

## VII CONCLUSION

November too was marked with new cases of physical assaults on journalists. However, the court verdicts in related legal proceedings are still pronounced below the legal minimum. Such overly lenient penal policy in cases where journalists have been attacked are sending a message that the Serbian society is one in which freedom of expression is very poorly valued. At the same time, any further postponement of the adoption of the Media Strategy would show that the state is not ready to assume clear obligations as to the further development of the Serbian media. Reluctance to take clear positions about the transparency of media ownership leads to situations where after more than four years the public was unable to discern who is the owner of one of the most influential Serbia dailies (the case of Milan Beko and Novosti) – we have finally learned that after the owner himself admitted it in a television interview. The apparently surprised government authorities later announced that they would “launch a procedure to determine”. In the same way, the absence of a clear stance concerning the funding of the public broadcasting service has led to the surprising emergence of the Draft Advertising Law. That Law has not only been written almost in secrecy, but it is threatening to compromise the adoption of the Media Strategy and cement the current situation of uneven status of state and private media in Serbia. If the Media Strategy is finally adopted in such an environment, the big question is will it have anything to tackle or will the media professionals once again face a *fait accompli*? It all remains to be seen, probably by late January, or maybe not even then, judging from the multiple delays by the Ministry in adopting the Strategy and the breaking of its own deadlines.