

V THE DIGITALIZATION PROCESS

Besides the activities of the Ministry for Telecommunications and Information Society described in the section of this Report dealing with monitoring of state authorities, which are indirectly connected with the digitalization process since they are a kind of introduction into a public debate about the allocation of digital dividend, there were no steps forward with regard to the digitalization process.

VI THE PRIVATIZATION PROCESS

“Vecernje Novosti” reported that “Hemo” Company, owned by Davor Cicic from Kraljevo, was the new owner of “Ibarske novosti”, which until recently was the largest media house, including weekly with the same name, a regional television and a local radio station. The relevant decision was made by the Creditors’ Board upon the evaluation of the proposals submitted under the public call for sale of this media house which, after a failed privatization process, was subjected to bankruptcy procedure in the end of January. It was later announced that the company went bankrupt. “It was nothing spectacular and we have survived. In the meantime, we have started the television and radio programs, and now we have an ambition to revive the magazine that has not been published since August last year”, said Zorica Cerovina-Nikodijevic, Editor in Chief of TV Kraljevo.

After the failed privatization of their company in the end of past year and the transfer of responsibility for the company to Serbian Share Fund, employees of RTV Krajina from Negotin asked the competent authority to help them instigate the bankruptcy procedure. They have decided to take this step because they do not see the way out of the crisis in which they have been almost since the privatization. For two years already, the employees of this media house have not been paid health insurance, or salaries, and they are not sure whether other due contributions have been paid. After three decades, they are no longer broadcasting, since their frequencies have been seized, and they were even left without their work equipment, which is being sold pursuant to a final and enforceable court decision that was made in a lawsuit instigated by eight persons who were formerly or are still employed with the company.

The above examples reflect the general situation where we have both privatized and not-yet privatized local and regional media in Serbia struggling for survival, on a narrow line

between hardly surviving and appealing to the competent authorities, not to help them survive, but to help them go bankrupt. The competent authorities are still not offering any systemic solutions which, in the interest of local communities, would give at least minimum hope for sustainable development of local media in Serbia.