

# Azerbaijan - Media Landscape

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## Overview

On 28 May, 1918, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic became the first democratic parliamentary republic in the Muslim world. For the first time in the area and long before some European countries, women were granted the right to vote. On 28 April, 1920, the country was occupied by Bolshevik Russia. In 1920-1922, its formal independence was de-facto recognised by the international community. During the Soviet era, Azerbaijan's statehood faced serious challenges. On 18 October, 1991, when the country gained full independence it declared itself the political and legal successor of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and demonstrated commitment to its ancient traditions of statehood, soon restoring its old state symbols.

While media have formally abandoned the administrative system of Soviet times, they act as if it was still in place. This happens because there are no favourable conditions for the development of independent media in the country. Therefore, media have turned into a fully-fledged structure with very low material revenues and most outlets in Azerbaijan do not have long-term strategies because of the lack of competition. This is especially the case of the print press, with newspapers lacking advertisement, which are mostly noticeable on digital media. Newspapers such as *Azadliq*, *Ayna*, and *Zerkalo* had hundreds of advertising partners in the mid-1990s and today they have all ceased to operate. The deterioration of the political situation has also reflected in the advertising market, resulting in the newspapers stopping from publishing. Another issue of the local media landscape is related to media entrepreneurs. There is almost no information about them, with obvious consequences on transparency. The identity of media owners is important in an environment where there is no advertising, no sales and no subscription system.

The Azerbaijani press has gone through four phases coinciding with the political situation: 1) Newspapers and magazines published under tsarist Russian rule (1832-1917); 2) printed organs published during the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic (1918-1920); 3) printed publications of the Soviet era (1920-1991) and diaspora press; 4) publications printed since the restoration of independence (from 1991 to the present).

As of 2019, there are two state-funded TV channels, which are not meeting the population's information needs. In 2018 31.8m Azerbaijani manat were allocated to *AzTV* and AZN11.6m to *ITV*. Nevertheless, the result is that these amounts do not provide citizens with pluralistic information, since *AZTV* and *ITV* represent the interests of the government that funds them, not of society. Their news programs are not objective, alternative views are not included, the opposition and independent voices are not invited to the airwaves. The situation in the print press is similar: Tens of millions of manats were allocated to media outlets from the President's Reserve Fund in 2010-2018.

Azerbaijani media are influenced by the political processes in the country and are basically separated in pro-government and

pro-opposition media. The first are controlled by the ruling party and never face charges or courts as a result. Journalists of these media outlets are impacted by the state's Soviet-style propaganda. Traditional broadcast media are fully controlled by the government and there is no way for alternative thinking on TV and radio. Even during presidential election campaigns opposition candidates have limited access to broadcast media. Usually, the propaganda of the candidate from the ruling party starts even prior to the official approval from the Central Election Commission and all the country's television channels join the campaign. In addition, there are longer provisions for free airtime for all candidates, which would give an opportunity to criticise domestic and foreign policies, or any illegal actions by the government. The opposition has more opportunities to voice criticism on social networks and during rallies, than through mainstream media.

According to the Unified List of Political Prisoners in Azerbaijan there are four arrested journalists. Afgan Mukhtarli, Seymur Hazi, Araz Guliyev and Elchin Ismayilli. Exiled journalist Afgan Mukhtarli, whose wife initially reported him missing from their home in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 29 May, 2017, surfaced the following day in a detention center in Baku, Azerbaijan. On 12 January, 2018, a district court sentenced the journalist to six years in prison. Seymur Hazi arrested on 29 August, 2014, was accused of "aggravated hooliganism." Authorities said that while waiting for a bus on his way to work, Hazi attacked and beat a Baku resident. In January 2015, he was sentenced to five years in jail. His detainment is said to be politically motivated in response to his criticism of the Azerbaijani government.

Since the early 2000s the Azerbaijani press was intended as "a political tool". First of all, the Soviet state of mind is still actual and the government pays attention to both newsmaking and media production, with the main goal to influence the public opinion. Secondly, the press is mainly intended as an instrument of economic development and a means of fostering national identity. It is considered to protect national security and the interests of the state. Representatives of the media also act as defenders of national interests and national security, rather than simply telling the truth about their professional activities.

Since 2013, a government project approved by President Ilham Aliyev's decree, has started granting local journalists with free housing. Apartments were provided for 156 journalists in 2013 and 255 in 2017. The construction of a third building is still taking place, and will house more than 255 media workers when completed. These journalists come from a variety of media outlets: newspapers, radio, TV, Internet sites, freelance journalists. The measure has generated debate in the media community: Journalists in favour of it hail it as a form of wealth redistribution, while others see it as yet another attempt to smother media freedom in the country. Receiving housing from the government questions the objectivity and honesty of journalists. Accepting gifts, journalists risk losing their status and becoming the spokespersons of a certain interest group. This behaviour is in breach of the Code of Professional Ethics of Journalists of Azerbaijan, which clearly states that a journalist should not accept any gift, honorarium, free ticket or any other offer or service.

In Azerbaijan journalism education is based more on theory than practice and the subject is thought more during training sessions and seminars than in universities. To provide some context, it can be noted that up to 2-3 years of the bachelor's degree are devoted to teaching media history. The conditions for the practice of journalism are severely limited. The media departments of some universities feature training centres including television and radio studios, but the content produced there does not circulate outside of faculty, while the departmental newspapers lack real news articles and are comprised mostly of reviews. Overall, students don't get many opportunities out of these departmental outlets. The professors teaching at journalism departments also face financial problems. They must either work at several universities or seek jobs outside the academic environment. As a result, teachers lack the possibility to work on self-development, with negative consequences on their teaching methods and the quality of their lectures. Therefore media managers tend not to offer positions to new graduates of the faculty of journalism, who are somehow considered unskilled.

## Media

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### Print

Azerbaijan and its social environment were affected by the reconstruction of the country after being part of the USSR. The establishment of *Azadliq* (Freedom) newspaper in 1989 is historically considered as the symbol of the nation's revival, as the outlet is considered the first example of independent press. It started publishing on December 24, 1989 and its leader was the well-known journalist Najaf Najafov. *Azadliq* was the voice of the Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan and faced draconian criminal charges which resulted in stopping it from functioning. In September 2016, the newspaper was closed but its website it is still operational, yet blocked in the country, and its Facebook page is also regularly updated. The Gasid Company, which distributed the newspaper, did not pay its debt to the newspaper, which amounted to US\$30,000. Because of the debts, newspaper staff are not allowed into the offices, which are located in the building of the Azerbaijan Publishing House.

