On February 20, 2015, the Seventh Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Amendments to the Law on Fire Protection (“Official Gazette of the RS” no. 20/2015, hereinafter the “Law”) which came into force on March 4, 2015.

The incentive for enforcement of this Law lies in increase of safety in public facilities in respect of fire protection, which originates from the analysis of the existing normative framework, suggestions and
recommendations by the parents of victims of the fire occurred in Novi Sad, in a club named “Kontrast”, and by the public experts.

The Law revokes the obligation of preparing the recovery plan, but it supplements the content of the Fire protection plan by introducing calculation of maximum number of people for safe evacuation from the facility and it specifies the content of the Rulebook on fire protection measures. It also provides additional content for documents regarding fire protection measures, including planning the safety distance between facilities or their fire separation, along with the possibility of evacuation and saving people. Since Fire protection plan needs to be harmonized with all relevant changes, besides giving consent to the initial Fire protection plan (which is mandatory for subjects classified in the first and second fire risk category), now the Ministry of Interior also gives consent for every amendment to the Fire protection plan.

The obligation of displaying the Evacuation plan and instructions to be followed in the event of fire in a visible place is expanded to all subjects classified in the first, second and third fire risk category.

Crucial change in the Law refers to specially regulated procedure for obtaining consent on technical documentation in respect of fire protection measures for construction, reconstruction and upgrade of objects including installations, equipment and devices, in particular the objects listed in Articles 33 and 34 of the Law. When above mentioned objects are the subject of technical inspection, within the context of the law regulating construction, then the member of the commission for technical inspection, which determines the objects’ suitability for use regarding implementation of fire protection measures stipulated in technical documentation, needs to be licensed and employed in the state administration authority, competent for fire protection operations and authorized for making decisions of determining objects’ suitability for use. Decision is delivered within 15 days from the request made by the investor.

Basic training in the field of fire protection, which is mandatory for all employees, from now on needs to be organized within 30 days (not within a year) from commencement of employment. The basic training program includes general and specific part with characteristics of fire protection system designed for the legal entity in question. Furthermore, it is defined which legal entities and employees can perform basic training and tests on general knowledge. The employer is obliged to organize the test on general knowledge of employees in this area, once in a three year period.

Moreover, the obligation of installment and maintenance of stable fire alarm systems, as well as the maintenance and monitoring of installations and devices, is now fully regulated. Proper configuration of these devices needs to be controlled every six months by authorized legal entity.

Finally, the Law provides the time limit of six months for passing relevant subordinate legislation and harmonizes penalty provisions with the amendments to the Law, while introducing, among other measures, a fine in the range from RSD 300.000,00 to 1.000.000,00 for legal entities that do not adopt amendments to the Fire protection plan, do not adopt the Rulebook on fire protection or do not display the Evacuation plan in a visible place.