person may own any media institution or media outlet, after fulfilling the following conditions:
 - A. He must have full legal capacity.
 - B. He must be of good reputation and conduct, and has not been previously sentenced to imprisonment penalty in a felony or misdemeanour breaching honour or trust, unless he has been rehabilitated.
 - C. He must obtain the required approvals from the Concerned Authorities.
 - D. Any other conditions determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.
2. A legal person may own any media institution or media outlet, after fulfilling the following conditions:
 - A. Taking the form of a sole proprietorship or any form of company stipulated in the Commercial Companies Law in force in the State.
 - B. The activity of the legal person shall be limited to media activities.
 - C. Obtaining the required approvals from the Concerned Authorities.
 - D. Any other conditions determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.

Article (5)

Issuing Licence or Permit to Practise Media Activities

The Council or the Competent Authority, each within its jurisdiction, shall issue a licence or permit to practise media activities in accordance with the following controls and conditions:

1. The applicant must fulfil the controls and conditions for practising media activities and the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree and its Executive Regulation.
2. The applicant must not have a licence or permit issued thereto previously suspended or cancelled, or an establishment related to media activity belonging thereto closed, and he must have not been previously prevented from practising media activity unless the reasons for the suspension, cancellation or prevention are removed.
3. Payment of the set fees.
4. Any other controls and conditions determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.

Article (6)

Practising Media Activities in Free Zones

1. The Competent Authority shall issue licences or permits to practise media activities in free zones in accordance with the following controls and conditions:
 - A. The applicant must fulfil the controls and conditions for practising media activities and the media content standards in accordance with the provisions of this Law by Decree and its Executive Regulation and any legislation in force in the State in this regard.
 - B. The licensed or authorised media activity must be practised within the specified geographical borders of the free zone. In the event that media activity is practised outside the geographical borders of the free zone, the laws and regulations in force in the country shall apply to it.
 - C. The persons, establishments and media institutions licensed or authorised to operate in free zones must abide by the media activities specified in the licence or permit issued thereto, and must renew those licences and permits within the specified dates.
 - D. Any other controls or conditions determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree or determined by the Competent Authority.
2. The persons, establishments and media institutions licensed or authorised to operate in free zones

shall be subject to oversight and supervision by the Competent Authority to ensure their compliance with the provisions of this Law by Decree, its Executive Regulation and the resolutions issued in implementation thereof.

Article (7)

Other Permits and Approvals

The licence or permit issued by the Council or the Competent Authority does not substitute for obtaining the necessary permits or approvals from the Concerned Authorities.

Article (8)

Media Activities

1. Media activities include any activity related to the production, transmission, distribution, printing, publishing, broadcasting and sending of media content, whether it is read, audio, visual or digital, and making it available to the public through the media outlets, whether these activities are for or without compensation. Media activities shall include:
 - A. Radio and television broadcasting including Internet Protocol Television (IPTV), over-the-top (OTT) or video on demand (VOD).
 - B. (Interactive and non-interactive) video game and arcade game services that are developed and distributed within the State.
 - C. Films and showings of artistic works.
 - D. Newspapers and Publications.
 - E. Book Fairs.
 - F. Electronic and digital media activities.
 - G. Photography activities.
 - H. Any other activities determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.
2. The Council shall, in coordination with the Competent Authority, issue a guide specifying media activities in the state and their classification, provided that this guide is updated periodically and in cases that require the same.

Media Activities and Conditions thereof

Article (9)

Radio and Television Broadcasting

1. The Competent Authority shall issue licences or permits to practise radio and television broadcasting activities, in accordance with the following controls and conditions:
 - A. The applicant must fulfil the conditions for practising the media activity requested to be practised in accordance with what is determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.
 - B. Abiding by the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.
2. The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) in the State is responsible for allocating the necessary frequencies for radio and television broadcasting activities, and determining device specifications and uses.

Article (10)

Films and Showings of Other Artistic Works

1. The Council shall issue permits related to the showing of cinematographic films and the showing of other artistic works, in accordance with the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.
2. The Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree shall determine the controls, conditions and procedures for showing films and showings of other artistic works.

Article (11)

Newspapers and Publications

The Competent Authority shall issue licences or permits to practise newspaper and publication activities, in accordance with the following controls and conditions:

1. The applicant must fulfil the conditions for practising the media activity requested to be practised in accordance with what is determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.
2. Abiding by the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.

Article (12)

Electronic and Digital Media Activities

1. The Competent Authority shall issue licences or permits to practise electronic and digital media activities that provide news services or promotion and advertising, for or without compensation, on social media and other modern technical means.
2. The Council shall issue permits to the natural person who provides advertising or media content, whether for or without compensation, on social media and other modern technical means.
3. The Competent Authority shall, in coordination with the Council, issues licences for smart applications to display foreign media content.
4. All electronic and digital media activities shall be subject to the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.
5. The provisions of Clause (1) of this Article shall not apply to digital platforms affiliated with federal and local government agencies, and digital platforms of schools, institutes, universities, and governmental and private colleges accredited by the authorities concerned with education in the State, as well as any other platforms and sites determined by the Council.
6. The party responsible for electronic and digital media activity shall bear responsibility for what is published through this activity, whether the activity is permitted or not permitted.