*Yeni Məsavat* (New Musavat) was one of the leading opposition newspapers until 2013. It was known for its radical criticism of the current government and its editor-in-chief was repeatedly detained; some of the employees were subjected to pressure and some left the country. The newspaper is no longer the body of any political party and has downplayed its criticism of the government. It has adopted a distinguished stance of loyalty to authority.

*Zerkalo* was one of the most popular Russian-language publications in Azerbaijan and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The printed version ceased its activity mainly because of financial impropriety and the arrest of one of its employees, which negatively affected all operations. The newspaper is still active online.

State-owned *Azerbaijan* is a public journal published by the National Assembly of Azerbaijan, *Khalq Gazeti* is also a state-owned newspaper published by the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan, while *Respublika* is associated to the Cabinet of Ministers. All these newspapers are controlled by the Government.

The independent social and political newspaper *Echo* was founded in January 2001 but closed-down completely in 2018 because of its financial problems and the death of editor-in-chief Rauf Talyshinsky.

The press is no longer the most trusted media and doesn't play a crucial role in society. Online news portals and social

networks have replaced it as main source of information, also because newspapers do not reach outer regions and villages. Their distribution is largely limited to Baku. The only three regional newspapers *Cənub xəbərləri* (The Southern News) in Masalli, *Mingəçevir işıqları* (Mingachevir Lights) and *Region mediası* (Regional Media) in Shekhi, are constantly fighting for survival. One of the causes of this situation is the lack of an advertising market in the regions. Another point is that critics in the regions face more challenges there than in the capital: Local authorities are constantly interfering with the activities of an independent media in the region, as the number of independent media is small, and such journalists are few. Unlike Baku, there are more "favorable conditions" for pressures in the region. Finally, the lack of printing houses in the districts where they are based and the lack of personnel are also hindering the regional press.

Financial support for newspapers and free housing to journalists have been provided through the State Support Fund for the Development of Mass Media that was established by the President of Azerbaijan. While AZN32.4m (EUR17m) were allocated to media from the state budget for 2010-2018, funds allocated for the construction of free housing for journalists from the Reserve Fund of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan have reached AZN67m (EUR35m).

## Radio

"Baku speaks!" were the first words emitted by the loudspeakers installed in the city's streets and squares, when Azerbaijani radio was founded on 6 November, 1926. This influenced the political and cultural life of Azerbaijani people. Radio regulations were approved by the Azerbaijan People Commissars Soviet on 13 May, 1928. Radio Information Office and Baku Television Studio were united and the Radio and Television Broadcasting Committee under Azerbaijan SSR Soviet of Ministers was established in 1957.

In 2005, with the order of the President of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting Closed Joint-Stock Company was established as the basis of the *State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company*. Mainstream news radios are under the strict control of the ruling elite. This holds true for both state-owned and private channels. In December of 2008, other media have come under withering attack. Several years after *Radio Azadlıq*, the Azerbaijani bureau of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (RFE/RL) was raided by the police in December 2014. Subsequently, the radio was stripped of its frequency and its website was blocked by court order in March 2017.

As of 2019, there are 13 radios in Baku. They are mainly divided into state, private, and public domain. These are *Radio Antenn*, *Radio Media FM*, *Azad Azerbaijan*, *Radio Space*, *Avto FM*, *Araz FM*, *Asan Radio*, *Lider Radio*, *Day.az*, *Irado.az*, *Autolife.audio*, *Sharg.airtime.pro*, *Love Radio* and *Kepez Fm*.

All channels mainly broadcast entertainment and educational programmes. *Araz* radio broadcasts programmes in different languages: in Russian every day, in Georgian three times a week and in Kurdish, Talish and Armenian twice a week.

Although there is a department of social and political programmes on Azerbaijani radio, there are actually no talk shows or debates. On the eve of the presidential and parliamentary elections candidates and their authorised representatives are allocated limited airtime only on the public radio.

An unsolved technical issue is that of connecting foreign radio frequencies to the local frequencies in the border regions of Azerbaijan. When additional transmitters are illegally installed in those areas, it has an impact on local channels which are technically hampered from functioning. The regions involved include Ujar, Beylagan, Barda, Imishli, Lankaran and Astara, where there are mainly Iranian channels. Therefore, the solution of the problem must be regulated by intergovernmental agreements.

The FM radio range is constantly monitored by broadcast radio stations of the State Radio Frequency Division. Information

about this is regularly submitted to the Ministry of Transport, Communication and High Technologies and Radio Television Broadcasting and Satellite Communications Production Union (Teleradio PU). When anti-propaganda radio programmes are detected in the country, certain technical measures are taken by Teleradio PU in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Communications and High Technologies.

## Television

When TV was introduced in Azerbaijan in 1956, the country was still part of the USSR. Today there are 47 television channels, out of which 4 are public and 43 private, while 12 are national and 31 regional channels. According to the State Statistical Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic, the penetration rate of cable television was 28.1 percent of households in 2013. About 39 percent of cable television subscribers are based in major cities. The penetration rate of cable television in Baku was 59.1 percent.

TV is the most demanded media and many households have subscribed to satellite TV. State-funded *ITV* is a national public service broadcaster. *ITV* does not ensure pluralism, despite its membership in the EBU, which requires balanced and varied programming for all sectors of the population. *ITV* has been mainly meeting the needs of the government since its formation in 2005. It gives only short and generally one-sided news about actual happenings in the country, including the activities of political parties or public associations, mainly as a propaganda tool of the state. Public TV often gives biased information about individuals and organisations and does not grant them airtime to exercise their right to reply. All Azerbaijan-based channels have ties to the government. Some channels are owned by relatives or partners of government officials. State-owned *AzTV* runs three national channels (*AzTV*, *Medeniyyet TV*, *Idman Azerbaijan*) and there are five privately-owned stations with national reach and pro-governmental views (*Lider*, *Space*, *ATV*, *ARB* and *Khazar TV*). *Real TV* is a nation-wide cable TV also holding pro-governmental views. Turkish, Russian and western TVs are also available through cable.

