

VI THE PRIVATIZATION PROCESS

The evident standstill in the media reform process threatens the viability of the deadlines for the privatization of public media provided for by the Law on Public Information and Media. The public debate about the draft of that Law ended on March 22 and since then, there has been no information about the further fate of that Draft, whether it has incorporated any recommendations presented at the public debate, or when will the government have any decision about the text, namely when will it be tabled to Parliament. Under the transitional and final provisions of the Draft Law on Public Information and Media, the competitions for 2014 projects must be called no later than by September 15, 2013. Since the Draft Law is not even in procedure before the Government and the summer is nearing, there are legitimate concerns that it will perhaps not be adopted by September 15. This could jeopardize the implementation of the project-based financing model in 2014, as provided for by the Draft Law, as well as to allow the continuation of direct local budget financing of the media next year. The next deadline, provided for by the Draft Law, which could be exceeded, is the deadline for privatization. Serbia does not have any more time for postponing the media reforms, but it seems such postponement is already taking place, which could be fatal for many media, especially at the local level.