Article (13)

Photography Activities

1. The Competent Authority shall issue permits for practising land, aerial, or marine photography activities, including approval of texts and content, after coordination with the Concerned Authorities.
2. The Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree shall determine the controls and procedures for practising land, aerial, or marine photography activities.

Article (14)

Book Fairs

1. The Competent Authority shall issue permits for holding book fairs, in accordance with the following controls and conditions:

- A. The applicant must fulfil the conditions for the media activity requested to be practised in accordance with what is determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.
 - B. Providing the Competent Authority with data on publications displayed in book fairs and any other data it requests.
 - C. The Competent Authority must exclude the publications that violate the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.
2. The Council and the Competent Authority may take the necessary measures to ensure that entities participating in book fairs comply with the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree in the publications displayed.

Article (15)

Foreign Publications

Local and foreign persons, establishments, and media institutions in the State wishing to reprint foreign publications must obtain a licence or permit from the Council to do so in accordance with the following controls and conditions:

1. Providing a valid licence for the publication in the country in which it is issued.
2. Providing proof of the approval of the owner of the publication or his legal representative to reprint it within the State.
3. The printed copy to be reprinted must be completely identical in terms of editorial material and media content to the printed copy in the country of original publication or to the international copy.
4. The Foreign Publications must not violate the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree.
5. Any other controls or conditions determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.

Article (16)

Foreign Media Offices

1. Foreign media offices wishing to practise media representation activity in the State must obtain a licence to do so from the Competent Authority.
2. The Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree shall determine the conditions that must be met by

foreign media offices in the State that can be licensed to work in the country, the licensing conditions and work controls for correspondents, journalists and other workers in these offices.

3. The Council shall issue permits for foreign correspondents and journalists who are not registered in the State in accordance with what is specified in the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.

Article (17)

Media Content Standards

Without prejudice to any provision contained in any other law, everyone who practises an activity or profession in the field of media must abide by the media content standards, according to the following:

1. Respecting the Divine Entity, Islamic beliefs, monotheistic religions, and other beliefs, and not offending any of them.
2. Respecting the State's governance system, its symbols and institutions, and the highest interests of the State and society.
3. Respecting the State's orientation and policy at the internal and international levels.
4. Avoiding to address to anything that might harm the State's foreign relations.
5. Respecting the cultural and civilisational heritage and national identity of the State.
6. Not to publish or circulate anything that harms national unity and social cohesion.
7. Not to raise sectarian, regional, or tribal strife, not to incite violence, hatred, and terrorist acts, and not to incite hatred and spread a spirit of discord in society.
8. Not to offend the prevailing values in society and observing the requirements of the public interest.
9. Not to offend the legal, economic, judicial and security system in the State.
10. Respecting the rules of privacy and everything related to the private lives of individuals.
11. Not to publish or circulate anything that might incite the commission of crimes or encourage murder, rape, or the use of drugs or psychotropic substances.
12. Not to publish, broadcast, or circulate phrases, pictures, drawings, or opinions that violate public morals, offend young people, or call for embracing or promoting subversive ideas.
13. Not to publish, broadcast, or circulate false news, forged papers, or those incorrectly attributed to entities or persons.
14. Not to publish, broadcast or circulate anything that might harm the national currency or the

economic situation in the State.

15. Not to spread rumours and misleading news.
16. Any other standards determined by the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree.

Article (18)

Printing, Circulation and Publishing of Media Content

1. The Competent Authority shall issue permits for the printing, circulation, and publishing of media content, and the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree shall specify the controls, conditions, and procedures for issuing such permits.
2. The Council shall issue licences or permits for the printing, circulation, and publication of foreign media content, and the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree shall specify the controls, conditions, and procedures for issuing such permits.

Article (19)

Age Rating

The Council shall, in coordination with the Competent Authority, determine the following:

1. Age rating criteria for media content of publications and artistic works that require so, in particular, books, video games and films.
2. The age categories of individuals who are entitled to enter cinemas, and the controls, procedures and times of their publication, broadcast or showing.

Article (20)

Promotion and Advertising

1. It is not permissible to publish any propaganda or advertisement that violates the media content standards stipulated in this Law by Decree or that would harm the public interest therein directly or indirectly.
2. All advertisers must include in all advertising materials something that explicitly and clearly indicates that it is advertising material.
3. The Council, the Competent Authority, and the Concerned Authorities, each within the limits of their

jurisdiction, shall monitor media content in advertising and publicity.

4. The Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree specify the standards, conditions and controls that must be met in the promotion and advertising that is published or circulated by persons, establishments or media institutions.