Although the above-mentioned stations have national coverage, the population does not have access to pluralistic political views through broadcast media. The main reason is a monopoly of the government on television, which leads to full coverage of the activities and views of the authorities, while ignoring the views of opposition leaders.

The TVs of the opposition and those close to exiled politicians go live through satellite and online distribution. Analogue terrestrial TV was phased out in 2016-17. Although the government cannot extensively block their online content, web users and their families can face intimidations and arrest.

## Digital Media

There were 7.8 million Internet users in Azerbaijan by 2017, around 78 percent of the population. Blogs and civic journalism began to spread around the early 2000s and gave a boost to the development of social media marketing in Azerbaijan. Many bloggers at that time began to engage in smaller online marketing activities. Then, gradually, the use of social networks has become widespread along with social media marketing and the increased use of other digital services, in line with the trends of the rest of the world.

News websites and traditional media outlets in Azerbaijan often lose to social networking news in terms of speed, but in many cases, it is revealed that most of the news which rapidly circulate on social networks have no real basis, and blogs that use social networks as the source of news fall into a net of misinformation. Despite the fact that social networks have the opportunity to quickly reach a wider audience, media outlets are safeguarding their credibility. Thus, if any information shared on a social network refers to news by a media agency, then its reliability is higher. Government interference with Internet content is observed by some users, although not all seem affected.

The most known digital media outlets are *Radio Liberty*, also broadcasting on local frequencies until January 2009, *Meydan TV*, currently blocked in Azerbaijan, *Marja.az*, which mostly presents financial and economy news, *Oxu.az*, offering entertainment content which attracts mainly young people and *1news.az*, a pro-governmental outlet which covers all areas of social and political life and presents content also in Russian language, which attracts the Russian-speaking population.

The online newspaper *Bizim Yol*, which provides a variety of news, holds the most popular social media presence in Azerbaijan with 1.8 million followers on its daily updated Facebook page.

## Social Networks

Social media are used as platforms for free expression and activism. Facebook is the leading social network by a wide margin. It is used by a generalised audience both urban and rural, of younger and older people with political and apolitical views; there were more than 3 million registered users in 2017. Instagram is also quite popular with a slightly smaller usage. In this sense, Twitter is the least popular social network and is mainly used by an urban and younger population, especially among politicians and prominent activists.

As the country does not have independent traditional media, everything is discussed on social media, especially Facebook. People use it as an information portal, as a platform of discussion, as a place of planning actions and as a place for promotion of their work and plans. That is virtually the only way society can express itself and the only way the public opinion can be felt. It is not a coincidence that, whatever positive steps the government of Azerbaijan has been forced to make, it was under the pressure of social media (eg Mehman Huseynov's case, where specific minority/discriminated groups have been able to gain greater attention through social media). Social media is becoming a voice for whoever wants to be heard. The perfect example is the LGBT community, which is the most discriminated minority in Azerbaijan. Thanks to the rise of social media it has been able to draw more attention to the problems of LGBT people in the country and gather some momentum against homophobia.

Various organisations in Azerbaijan (government, business, state, etc), have become active users of social networks which in turn, has led to the transition of social networks, especially Facebook, as news production and news mediating entities. Along with an increasing number of users, social media is having a huge impact on the information flow.

It is worthy to note that sometimes overt threats come to independent outlets' digital security. The Facebook pages of *Kanal13* and *Meydan TV*, which, respectively, had 200,000 and 500,000 followers, were hacked in January 2019. *Meydan TV* lost 100,000 users and saw its entire post history deleted in the cyberattack. The episodes marked a new front in the war on media by Azerbaijani authorities.

## Opinion Makers

While mass media in Azerbaijan are technically developed, they face serious problems with content. The absence of independent media directly paralyses the communication flow between media and society. The audience cannot get all the information it needs, as media channels are mainly provided by the state. Even cable television is under full control. Besides satellite antennas, there are no alternative media. Hence the Azerbaijani opinion makers find a tool of self-expression mainly on social media, where they list the problems they see and try to analyse the real situation. Social media allows communication with the audience, collaboration, community creation and feedback. It allows to share information that is not available in the newspapers and Internet resources, including all television channels, and creates resonance in the community.

Following are the profiles of some of the most prominent opinion makers of Azerbaijan:

- Avaz Hasanov is a co-founder and head of the think-tank called Humanitarian Research Public Union (2000) and of the Baku Institute for Conflict Management (2011), working on the issues of conflict transformation, migration and human rights. He is an internationally acknowledged expert on human rights and peacebuilding processes in Azerbaijan and an internationally qualified conflict expert. The most influential experts and politicians in Azerbaijan meet with him and take his views on conflicts. Hasanov has been long engaged in dealing with captives, hostages and missing people. He is the author of numerous speeches in front of local and foreign audiences on the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He is an author of numerous publications, books and documentaries about Nagorno Karabakh conflict. He is active on Facebook and Twitter, with a combined following of almost 3,000 users.
- Alasgar Mammadli is a lawyer who has been working in the field of media and development in Azerbaijan for 12 years. He is one of the few experts specialised in media rights in Azerbaijan and is the author of dozens of books, brochures covering media rights, electoral rights, local self-government, access to information, constitutional law, human rights and freedoms. He has published numerous scientific articles in local and foreign publications and is the presenter of hundreds of trainings for lawyers and journalists. He is active on his personal blog, on Twitter and on Facebook, where he has 2,400 followers.
- Khadija Ismayilova is an Azerbaijani investigative journalist. She is a member of the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. In December 2014, Ismayilova was arrested on charges of incitement to suicide, a charge widely criticised as bogus by human rights organisations. On 1 September, 2015, Ismayilova was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison under charges of embezzlement and tax evasion. On 25 May, 2016, the Azerbaijani Supreme Court ordered Ismayilova released on probation. In December 2017, Ismayilova received the Right Livelihood Award, often referred to as "Alternative Nobel Prize", Stockholm, Sweden, "for her courage and tenacity in exposing corruption at the highest levels of government through outstanding investigative journalism in the name of transparency and accountability." Khadija was not allowed to travel from Azerbaijan to Sweden to receive the award. Ismayilova was the head of the Azerbaijani service of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* from 2008 to 2010, after which she continued working there as a regular staff reporter. Beginning in 2010, a series of her articles dealing with state-level corruption in Azerbaijan caused great controversy as they explicitly named Azerbaijan's current President's family as engaging in corruption. The government never issued a comment with regard to any of these reports. She is very popular on Facebook with 30,000 likes and on Twitter with 18,400 followers.
- İlham Şaban is the Head of the Caspian Barrel Oil Research Center, a non-governmental body collecting information on the Caspian oil and gas, as well as the countries of the Caspian basin. He is the only oil and gas expert in oil-rich Azerbaijan and has 4,400 followers on Facebook.
- Natig Jafarli, executive secretary of the Republican Alternative Party (ReAl) and economist, makes forecasts and proposals on the economy of Azerbaijan, international economic relations, banking system and efficient use of budget funds. He supports the idea of developing the country's economy on the basis of a free/competitive market relationship and a model dominated by private property. He advocates for transparent tax policies, decrease in budget expenditures, support for small- and medium-sized businesses, and the creation of a cheap credit market. He has 27,000 followers on Facebook.

