

III MONITORING OF THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION OF NEW LAWS

In the period covered by this Report, the Parliament has not adopted any laws particularly relevant for the media sector. The process of media reform has evidently come to a halt. The public debate about the Draft Law on Public Information was concluded on March 22 and in the meantime, no information has emerged about the status of that Draft. First, it is unclear if and to what extent the suggestions, compiled during the public debate, have influenced the Draft Law and whether the Ministry would review and comment on these suggestions. It is also unclear whether the Draft Law has been sent for review to other ministries, or if, and when, the Government of the Republic of Serbia will lay down the Draft Law and table it for public debate. We remind that the Action Plan accompanying the Strategy of the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia by 2016 provides for the obligation to lay down a draft law regulating the field of public information and a draft law regulating the sphere of electronic media, within 18 months after the Strategy comes into effect. The Strategy came into force on September 28, 2011, which means that the said deadlines have been exceeded by far.

1. *Advertising Law*

The Ministry for Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunications has set up a working group for drafting the Draft Advertising Law. The current Advertising Law was adopted in 2005 and has been strongly criticized as rigid and restrictive both for the marketing industry and for the media as the most important conveyors of advertising messages. In the last few years, there were several attempts to amend the Law, to no avail. The new Law is expected to be in harmony with the Directive on Audio-Visual Media Services, the Directive on Misleading and Comparative Advertising and other European documents. The expected innovations are, for example, comparative advertising or product placement. The current Law prohibits comparative advertising, as well as product placement that is considered as implicit advertising. The media have called for changes to this Law on multiple occasions in the previous years and ANEM had some concrete proposals for the line ministry. The good news is that, in view of the relevance of the media's opinions on this Law, the representatives of the media industry have been invited to be part of the working group drafting the Law.