

V THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS

Although more than two months have passed since the start of the trial broadcasting in the DVB T2 standard on March 21, in the scope of the initial network for testing the digital TV signal, the public company “Broadcasting Equipment and Communications” (ETV) is yet to release the results of the measurements and the reports about the operation of the new network. Off the record, we have learned there were no serious operational difficulties. However, the problems could arise with respect to financing, since the funds ETV receives from the budget are less than last year, while the biggest clients face financial difficulties or, as in the case of RTS, still have not paid for broadcasting services. Namely, ETV provides most commercial stations with only collocation services (storage of analog broadcasting equipment in their facilities) while providing analog broadcasting services only to RTS and the commercial national station TV Avala. Avala’s financial woes became obvious during the recent two-month strike of the employees over unpaid salaries and fees. A new strike erupted in early May, with the employees accusing the management of failing to adhere to the deal that had ended the previous strike in February. Meanwhile, RTS has not paid for broadcasting services to ETV or for the use of frequencies to RATEL, although it is obligated to do so under the Broadcasting Law. What is more, RATEL is now trying to “pass on” the debt for the frequencies to ETV. The financial difficulties that might ensue for ETV could seriously undermine the further roll-out of the digitalization process.