

VII CONCLUSION

In the last two years, in the course of the passing of the Media Strategy and in the past couple of months in particular – when this document practically became a condition for Serbia to obtain EU candidate status – the political will for changes in the Serbian media sector was, as we have reiterated several times in our previous reports, limited only to the adoption of the Strategy. This has led to a situation where the problems in the implementation of already adopted regulations have been completely neglected. After the Media Strategy was finally adopted, a greater emphasis should be put on the daily challenges faced by the media and journalists in Serbia, such as threats and pressures restricting the free flow of ideas, information and opinions, or the practice of courts in trials against the media, which is still not compliant with the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in the enforcement of Article 10 of the European Convention. Furthermore, greater attention should be paid to the intolerably lenient penal policy in cases of threats and physical assaults reporters are exposed to. These are not, unfortunately, the only problems. We remind that the Parliament has already reviewed the Draft Amendments to the Law on Copyright and Related Rights adopted in December 2009. Furthermore, we are yet to see the closure of tariff disputes regarding the tariffs of the fees most importantly for music rights, which are still being paid by the media under a far less affordable concept established by the old law from 2004. And finally, there is the issue of the poor implementation of the Law on Electronic Communications and the fight against radio piracy. The Strategy was indeed of paramount importance for the media sector in Serbia. The good news is that it has finally been adopted and that the media associations have, after a long and painstaking negotiation process with the government, managed to push through at least part of their demands. However, due to the efforts invested in passing the Strategy, all other activities aimed at improving the status of journalists were left on hold. The media associations now should, while insisting on the implementation of the Strategy, focus on the aforementioned issues. In our next report we will delve in more detail into the role of the Strategy itself regarding these efforts, as well as into a general analysis of the particular concepts it contains.