## Sources

Newspapers

- [Yeni Musavat](#)
- [Azadliq](#) (closed, online version only)



- [Zerkalo](#) (closed, online version only )
- [Bizim Yol](#) (closed, online version only)
- [Echo](#) (not operating)
- [Azerbaijan](#)
- [Yeni Azerbaijan](#)
- [Respublika](#)
- [Khalq](#)
- [Khalq cebhesi](#)
- [Kaspi](#)
- [Ses](#)
- [Sherg](#)
- [Adalat](#)
- [Movqe](#)
- [Futbol+](#)
- [Uc noqta](#)
- [Bakinskiy Rabochiy](#)

#### Radio

- [Radio Antenn](#)
- [Radio Media FM](#)
- [Azad Azerbaijan](#)
- [Radio Space](#)
- [Avto FM](#)
- [Araz FM](#)
- [Asan Radio](#)
- [Lider radio](#)

#### Television

- [Az TV](#)
- [ITV](#)
- [Lider](#)
- [Real TV](#)
- [Space](#)
- [ATV](#)
- [Medeniyyet TV](#)
- [Idman Azerbaijan](#)
- [ARB](#)
- [Khazar TV](#)

#### Digital Media

- [Radio Liberty](#)
- [Meydan TV](#)
- [Marja.az](#)

- [Oxu.az](#)
- [1news.az](#)

#### Opinion Makers

- [Avaz Hasanov](#)
- [Khadija Ismayilova](#)
- [Alasgar Mammadli](#)
- [Ilham Shaban](#)
- [Natig Jafarli](#)

## Organisations

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### Trade Unions

The *Jurnalistlərin Həmkarlar Təttifaqı* (Journalists Trade Union of Azerbaijan - JuH?) was established in 1997 and it is a member of international journalism and freedom of expression organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists, the IFEX network and the Federation of Journalists of Turkey. The organisation was registered by the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan on 28 March, 2000 and operates thanks to the efforts of 270 journalists. However, JuH is not very active in defending journalists' rights or promoting professional and independent journalism.

The officially registered Trade Union of the Public Television and Radio Broadcasting Company of Azerbaijan campaigns for the labour and professional interests of its members.

### Journalist Associations

Journalist associations in Azerbaijan can be divided into three groups: Those supporting the government's media policy, associations that have been separated from the media after political and economic persecution, and organisations that operate individually.

Since 2014, independent media outlets have been exhausted as a result of raids, equipment confiscation, freezing accounts and the de facto closure of several NGOs which owned them. Authorities explained these actions citing supposed violations of law, financial mischief, lack of transparency, corruption and money laundering by non-governmental organisations. NGOs that are loyal to the authorities continue their activities by receiving grants from the NGO Board of the President.

Among the most known journalist associations there are the International Eurasia Press Fund, the Democratic Journalists League, the RUH Azerbaijan Journalists Defence Committee and the Yeni Nesil Journalists' Union of Azerbaijan.

Journalists and other communicators may use the premises of the International Press Centre, which acts as meeting venue for press events. It has three halls with different size and setups and hosts press conferences per charge. The centre only hosts activities that are pro-governmental. Independent organisations have approached the centre several times, but have always been rejected with a "no vacancy" excuse.

The *Parlament Jurnalistləri Birliyi* (Parliament Journalists Public Union) has the official mission to implement initiatives aimed

at raising professionalism and increasing patriotism by bringing together independent journalists.

## News Agencies

The history of information agencies in Azerbaijan begins with the foundation of the Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency (AzerTac). Founded by the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1920, AzerTac operated during the Soviet period under various names. The first name was Azerbaijan Telegraph Agency, later it was called Azerinform. After Azerbaijan regained independence, the agency restored its historic name. In 1995 it was called State Telegraph Agency under the Cabinet of Ministers, and in 2000, Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency. As of 2019, in addition to the official state news, AzerTac provides 24-hour information in English and Azerbaijani on socio-political and economic matters, on education, science, culture, health-care, sports, environment, etc.

The independent news agency Turan, one of the leading independent agencies in the former Soviet Union, was founded in 1990 in Baku by a group of journalists. The agency distributes news, analytical articles and reviews of Azerbaijan on topics including politics, economy, energy, finance, communications and photography. Media, government officials, governmental and diplomatic institutions, international organisations, foreign and domestic companies, use the products of Turan. The agency produces content in three languages: Azerbaijani, English and Russian. The agency distributes news online, in real time and in periodic bulletins. In August 2017, tax authorities initiated an investigation of the Turan Information Agency and subsequently detained its director, Mehman Aliyev. Three state institutions provided three very different explanations for his arrest. Amid international pressure, including condemnations from the Council of Europe and the US State Department, the government released Aliyev after three weeks and dropped all charges.

