The Law on Public Information and Media, The Law on Electronic Media and The Law on Public Service Media

General Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed the The Law on Public Information and Media, The Law on Electronic Media and The Law on Public Service Media on 02.08.2014., published in „Official Gazette RS” no. 83/14, entered into force on eight day from the date of publishing in Official Gazette on 13.08.2014.

The Law on Public Information and Media is a framework law, which stipulates mandatory privatization of remaining publicly owned media until 1 July 2015 (except for public service broadcasters). An obligations prescribed for these media is to within following five years maintain the same business. Otherwise, if not sold, the capital of these media shall be privatized by transferring of shares to employees free of charge.

- The Law introduces a Media Register administered by Business Register Agency, aimed at enabling access to the relevant data on publishers
- Novelties introduce due diligence which refers to editors and journalists in the sense that the retrieved information, views and opinions must convey accurately and thoroughly.
and media outlets, and these rules shall be applicable after the expiry of six months from the date of entry into force of this Law, i.e. on 13th February 2015. Changes within publisher of media shall be registered in the Media Register.

- From 1 July 2015, financing of the publishers of the media from public funds is prohibited, allowing the co-financing of media projects of public interest as a permissible form of state aid to media. Also, a transition from direct budget financing of some media to the system of project, competitive co-financing, for all the media registered with the Media Register, legal entities and entrepreneurs who are registered for the production of media content, as well as other legal entities or entrepreneurs.

- Term public media is abandoned, and introduced new term - media. It is defined what the media is not (book, movie, audio support and audio-visual content, scientific and professional journals, web browsers), and determined that the publisher of media may be any natural or legal person. It is stipulated that the media is not a legal entity.

- The right of journalists to publish assertions, opinions and views is now protected, and provided provision that regulates journalistic confidentiality by which journalist have been guaranteed a right not to reveal information relating the source of information.

- The Law for the first time provides protection to victims of domestic violence, also regulates disclosure of private facts and personal records, as well as rules relating the conditions when permitted disclosure of private life information and personal written records.

- The Law stipulates that a political party may not be an owner of a media, or entities for which it is not possible to determine the ownership structure of the

- Public interest in the field of public informing is determined and represents realization of the rights of the public to be informed, and it is achieved through the media.

- Freedom of establishment of journalists’ associations is guaranteed, also the position of the representatives of foreign media correspondents is regulated, and they have the same rights and obligations as local editors, journalists and other associates.

- Principles underlying the freedom of the media are specified, representing a guaranteed freedom of media and the prohibition of censorship, discrimination of journalists, exerting pressure, threats or blackmail of editors, journalists and sources of information.

**The Law on Electronic Media** regulates in accordance with international conventions and standards, organization and operation of Regulatory body for the electronic media, the conditions and manner of audio and audio-visual media services, conditions and procedures for issuing licenses for the providing audio and audio-visual media services, as well as other issues of importance to the field of electronic media. Adoption of this Law was a precondition for the process of digitalization.

- The most important novelty is the transformation of the Republican Broadcasting Agency into the Regulatory body for the electronic media.

- New Regulatory body shall prescribe rules, control the work and impose fines to providers of media services, and about its work shall submit annual reports to the Parliament of Serbia.

- Broadcasting license shall be issued for eight years, but will have the right to withdraw if it finds irregularities. The license may be revoked temporarily for a period of 30 days, and thereafter

- Permanently. Revocation of license is possible also when determined that a media holds a monopoly, i.e breaches the principle of media pluralism.
New technical achievements imply that all EU member states must until 2015 switch from analogue to digital broadcasting, and that in this field providers are perceived as providers of audio-visual media services and not as broadcasters.

The law specifies and guarantees the freedom of reception and retransmission of media services, because of defining and determining kinds of audio-visual media services in accordance with EU regulation.

The Law on Public Service Media governs the operation of public service media, its activities and the principles underlying the performance of activities of public interest, transparency, appointment of organs and their competences, adoption of acts, as well as providing the tools and manners of their funding.

The Law stipulates the existence of two public service, Radio Television of Serbia and Radio Television of Vojvodina, both of which shall be financed from the state budget in current and following year. From 2016 the fee is introduced as a model of financing, which may not exceed 500,000 dinars.

Public service are seen as independent and autonomous legal entity that allows them fulfillment of public interest in field of public informing, and furthermore it is defined that the program content must be such that contributes to proper, unbiased and professional informing of citizens, with full respect of human rights and freedoms.