

## VII CONCLUSION

The scandal into which the situation with the takeover of “Novosti” threatens to grow is in fact a true picture of the Serbian media scene. There is hardly any problem faced by the Serbian media sphere that was not touched upon in public statements of different interested parties who have recently made public announcements in this regard, such as the absence of the vision of the media sector development, privatization – not as a mechanism intended to restrict the influence that executive authorities and centers of political power exert on media houses, but quite the opposite, a mechanism intended to secure it through intermediation of oligarchs trusted by the ones with political power, non-transparent procedures, non-transparent ownership structures, including ultimate invocations of patriotism once everything else fails. Without analyzing what is true and what is not from everything that could be read in media concerning the situation with “Novosti”, it is undisputable that the government, as a shareholder in this media house, did not have a clear vision of development of “Novosti“, just as it does not have a clear vision of development of the overall media scene in Serbia. Media are also often seen as a mere means for exerting influence on public opinion, the control over whom is important for winning or losing elections, and not as a forum allowing the citizens to take part in the broadest social and political debate about the things of public interest the functioning of a democratic society is inconceivable without. The procedures, whether concerning takeover of shares or obtaining a permit to implement concentration – as it was in the case of “Novosti“, or concerning obtaining of broadcasting licenses or local self-government budget funds intended to support media in complying with their legal obligation to create conditions for public information of local importance, are all equally non-transparent, frequently essentially unfair. Media ownership is extremely non-transparent too. The 2009 Amendments to the Law on Public Information, by which a media register was established in Serbia, have not produced any improvement in this regard and the general public is still denied their right to know the identity of the persons who, based on ownership or otherwise, can influence the editorial policy. Such a state of affairs, together with frequent physical attacks on journalists and threats that result in endless court proceedings or decisions on rejection of indictments because the courts’ finding that threats are not serious enough, and the appertaining increase of self-censorship, paint a media landscape in which public consultations leading to adoption of a new media strategy should commence during the coming summer. The level to which such a media strategy responds to the above described problems will actually be the level to which it would be likely to contribute to improvement of the Serbian media sector.