

## OVERHAUL OF GAS SUPPLY REGULATION

On 8 July 2025, Azerbaijan enacted Law No. 233-VIIQ, *On Gas Supply*, repealing the eponymous 1998 Law No. 513-IQ. Effective 1 January 2026, the new Law introduces sector reforms, including industry unbundling, a revised tariff system, and the creation of an independent regulator.

Starting 1 January 2027, gas transmission, distribution, storage, and sales operations must be run by separate entities, ensuring no single operator manages multiple functions. Until that date, the State Oil Company will maintain control, after which its subsidiaries will assume these roles, including import activities.

According to another Law (No. 234-VIIQD of 8 July 2025) amending the Law, *On Licenses and Permits*, effective 1 January 2026, the permit for processing, building, and operating underground gas storage will be replaced by a gas storage permit.

Eight tariffs will apply in the gas sector: wholesale, transport, storage, distribution, retail, network connections (transport and distribution), and fixed.

Acting through its Energy Regulatory Agency, the Ministry of Energy will serve as regulator until 1 July 2028, collecting ‘regulatory fees’ from operators.

The Law envisions state programs to develop gas supply across three timeframes: short-term (up to five years), medium-term (five to ten years), and long-term (over ten years). All such programs are subject to an applicable environmental assessment.

## MEDIA SUBJECTS

On 14 July 2025, Azerbaijan enacted Law No. 247-VIIQD, revising the Civil Code, Code of Administrative Violations, Law No. 471-VIQ, *On Media*, and Law No. 560-IIQ, *On State Registration of Entities and State Registry*.

Following enactment, the Law requires media names to be unambiguous and not misleading.

Foreign media must register branch and representative offices with the state and apply for inclusion in the Media Registry within seven business days of the enactment. A failure to meet the deadline results in repealing registration, if any, and/or blocking of a website.

New fines apply for print publications not registered with the Media Registry: AZN500–1,000 for journalists and individual media subjects, AZN1,500–2,500 for officers of media subjects (whether individual or entity), and AZN3,000–5,000 for media subject entities.

Information agencies are required to maintain contracts with at least 20 media subject, employ accredited journalists in no fewer than five foreign countries, and, each month, publish at least 20 articles per day over a minimum of 20 days. At least 80 percent of daily content must comply with established rules on sourcing and citation.

A media subject can be removed from the Media Registry if:

- it receives foreign funding (except from founders);

- its founders or directors face criminal liability for grave and especially grave crimes;
- it repeatedly publishes false information after two warnings within a year, except for audiovisual ones; or
- it fails to comply with required online or printed disclosures.

The removal may trigger blocking online access, and, if an entity, be a ground to termination.

#### CASINOS ON MAN-MADE CASPIAN LAND

On 29 July 2025, Law No. 240-VIIQD of 8 July 2025 decriminalized casinos on [artificial land plots in the Caspian](#). Operating a casino requires a license issued and regulated by the State Tourism Agency, costing AZN340,000 and renewed annually at the same rate.

The Law defines a casino as an establishment offering games such as roulette, card games, gaming tables, dice, and similar equipment, as well as slot machines, in which money, material prizes, or other rewards are wagered, and the outcome is determined by chance or uncertainty.

Virtual casino games – including ticket sales and transactions processed by banks or other accounts – are prohibited across all online, mobile, social media, and other digital platforms. Participation in casino games is restricted to individuals aged 21 and over.

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