Founded in 1995 as a private media outlet in Azerbaijan, Trend News Agency is a news provider focusing on the South Caucasus, Caspian and Central Asia regions. Analytical reports and feature articles produced by the agency highlight major political, economic and energetic developments and financial articles from the countries of coverage. Trend News Agency operates five news services, in Azerbaijani, English, Russian, Turkish, and Persian. The services produce news from the countries and regions by placing more focus on ongoing events in languages appropriate to the specific audiences. Trend's specialised bulletins cover sectors such as politics, business, oil and gas, transport and logistics, finance and banking in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

Registered on 8 January, 2004 by the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan, the Azeri Press Agency (APA) launched its operations on 16 November, 2004. APA issues newsletters and online bulletins in Azerbaijani, Russian and English. The newsletters cover political, economic, social, cultural and sports events within the country, as well as breaking news about ongoing regional and worldwide developments. APA's subscribers and customers include embassies, consulates, diplomatic missions, international representatives, government agencies, ministries, financial institutions, representatives of international financial institutions in Azerbaijan as well as foreign companies and local and foreign business entities. Most of the subscribers are the leading pro-government and opposition press and independent media. Most non-governmental agencies and organisations of the Azerbaijani diaspora are also among the permanent subscribers. APA has offices in Turkey, Russia, Iran, Georgia and the Great Britain, as well as in all regions of Azerbaijan. APA resumed its activities in June 2019, after its websites had been offline since August 2018 following a misquoted declaration by President Ilham Aliyev.

As a holding, APA also controls the Online News Agency (ONA), which was registered by the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan Republic on 11 February, 2019. The core principles of the agency are accuracy, efficiency, impartiality and its main goal is to objectively cover the key political, economic and other events taking place in the country and worldwide. ONA publishes special bulletins and online news in languages including Azerbaijani, English, Russian, Arabic, French and Armenian. Information blocks include news on Azerbaijan's political, economic, social, cultural and sporting life, as well as

news and articles about events occurring in the region and the world. ONA offers photo and video services, as well as analytical services on economic and political themes. Its offices operate in all regions of Azerbaijan, as well as in the United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, Georgia and Iran.

## Audience measurement organisations

In January 1999 the TV measurement system established by BMRB, known as SIAR daily panel appeared. The Advertising Media Department of AA&M became the first subscriber among Azerbaijan advertising agencies. Since January 2006, SIAR operates its own TV viewing measurement system together with CESP and MARKDATA. In January, 2000 SIAR started to measure radio and press (via daily panels) and in January 2007 it started monitoring OOH. Between 2001 and 2005 only TV monitoring bases and TV viewing data are available.

In January, 2005 the AGB people-metric panel appeared on the market. TV MR AZ AGB, a Nielsen Media Research Official Licensee, began delivering people-meter data in January 2005, based on 150 households in Baku. Today, the panel represents 400 national households, which cover all urban areas in Azerbaijan. AA&M Media Department became one of the first subscribers and the list was extended with Universal Yayim, MPG, AA&M, Banner Group, OMM, Azerbaijan Media Exchange, MaxMedia, VIA-Media and Hepta Group. In March, 2012 AGB started monitoring radio. TV monitoring bases and TV viewing data are available since 2005.

## Sources

### Trade Unions

- [Journalists Trade Union of Azerbaijan](#) (JuHI)

### Journalist Associations

- [Azərbaycan Jurnalistlərinin Birliyi](#) (Azerbaijan Journalists Union)
- [Azərbaycan Mətbuat Şurası](#) (Press Council of Azerbaijan)
- [Beynəlxalq Mətbuat Mərkəzi](#) (International Press Center - BMM)
- [Parlament Jurnalistlərinin Birliyi](#) (Parliament Journalists Public Union)
- [The International Eurasia Press Fund](#) (IEPF)
- [Yeni Nəsil Azərbaycan Jurnalistlərinin Birliyi](#) (New Generation Azerbaijan Journalist Union)

### News Agencies

- [Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency](#) (AzerTac)
- [Azeri Press Agency](#) (APA)
- [Turan](#)
- [Trend News Agency](#)
- [Online News Agency](#) (ONA)

### Audience measurement organisations

- [SIAR](#)
- [AGB](#)

# Policies

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## Media legislation

Mass media laws and regulations in Azerbaijan ensure basic freedom of the press, but independent and pro-opposition media still face some legal limitations while exercising their rights. The censorship of media was officially abolished in 1998. Also, the Mass Media Law that passed in 2000 openly forbids censorship, with the exception of temporary restrictions on the media activities in case of emergency. At the same time, the TV and Radio Broadcasting Law emphasises that broadcasting is free and puts the state as the main responsible in providing this freedom by ensuring that information acquisition and dissemination are possible without obstacles and in a legal way.

According to the Mass Media Law, anyone willing to establish a print publication can do so with no need to obtain permission from the public authorities, but with the obligation to inform the relevant body of the executive authority seven days before starting the publication. Unlike broadcasting media, print media has more favourable conditions, including the provisions to establish an outlet and the subsequent tax regulations. Public and private broadcasting channels are regulated by two laws, namely Public TV and Radio Broadcasting Law and Radio and TV Broadcasting Law. The Public Television and Radio was established in 2005 with the aim to ensure the interests of society and deliver information based on the concepts of freedom of speech and of ideas, as stated by the government.

Registering a newspaper with the Ministry of Justice has easier conditions in contrast to acquiring license for TV and radio broadcasting. According to law, channels that are not state- or public-owned, are supposed to obtain a license to broadcast, provided they win a tender conducted by the National Television and Radio Council, which has very broad evaluative criteria, leaving space for personal judgment.

There were some changes to legislation that affected the capability of media to be diverse and meet the needs of journalists. The freedom of media was influenced negatively especially by the amendments of July 2012 which increased the closure of information on corporate entities. Specifically, the changes limited public access to information about the ownership of commercial entities, including their capital, structure of ownership, etc.

On 14 May, 2013, the Criminal Code was amended. The definition of slander specified in Article 147 of the Code was broadened by adding the following words: “in a mass media outlet or on the Internet information resource when displayed publicly.” Thus, the Internet and social networks were also included in the scope of the article. On 29 November, 2016, a new article was added to the Criminal Code, which determines responsibility for online slander or insult by using fake usernames, profiles or accounts. According to the article, penalties have been toughened to include even imprisonment for up to one year for publicly displayed slander or insult put online by using fake usernames, profiles or accounts.

In February 2017, the parliament adopted the revised bill on Martial Law. The revised law envisages appealing relevant bodies regarding the operation of mass media outlets in special regime, limiting or suspending their operations if there are legal grounds during the martial law. According to the bill, Azerbaijan can apply military censorship on media upon the

declaration of martial law in the country. Military censorship includes pre-coordination of mass media information by military and state authorities, control on correspondences for the purpose of preventing illegal dissemination of state secrets, on TV and radio broadcast as well as phone and radio talks.

