

VII CONCLUSION

In late June, the media reported about the results of the survey “Profession at the crossroads: journalism at the threshold of the information society”, conducted by the research team of the Center for Media and Media Research of the Faculty of Political Sciences between July 2010 and June 2011. This research was conducted in the scope of the Regional Research Promotion Program in the Western Balkans, with the assistance of the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency. Two hundred and sixty journalists and editors and 51 media owners and directors were interviewed. Group interviews with 30 journalists were conducted in the second phase. The results of the survey show that one quarter of journalists in Serbia believe that the strongest pressure on the media comes from ruling coalition political parties, followed by big business, local self-government officials and owners of private media. More than 11% of respondents believe that advertisers are putting pressure on media, while less than five percent claim media are under pressure from the Government, opposition political parties and PR agencies. Half of the interviewed journalists cited undefined criteria for media aid and state inspections and controls as the most frequent forms of pressure, while 14% of them also mention deliberate obstruction of media content distribution. The findings of the survey have also shown that more than 30% of the media revenues come from advertising, another 30% from own income, while 18% of the revenues are donations. The problems faced by the media in the month of June seem to confirm the findings of the survey. Two editors-in-chief have been dismissed due to political pressure. In the case of the editor-in-chief of the newspaper “Alo!”, Antonije Kovacevic, it is difficult to accept the official version (divergent views as to the further course of development of the newspaper with the publisher, the company “Ringier Axel Springer”) outside of the context of President Tadic’s dissatisfaction with the editorial policy of “Alo!”. The dismissal of Czaba Pressburger, the editor-in-chief of Magyar Szo, is also a blatant example of pressure and the ambition of the Association of Hungarians of Vojvodina to have their activities reported about with “sympathy”. As to pressure coming from big business, the best example is the warning of the Anti-Corruption Council that certain media have imposed a blackout on the privatization of a big media company – Novosti. In Krusevac, local authorities are putting pressure on journalists by tolerating the failure of the courts and prosecutors in that city to thoroughly investigate last year’s attacks on Blic correspondent from Aleksandrovac Gvozden Zdravic and especially to look into the potential involvement of the officials of the Aleksandrovac municipality in these attacks. At the same time, a positive example is the verdict of the Higher Court in Belgrade and the willingness thereof to condemn the instigation of hatred and violence against the LGBT population and the discrimination thereof in the media. Unfortunately, that move is overshadowed by the reluctance of the government to part with the tragically failed public media policy in Serbia. The said reluctance was best observed during the public debate about the Draft Strategy for Development of Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia until 2016. The reluctance and unwillingness of the authorities on all levels

of government to renounce well-oiled and effective mechanisms of media control is unfortunately threatening to hamper the adoption of the Media Strategy or at least to prevent any meaningful changes to take place after its adoption. The Draft Strategy is in danger of suffering the same fate as the long-prepared Recommendations for the Financing of Media this month. The importance of these Recommendations was confirmed by the findings of the aforementioned survey, according to which the media rely for 30% of their revenues on advertising, while almost 20% come from the budget. The Recommendations that were supposed to introduce some order in the manner in which this extremely important source of financing affects the media market, have been revalued to the extent that they have ultimately failed to bring any substantial change at all.