

VII CONCLUSION

It is beyond dispute that the Serbian media scene was marked in the past year by a change of focus and a different perspective on key issues faced by the media. We have entered 2010 with politicians saying the main problem in the sphere to be the absence of or insufficient responsibility towards the general public and the public word. At the start of 2011, the statements are different: politicians are not insisting on muzzling the media; instead, they have recognized the need for systemic changes of the legal and regulatory framework that is expected to regulate the Serbian media scene in line with the highest European standards, as well as with the needs of the Serbian media market and society as a whole. This shift of focus, however, remains merely verbal. This is best illustrated by the postponement of the release of the Draft Media Strategy, which on one hand demonstrates the lack of the state's regulatory capacity and on the other the unwillingness to regulate the media scene according to the proposals of media professionals, uninfluenced by petty political ambitions and needs. The postponement has resulted in an even more complex situation. An increasing number of media cannot keep up with the economic downturn, freefall of the advertising market and the fact that local self-government budgets are typically funding media that remain in state property. If some resources remain after these, they are typically awarded to those who are willing to trade their independence for financial support.

For 2011, there is little optimism; a positive element, however, is the fact that the most relevant media and journalists' associations have recognized their mutual interests and taken a united stance at the round tables discussing the Media Strategy. It seems that it was the first time after several years that they had managed to put quarrels from the past behind them and refused to be imposed a *fait accompli*, without voicing their own arguments for the government to hear.