In March 2017, Azerbaijan's Law on Dissemination and Protection of Information was amended to provide a legal basis for blocking online resources. The measure also gave the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and High Technologies the power to shut down an Internet outlet without a court order. Two months after the amendments were approved, a Baku court blocked the access from the country of the websites of *Radio Azadliq*, *Azadliq* newspaper, Berlin-based *Meydan TV* and sibling video news channels *Azerbaycan Saati* and *Turan TV*.

## Accountability systems

The Code of Professional Ethics for Journalists of Azerbaijan was adopted during the First Congress of Azerbaijani Journalists on 15 March, 2003. On 1 November, 2018 a revised version from a gender equality perspective was approved by the Azerbaijan Press Council, introducing Principle 4, which was developed within the Council of Europe's Project *Gender equality and media freedom in Azerbaijan*. The Code holds journalists accountable and requires them to correct their mistakes at soonest. While correcting the information, they are supposed to clarify whether the information was inaccurate in whole or in part.

The National Television and Radio Council is the body responsible for ensuring the accountability of the broadcasting sector. Among the duties of the Council are "regulating the activities of television and radio broadcasting, protecting their independence and the public interests, and exercising control over the observance of the legislation on television and radio broadcasting." In practice, accountability has not increased. It is stated in the Mass Media Law that print media ownership must be disclosed publicly. Yet, the transparency of the media's financial resources or reporting policies is not regulated by any law. Moreover, the transparency of meetings, agendas and decisions of the National Television and Radio Council are not regulated. It is worthy to note that there are no mechanisms in place to ensure the prudent control of public funds of the national broadcaster. In 2011, *AzTV*, the official broadcaster, received a fund of AZN35m (US\$44.5m), excluding advertisement fees, but did not report about the usage of the budget.

It is almost impossible to get comprehensive information about the ownership of certain media outlets, especially in the case of private broadcasters. *ANS TV* was the only commercial broadcaster that has disclosed information about its founding ownership. This TV is closed now. Major media outlets do not disclose their financial statements.

## Regulatory authorities

The Press Council is the body of media self-regulation in Azerbaijan. It was established on March 2003 with the purpose to provide public oversight of journalists in their professional activities, observe the requirements of the law and professional principles, strengthen the relationship between public authorities, the public and the press, and create greater opportunities for freedom of speech, opinion and information. The council carries out investigations of the options of pre-trial settlement of the conflicts in the field of activity of media, reception, studying and making decisions on the behaviour of the editorial staff. The main goals of the council are to establish public control on adherence of media members to the rules of the Professional Code of Ethics of Journalists, to strengthen the network, to ensure trust among the public, the state bodies and the mass media, and to provide better conditions for the freedom of expression, thought and information. Its official mission is to investigate complaints and settle conflicts. Yet its basic action is to punish media members and outlets when they infringe the law, specifically by ignoring professional standards or impairing individuals' honour, dignity and business reputation. The use of blacklists and other punitive instruments is evidence of the fall and disorientation of the Press Council, which has lost the

ability to perform its functions of self-regulation, pre-trial institution and consolidating factor. It has lost its inherent essence. Since its establishment in 2003, the pro-governmental Press Council has been headed by Aflatun Amashov, who is also a Member of Parliament.

There is no press ombudsman that may function as a separate institution in Azerbaijan. A provision in the Access to Information Law of 2005 required the establishment of an information commissioner. Yet, the amendments of 2010 to the Constitutional Law on the Human Rights Commissioner passed these duties to the Human Rights Commissioner or ombudsman.

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## Education

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### Universities and schools

Since the 2012-2013 academic year, admission to Journalism faculties in private universities in Azerbaijan has been suspended. In the opinion of the Education Commission attached to the President, the main reasons are the lack of potential personnel and technicalities.

The course is currently active in public universities, namely Azerbaijan University of Languages, Baku Slavic University and Baku State University. Apart from that, there are private schools/organizations where anyone interested in journalism can get

trainings and specific media courses per charge. These include, but not limited to, Baku School of Journalism, Institution of Democratic Initiatives and Internews Azerbaijan.

In 2014, the National Examination Centre and the Press Council reinstated the Soviet tradition of admission exams, which consist solely of a written essay with no required knowledge of international standards, codes of ethics, verification of facts, etc. Furthermore, more than 80 percent of the curriculum in journalism relies on theory and students have very limited opportunities of exposure to practical skills, since 90 percent of professors in journalism faculties in Azerbaijan have very little or no professional experience.

Students in journalism are still exposed to Soviet-era lectures, which is causing justified protests. As a consequence most students are learning journalism practices at external trainings and not in the faculties, where up to 2-3 years of the bachelor curriculum are dedicated to media history.

## **Professional development**

The Azerbaijani media still demonstrates loyalty to the old system of Soviet times. The main reason is that the conditions of the country are not favourable for the development of independent media, mainly due to the lack of market and competition. In such a scenario, it is difficult to obtain a successful career for journalists working in the media. In such unfavourable conditions, there is little room for discussions on development and journalists are also busy with fulfilling orders from specific interest and political groups. These interest groups go as far as nominating personal initiatives and making suggestions to the editorial staff.

Journalism is perhaps the only profession that gets tougher in all aspects: Social and political situation, pressure and persecution of journalists' for professional activities, poor economic situation, and even low social status. Under the best circumstances journalists can aspire to a ministry's press secretariat, while others change their professional orientation and engage in public relations. One reason is that most editors think that media still serve national and state interests and relegate professionalism behind these interests. Therefore, the information presented to the audience is not of public interest as it is not given in a balanced or impartial way.

## **Media Development Organisations**

In Azerbaijan, media development is mainly carried out with the help of international organisations such as IREX, which has been a USAID-funded project partner for the Media Support in Azerbaijan project in 2004-2014. The same project was implemented by the local section of Internews in 2002-2004.

The Azerbaijan Media Centre project was active in Baku in 2008-2012, promoted by the International Media Support organisation. In 2012, IMS was merged with IRFS and operated until 2014.

Internews Azerbaijan, as an organisation, opened its office in Baku in 1997. Until the end of 2004, it acted as a local partner of the US-based Internews Network and was engaged in USAID-funded media projects. Since January 2005, Internews has been building and implementing its own projects funded by various US and European funds as an independent local organisation.



