

VII CONCLUSION

The end of the year 2011 in the Serbian media scene was marked by intensified threats against the media – local media and their reporters in particular – a worsening labor situation of media employees who, due to an opaque ownership structure or the lack of interest of the owners to continue to operate in Serbia’s media sector, are unsure as to who to address in order to collect their salaries and realize their basic rights, even in the case of national TV channels. At the same time, uncorroborated information, such as in the case of the acquisition by a domestic newspaper of the proprietary interest of the VAC Media Group in several Serbian media (allegedly with the financial and political backing of the highest circles of the government) have stirred concern that the government is unwilling to genuinely back down from media ownership or give up influence on the media, which influence would be financed by non-transparent expenditure of public funds. The reluctance of the government to understand media needs was also evidenced by the adoption of the controversial Law on Cinematography. Only a couple of months after the adoption of the Media Strategy, by which the authorities have committed to remove the paradoxes in legislation causing serious disruptions in the functioning of the public information system, the government again proposed – and the Parliament approved – yet another piece of legislation that is in direct contravention of systemic media regulations. Only a few months after the Strategy recognized the duty to establish a regulatory framework guaranteeing independent, transparent, efficient and responsible operation of the independent regulatory body in the field of broadcasting, that same government that recognized such duty and obligation, proposed the adoption of a Law that would undermine the financial foundation of such independence and efficiency. Even in the areas where progress is visible, such as the Strategy and the Rulebook on Digitalization, there are plenty causes for concern. If the potential conflict that could arise between the Ministry of Culture, Media and Information Society and the Regulatory Agency for Electronic Communications, as to who shall be planning the spectrum and under which criteria, is not settled and pacified, it threatens to compromise the digitalization process, which was finally resumed after a long deadlock.