

VII CONCLUSION

August, namely the summer, is a period when the institutions are not expected to work with full capacity and when the attention of the public is reduced due to the holiday season. That is why, in the last couple of years, the authorities in Serbia have taken this opportunity to introduce controversial regulations changes, typically without any public debate. We had the same situation last summer with the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information; earlier, the provisions of the Broadcasting Law governing the election of the members of the RBA Council were amended. Looking from that perspective, the fact that there have been no changes of laws relevant for the media is good news. Another good news is also the fact that the debate about the Media Study, prepared by experts hired by the European Commission and which should represented the basis for drafting the Media Strategy of Serbia, is planned for September, a month when media professionals are expected to take a more active part. Not so good news is the fact that many other things that should be dealt with unrelated to the future media strategy have most probably been postponed for the period after the completion of the debate about the Strategy. At that, the stakeholders have failed to make the difference between issues that are of strategic interests and matters that are of merely practical nature and should not be delayed. By the latter we mean the failure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to finally appoint the members of the Copyright and Related Rights Commission and enable the implementation of the new mechanism for determining the tariffs of the fees for the use of authors' musical works and phonograms in the program of broadcasters. The same may be said for the failure to publish the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia, which has ruled most of the provisions of the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Information to be in disaccord with the Constitution – the publishing of that decision would finally invalidate the controversial piece of legislation for good. The failure to publish that decision has flabbergasted media professionals, in the context of the Culture Minister's statement that such law had its purpose and positive effect on public information. An additional concern is the worsened position of the media and journalists on local level, which may be "credited" to local authorities and functionaries, who have at times neglected their obligations to ensure conditions for public information of local interest, excluding cases of direct funding (and the related influences) or have directly violated media freedoms by making threats, putting pressure or withholding information, which have also been presented in this report.