The Azerbaijani Press Council jointly with the OSCE Office in Baku worked on the improvement of the Code of Professional Ethics of Journalists in Azerbaijan and drafted a law on defamation. Their activity was suspended in May 2014, when bank accounts of local and foreign NGOs financed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Danish International Media Support (IMS) and other organisations have been frozen.

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- [Baku Slavic University](#)
- [Baku State University](#) (BSU)

Media development organisations

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- [Institution of Democratic Initiatives](#) (IDI)
- [?nternews Azerbaijan](#)

## Telecommunications

### Mobile network ecosystem

The mobile market of Azerbaijan is rather competitive, with part-state and part-privately owned operators.

Telecommunications Market Azerbaijan exercises strict regulations on market access and limited rules on content.

Azerbaijan's biggest Internet service provider (ISP) is the state-run Delta Telecom, which web users often accuse of holding a monopoly on Internet provision and offering low quality services. Critics say the international gateway provider is slow, costly, and has a track record of censorship. By the end of 2011, around 12 percent of ISPs were connected to newly registered AzerTelecom, which consists of several small enterprises, including DataCELL, Bakcell, Ultel, Azerfon, Baktelekom, and Azerbaijan Telecommunication ISP.

But even that did not help to break Delta Telecom's monopoly, which continues to hold an 88 percent share of the Internet market and thwarts larger capacity and faster speeds while maintaining high subscription rates. The lack of open competition has an adverse effect on the quality of the Internet market in the country and Delta's monopoly status gives a green light to the government to block websites it does not like. Temporary Internet blackouts occur periodically, often due to problems with Delta Telecom's infrastructure. In February 2018, Baktelekom announced its decision to reduce tariffs for its Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) users, a service provided using fiber optic infrastructure that includes speeds of up to 100 Mbit/s. The service is currently only available to 30,000 households.

### Company profiles

Currently there are three major mobile phone operators in Azerbaijan: Azercell, Bakcell and Nar (Brand of Azerfon). They all offer 2G, 3G and 4G services.

Bakcell, the first mobile company, was established in 1995; Azercell, the largest mobile company was established two years later and is largely owned by the Swedish and Finnish firm TeliaSonera; Azerfon, the newest company founded in 2007, operates the brand Nar (meaning pomegranate in Azerbaijani) which was the first to be awarded a 3G license. The company has ties with the Aliyev family (the family of the nation's current President).

Other mobile phone operators include the state-owned Aztelekom, AzEuroTel, Caspian Telecom and Cotel Eurasiacom. As of June 2014, approximately 95 percent of all main lines are digitised and provide excellent quality services for the region. The remaining 5 percent is being modernised.

Other companies offering various telecommunication services are Avirtel Ltd, The branch of the American Telecommunication Company in Azerbaijan, which provides telecommunication services across the region; AzStarNet, one of the leading network operators and the Internet service providers; CATEL offering wireless connection services to WLL telephone subscribers in FH-CDMA standards; Intelcom, offering system integration in the telecommunication area; Nessco, a leading global provider of communication solutions and services to businesses worldwide.

## **Main trends**

Mobile applications in Azerbaijan are widely available and actively used by the population. The trending and leading ones are WhatsApp among young people and adults, both women and men, and Instagram which, according to We Are Social (Digital Profile 2019), is mainly used by men (67 percent) over women (33 percent).

Services such as top-up cards, online banking and e-commerce are widely practiced. Since December 2013 holders of bank cards serviced by the AzeriCard processing centre were able to use SMS notification services not only within national mobile operators (Bakcell, Azercell Telecom and Azerfon), but also outside the country. The service has become available in the networks of 800 mobile operators in 190 countries. Yet individuals tend to make the majority of payments in cash and even some enterprises make transactions outside the banking system.

Although most of the major banks offer mobile banking, it is not yet well-developed from the customer side. One of the reasons is that at this stage, bank customers still don't completely trust the new technology, and prefer to conduct banking operations in a traditional way by going to bank. However, the service is quite safe and securely protected as banks are very careful in ensuring the reliability and security of their services.

## **Mobile coverage**

Mobile operators in Azerbaijan cover 80 percent of the national territory and an estimated 52 percent of the population accesses the Internet through mobile phones. The customer services of telephone companies are modern and reliable, with shops located in big towns and cities. All companies in the country work with GSM technology. Azercell, the leading mobile operator and part of TeliaSonera, started operating on 3G technology in 2011, offering faster data transfer rates and allowing video calls. Azercell also introduced 4G in 2016, initially in Baku and after 2017 in all the regions.

Due to the occupation of Armenian Armed Forces in Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts, the activity of local operators is inaccessible in that territory.

Accessing the Internet via mobile phones is also popular, especially in rural areas, where fixed infrastructure and dial-up services are poor and people are increasingly subscribing to mobile services, though prices for high-speed mobile Internet are still very high.

LTE standard coverage exists mainly in the Baku and Absheron districts. In addition, LTE networks are limited with 1800 MHz, which restricts the coverage in rural areas. Presently, there are 48 provider companies in the country that give 39 telecommunication services. The licenses for connection with 80-90 percent of international gateways are simply monitored by two providers. The level of usage of fixed broadband network is 55 percent, which is higher than the average in the area and is partly linked to an efficient telecommunications infrastructure around Baku. However, the user's average connection speed is low and it stems from the relatively old network based on X-DSL technology. The use of a fixed broadband network differs across the country's regions. While in Baku, 74 percent of households have fixed broadband networks, in the regions this figure is 34 percent.

On 28 December, 2012, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a set of rules on the registration of mobile devices. All mobile phones and other mobile devices must be registered in accordance with the "Complex Action Plan on the prevention of cases on wrongful information about terrorism." All available mobile devices must be entered in a dedicated registration system. Following the Cabinet of Ministers' decision, several indicators are included in the registration system. These indicators comprise of IMEI codes, mobile network numbers, SIM cards and affirmation codes of mobile device type. According to the rules, the registered phones are categorised. A "white page" lists registered devices and a "black page" lists unregistered ones.

