

VII CONCLUSION

Several negative things marked Serbian media scene in June. The “Novosti” scandal escalated and resulted in the German WAZ Company deciding to withdraw from Serbia. The Assembly of the Islamic Community called the Muslims to boycott the “Blic” because of a photomontage of Mufti Muamer Zukorlic, published in the satirical section of this daily, making accusations that the publication of the photomontage symbolized a continuation of the “genocidal policy” against the Muslims, and claiming damages of 100 million Euros. A TV program that was to address the affair that was based on irrational and non-transparent spending of tax payers’ money, was taken off from the public service broadcaster’s program only a few minutes before its recording was to start. A blurred explanation that the elimination of this program was demanded by the RTS legal team, without a single sentence about the position taken by the editorial team in this regard, opened up the question of how capable RTS editors and management are to resist pressure if and when it is exerted on them, particularly in the light of the fact that in the end of the month the RTS Managing Board entrusted to present Director Aleksandr Tijanic another four-year term as the head of this media house by majority vote. The authors of this Report did not address the matter of Tijanic’s reappointment in any detail here, considering that the relevant decision of the Managing Board, with due explanation of the appointment, has not yet been published. The Law on Electronic Communications was adopted and its text opens up the possibility to, by reviewing the listings of journalists’ incoming and outgoing calls, discover their information sources. No positive steps were made with regard to media privatization. On the other hand, the Law on Electronic Communications did introduce some positive novelties, namely it provides reason to believe that the battle against pirate radio and TV stations in Serbia will finally become more effective. Moreover, a year after the commencement of work on drafting the Serbian Media Development Strategy, with the presentation of the Media Study for the development of which the experts engaged by the European Commission were involved, the issue of the strategy finally moved from the deadlock. Regardless of the view one might have about the recommendations of the Study, it is undisputable that with it a public debate was started, and it was the absence of public debate and arbitrary decisions made without consultations with media, media and journalists’ associations, were the key elements of the times when Serbian media scene ended up in this unenviable position it is faced with at the moment.