

## VII CONCLUSION

A new development for Serbia was the decision by the Ministry of Culture and Information in November to set up a working group from people from outside of the Ministry, to help it evaluate the comments received on the draft media laws during the public debate. In the hitherto practice, the Ministry has dealt with that task on its own, stopping short of explaining the reasons for approving or rejecting certain proposals. It often happened that the draft laws were changed to the extent of becoming unrecognizable, ignoring the requests made during the public debates. The new practice of the Ministry is in line with the announcement of the Minister of Culture and Information Ivan Tasovac, who has criticized the lack of transparency of the process of drafting media laws during his predecessor's term of office. This "novelty" could extend even further the deadlines for adopting the new media laws, but such delay, if beneficial for a wider consensus about the proposed concepts and improved quality of the drafts, could well pay-off. It could also help set certain standards for the work of the Ministry in the future and establish the necessary practice of comprehensive consultations in all phases of the regulatory process. However, fresh attempts by the state, such as the case in Leskovac, to cement its ownership in the media, contrary to the official media policy and the commitments in the Media Strategy, show that it will be difficult to reach the consensus on media amendments and public media policy in Serbia. The best indicator of whether the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Government will manage to counter these attempts (and of what will be the effects of similar efforts to obstruct the reforms) will be the decisiveness of the state in withdrawing from media ownership, both on the level of the Republic and in big cities – withdrawing from the ownership of the Tanjug News Agency and from major regional media such as the Belgrade-based Studio B or the Nis Television.