## Mobile ownership

According to Statista.com, statistics on the number of mobile cellular subscriptions in Azerbaijan are available between 2000 and 2017. In 2017, the number of mobile subscriptions was 10.13m, with mobile penetration at an amazing 99 percent of the population. In 2019, according to datareportal, the number of mobile subscriptions reached 10.79m which makes 108 percent of population, explained by the ownership of multiple SIM cards by the same users. With ten million people, Azerbaijan is a mid-sized market for its three mobile networks. According to the statistics of 2017, 74 percent of the sample uses mobile Internet. Of these, 50 percent used WiFi to access the Internet, while 18 percent pay for a limited volume of data with their subscription, and a further 17 percent pays per usage.

The cost of services provided by broadband networks decreased by 8.7 times from 2009 to 2012. Since the first telecommunication satellite of Azerbaijan was launched into orbit in 2013, the usage level of high-speed broadband network services has increased more than twice. As a result of these processes, Azerbaijan is on the top ten World Bank ranking for future perspectives. As of 2019, most of the fixed broadband network belongs to few companies. The average speed of a user's access to the international network is 3.6 Mbit/sec, which is below the average global indicator (5.6 Mbit/sec).

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# Innovation

## Landscape analysis

The main targets of innovations are reflected in the development concept “Azerbaijan 2020: A Look into the Future”, approved by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. The High Technologies Park was established under the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies in order to ensure the expansion of innovative and high-tech industries based on modern scientific and technological achievements. Another High Technologies Park was also established in Mingachevir. Tax and customs privileges are applied in these parks.

In order to stimulate innovation activity, a Business Incubation Center has been established in the High-Tech Park of the Ministry, where over 30 startup projects work. The High Technologies Research Center under the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies is working on obtaining various types of new high-tech materials in the field of high technologies, as well as work on priority areas in the field of nanotechnology continues.

To support innovative entrepreneurship, the State Fund for Development of Information Technologies operates under the Ministry. Preferential loans are given to successful commercialised projects and in order to finance more successful projects, the Fund acts as a co-investor. To that end, 117 projects, winners of 6 grant competitions have already been financed.

Several projects were presented in 2019:

- “Knowledge Economy – Azerbaijan’s Innovation Roadmap”
- “Developing an Innovative Knowledge-Based Economy in Azerbaijan - Evaluation and Document Proposals”
- “Effective Investment Conditions for Provision of support for the high-technology sector of Azerbaijan and investment rules for special institutions: building the future of Azerbaijan by investing in high technology sector and ICT”
- “Formation of the future of Azerbaijan: development of National Concepts and innovative structures for development of the digital economy – an Action Plan for the investment of heavy-tech enterprises.”

It should be noted that the road maps of innovations were prepared by experts of the United Nations Development Programme.

## Profiles of main tech parks, accelerators, hackathons

In order to organise and manage the activity of tech parks in Azerbaijan, the High Tech Park, based under the Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies, was launched according to the Presidential decree of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev on 5 November, 2012. The goal was to stimulate the ICT development in the economy and increase the competitiveness of the national technological market; to develop ICT based on modern scientific and technological achievements; to create modern infrastructure for further pursuit of Research & Development and the implementation of new technologies in the country.

Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies is working to expand the activity of technology

parks and create new industrial facilities in the sector of high technologies. A business incubation center has been established under Azerbaijan's High Tech Park to stimulate innovation activities, and more than 30 startups currently operate in the centre.

In addition, the Research Center for High Technologies under the Ministry is currently working on priority areas in nanotechnology. To support innovative entrepreneurship, the State Fund for Development of Information Technologies of the Ministry acts as an investor of successful projects. In this direction, 117 projects were financed following six grant competitions held by the Fund.

Hackathon Azerbaijan is a project that unites the programmers to solve various problems, prepare projects and organise events in Azerbaijan. The main goal of the project is to check the knowledge of local programmers, network administrators and technology lovers, to compete with each other, to gain new and practical knowledge.

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# Traditional forms of communication

## Summary

Traditional mail is still used in Azerbaijan. As a result of rapid technological advancement, postal operators in the country have been provided with the opportunity to develop financial services by using the existing platform of *Azerpocht*. Free access to banking and financial services is provided also in rural areas and in small towns, as well as large-scale services to customers through post offices.

Telephones have been one of the most effective traditional communication channels both in businesses and households. Telephone communication was established in Azerbaijan by the construction of the first telephone line by the Nobel Brothers' Society in 1881. In the following years while the telecommunications sector was developing, telephone communication was established not only in the city centre or in suburban areas, but also in rural areas. The Baku Intercity Telephone Station began to function in 1933. Over the years, several important steps were taken towards the establishment of telephone lines in all the cities and villages of the Republic. In 1992, Aztelekom Production Union was founded on the basis of Telephone Communications Production Union for the purpose of rendering a number of telecommunications services in the whole regions of the Republic.

Concerts, theatres, festivals, sports have increased in popularity with the emergence of online sales, which made attending them easier and accessible for all. *iTicket.az* was launched in 2016 to provide online ticket sales service for a wide range of events. More than 20 ticket sales outlets in Baku are operated by *iTicket.az*. Since 2017, *iTicket.az* is the official ticket provider and supporter of IV Islamic Solidarity Games, Azerbaijan Grand Prix Formula 1 2017 and 2018, European Women' Volleyball Championships 2017, UEFA Champions' League Group Stage, BMX World Cycling Championship in Baku, JARA'18 Music Festival, Azerbaijan Judo Federation and AFFA as well.

Religious communities also play a role in the country's communication. However this form of communication is regulated by law, meaning that a state registration is a necessary condition for any congregation and mass religious activities are under the control of the state.

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## Conclusions

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### Conclusion

The Azerbaijani media environment does not provide the population with sufficient, balanced information about their country. This is mainly due to three factors: First of all there is no specialisation. More precisely, specialisation is only available at a Master's degree level. Taking into account that not all bachelors receive a master's degree and qualify, this becomes problematic. Even the specialised training received tends to be too theoretical. Second, the news presented to the Azerbaijani population are incomplete and one-sided, and the events in the country are presented superficially or in a biased way. There is no event analysis, debate or discussion. Third, it must also be noted that media managers do not deal with market research and with the interests of the audience. There is no competition and media are governed by the administrative system, not the market economy. This means most media managers are focusing on "profitable and productive" activities, rather than "humanity and community." In countries that do not have free market rules, the environment lacks free competition. In such cases, media do not earn money autonomously and get financial resources from officials or oligarchs. When this is case, media focus on protecting the interests of particular interest groups, not of the general public.

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