

## V THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS

The recently adopted Strategy for the Transition from Analog to Digital Broadcasting of radio and television program in the Republic of Serbia and the Action Plan that is the integral part of the Strategy, provide for proposing, in the current quarter of 2009, the adoption of the Law on Confirming the Final Act of the Regional Conference on Radio Communications for the Planning of the Digital Terrestrial Broadcasting Service in parts of the regions 1 and 3, in the 174-230 MHz and 470-862 MHz (RRC-06). The Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society, namely the Government of the Republic of Serbia, acting in accordance with the Action Plan, have sent the Draft Law to the Parliament for adoption. Furthermore, the Action Plan provides for the setting up, in the current quarter, of an Internet portal about the digitalization process. The setting up of the Portal is the obligation of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society.

In the meantime, it was announced that, in mid-August, RTS would broadcast live the Brass Festival in Guca in High Resolution. The Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) has been, since the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2005, from Avala and since the 29<sup>th</sup> of November the same year from Fruska Gora, broadcasting a package of TV programs in digital format. This format contains, in addition to two regular RTS channels, a Culture Channel – RTS Digital. This broadcasting is undoubtedly in contravention of the Broadcasting Law, which provides that RTS will broadcast its program only on two networks (RTS1 and RTS2). RTS, on the other hand, claims that, with the said digital broadcasting, it is merely fulfilling its statutory obligation to allow the use and development of modern technical and technological standards in the production and broadcasting of programs, as well as to prepare and realize in due time the plans related to transition to new digital technologies (Article 78, paragraph 1, point 9 of the Broadcasting Law). Of particular concern is the fact that RTS' digital broadcasting is also in contravention of the Digitalization Strategy adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. RTS has been broadcasting its package of programs in digital format in the DVB-T standard, although the Government has, in the Strategy, opted for the DVB-T2 standard, applying at that the MPEG-2 compression standard although the Government has opted for the MPEG-4, version 10 (H.264/AVC).

The above is creating confusion and raising questions in the public about how the transition from analog to digital broadcasting in Serbia will take place at all: whether in accordance with the Government Strategy or in line with the ambitions of the RTS, which are clearly out of synch both with the existing legislation and the adopted Strategy.