

## VII CONCLUSION

The beginning of the year was marked by the release of the Draft Law on Public Information and Media and the start of the public discussion on the Law, as an important stage in the long-awaited media reform in Serbia. It is definitely positive that the Draft Law focuses on the issue of regulating financing of the media from public funds, starting from the fact that, on a weak media market, the state is actually the key player on the media scene with its money. Therefore, the enforcement of rigorous standards of state aid control and regulations for protecting competition in this field is crucial to media reforms. A concern is the fact that many actors on the political and public stage in Serbia are yet to comprehend this, or are perhaps reluctant to do so. An indicator of that is the public hearing on the topic of media freedoms in the Serbian Parliament's Culture and Information Committee, where certain MPs identified the journalists' lack of professionalism as the key problem of the media, instead of unprincipled enforcement of the laws by the executive branch, or the opaque expenditures of public money as a means of influencing the media and tool that actually encourages the unprofessionalism of journalists. The latter is evidenced by the absence of a more energetic reaction to the return of notorious hate speech from the 90s on the public stage, repeated attacks on journalists and civil society representatives, the division to patriots and traitors, Serbs and anti-Serbs, Serb-haters and even a "census" of non-Serbs among the journalist staff of certain media, as arguments for cracking down on political opponents. The fate of the reforms in the media sector in Serbia will depend on both the decisiveness of the government to create conditions in which quality on the media scene will prevail, instead of obedience and servitude, and the swiftness of its response to the calls for discrimination and hate, irrespective of the source of such calls.