

VII CONCLUSION

In the observed period, we have witnessed the absence of progress in dealing with systemic problems faced by the media in Serbia. The state has continued to send contradictory messages about all issues of relevance for the functioning of the media sector. This was particularly visible in the debate that ensued after the media reports from the joint meeting of the representatives of the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office, the Belgrade Commercial Court, High Commercial Court and the Ministry of Culture. According to media reports, the participants in the meeting concluded that the amendments to the Public Information Law were inapplicable in practice and that accordingly - but also because of the fact that certain provisions were not in accordance with the Misdemeanors Law - these provisions needed to be adjusted. This information was not only immediately denied, but a press release also said that the Republic Public Prosecutor asked district and municipal prosecutor's offices for information about proceedings initiated under the Law on Public Information, aiming at a more efficient application in practice.

It remains unknown how the district and municipal public prosecutors' offices have reacted to said request, since there are no information about any proceedings launched under the amended provisions of the Law on Public Information. Therefore it is unclear how the joint press release of the Republic Public Prosecutors' Office and the Ministry of Culture could be interpreted other than putting pressure on district and municipal public prosecutors' offices to institute such proceedings.

On the other hand, the impression is that all activities aimed at strategically formulating a new regulatory framework for the operation of the media in Serbia have come to a standstill. This may particularly be observed in the light of the lack of information relevant for the continuation of the implementation of the Digitalization Strategy, as well as for the adoption of the Media Sector Development Strategy. The Digitalization Strategy was otherwise said to be too ambitious, i.e. the deadlines it has laid down for switching to digital broadcasting are unrealistic. Each delay in the implementation of the Strategy will hence be critical. On the other hand, the promises made by the Ministry of Culture immediately after the adoption of the controversial Amendments to the Law on Public Information are yet to materialize.