Article (21)

Intellectual Property

1. The Council shall work, in coordination with the relevant authorities, through the competences entrusted thereto in accordance with this Law by Decree and the legislation in force in the State, to enhance the protection of intellectual property within the State to ensure the protection of holders of intellectual property rights related to the media industry.
2. Person, establishments, and media institutions must abide by the intellectual property and trademark legislation in force in the State.

Article (22)

Oversight, Inspection, and Requesting Data and Information

1. The persons, establishments and media institutions licensed or authorised by the Competent Authority to practise media activities shall be subject to oversight and supervision by the Competent Authority to ensure their compliance with the provisions of this Law by Decree, its Executive Regulation and the resolutions issued in implementation thereof.
2. Without prejudice to the competence of the Competent Authority to oversee and inspect persons, establishments and media institutions, the Council may undertake the work of oversight and inspection of all persons, establishments and media institutions that practise media activities in the country, including free zones, to ensure their compliance with the provisions of this Law by Decree, its Executive Regulation, and the decisions issued in implementation thereof.
3. The Competent Authority and free zone authorities must provide the Council with all licences and permits issued by them in the field of various media activities, and other data and information requested by the Council through electronic linking or by any other means determined by the Council in coordination with the Competent Authority or the free zone authority.

Article (23)

Administrative Sanctions

1. Persons, establishments or media institutions, or those in charge of them, who commit violations shall be subject to one or more of the following administrative sanctions:
 - A. Warning.
 - B. An administrative fine not be less than one thousand (1,000) AED and not exceeding one million (1,000,000) AED. The administrative fine shall be doubled when the violation is repeated, provided that it shall not exceed two million (2,000,000) AED.
 - C. The administrative closure of violating establishments and media institutions for a period not exceeding six (6) months, subject to renewal. Unlicensed institutions may be permanently closed without prejudice to the rights of bona fide third parties.
 - D. Cancellation of licences, permits and approvals issued to persons, establishments or media institutions.
2. It is permissible to obligate the violator to pay the expenses and costs of removing and remedying the damages resulting from the violation in the event that he does not remove or remedy it.
3. The imposition of the administrative penalties referred to in Clause (1) of this Article shall not prejudice the penalties or sanctions stipulated in other legislation.

Article (24)

Regulation of Violations and Administrative Sanctions

The Cabinet shall, based on the proposal by the Minister and in coordination with the Competent Authority, issue the Regulation of Violations and Administrative Sanctions for acts committed in violation of the provisions of this Decree by Law and its Executive Regulation, determining the authorities that will impose such sanctions, the mechanism of grievance against them, and the authority concerned with collecting administrative fines.

Article (25)

Judicial Enforcement

The Minister of Justice, or the head of the local judicial authority, each within his jurisdiction, and in agreement with the Chairman or the head of the Competent Authority, may grant some employees of the Council and the Competent Authority the capacity of judicial enforcement officers, in proving what is committed in violation of the provisions of this Law by Decree and the regulations and decisions implementing it. For this purpose, they have the right to review documents and information and request any data, information or clarifications necessary to perform their duties.

Article (26)

Fees for Licences and Permits for Media Activities

The Cabinet shall issue a resolution, based on the proposal of the Minister of Finance in coordination with the Chairman, specifying the fees for licences and permits stipulated in this Law by Decree and its Executive Regulation or the resolutions issued in implementation thereof.

Article (27)

Executive Regulation and Resolutions

1. The Cabinet shall, based on the proposal of the Chairman and after coordination with the Competent Authority, issue the Executive Regulation of this Law by Decree within six (6) months as of the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.
2. The Chairman shall issue the necessary resolutions to implement the provisions of this Law by Decree and its Executive Regulation.

Article (28)

Delegation of Competences

The Cabinet may, based on the proposal of the Chairman and after coordination with the Competent Authority, delegate any of the Council's competences stipulated in this Law by Decree to the Competent Authority.

Article (29)

Reconciliation

Persons, establishments, and media institutions addressed by the provisions of this Law by Decree must adjust their status in accordance with the provisions of this Law by Decree, its Executive Regulation, and the decisions issued in implementation thereof, within one year as of the entry into force date of its provisions, and this period may be extended by a resolution issued by the Cabinet.

Article (30)

Repeals

1. The aforementioned Federal Law No. (15) of 1980 Concerning Publications and Publishing shall be repealed, as well as any provision that violates or contradicts the provisions of this Law by Decree.
2. The executive regulations and resolutions applicable at the time of issuing this Law by Decree shall continue to be in force without prejudice to its provisions until issuing the regulations and resolutions to replace them.

Article (31)

Publication and Entry Into Force of Law by Decree

This Law by Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall enter into force as of 01/12/2023.

Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan

President of the United Arab Emirates

Issued by us at the Presidential Palace – Abu Dhabi:

On: 17 Rabi' l 1445 H

Corresponding to: 02 October 2023