[RS] New media legislation adopted in Serbia

IRIS 2014-9:1/28

Slobodan Kremenjak
Živković Samardžić Law Office, Belgrade

On 2 August 2014, three new media acts, namely the Act on Public Information and Media, the Act on Electronic Media, and the Act on Public Service Media were adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and published in the Official Gazette No. 83/2014. The adoption of these acts was one of the main goals set in the Media Strategy, which the Government adopted in September 2011 and follows the stakeholder consultations and public debates that were held in 2013. Superseding a more than a decade old legislation, the new acts are introducing significant changes to the legal framework, which are relevant for the operation of media in Serbia.

Some of the major novelties introduced by the Act on Public Information and Media, which is the general media act, include the mandatory privatization of remaining publicly owned media until 1 July 2015. For the first time in Serbia, the law defines the common interest in the field of media, allowing the co-financing of media projects, which are of common interest, as a permissible form of state aid. A transparent and non-discriminatory procedure for the award of such an aid is prescribed in detail. Finally, the Act aims to improve the transparency of media ownership by introducing a Media Register. At the same time, for the purpose of consolidating the fragmented market, the media concentration regime is liberalised to some extent.

The Act on Electronic Media supercedes the 2002 Act on Broadcasting. For the purpose of a full harmonization with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive 2010/13/EU, its provisions include prohibitions on incitement to hatred, as well as those on accessibility for people with disabilities to audiovisual media services, and on protection of minors. The same applies to the rules on audiovisual commercial communications. Split screen advertising or virtual advertising is regulated along the lines of the interpretative Communication of the EU Commission of 2004 on certain aspects of the provisions on televised advertising in the Directive “Television without frontiers”. The Act changes the name of the former Broadcasting Agency to the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media and broadens its competences to include conductions of market analysis, the regulation of on-demand services, and logical channel numbering. Besides the issuing of reprimands and warnings and the revoking of licenses, the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media now has the power to temporarily prohibit the transmission of certain types of content in cases of serious violations of the law.

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

The Act on Public Service Media is harmonised with the Communication of the EU Commission on the application of state aid rules to public service broadcasting. It recognises a national public service broadcaster (RTS), and a provincial one in the Province of Vojvodina (RTV), provides a precise definition of the public service remit, and entrusts it to both RTS and RTV. The law allows the dual funding of RTS and RTV by the combination of public service broadcasting fees and revenues from commercial activities. However, the collection of public service broadcasting fees is been deferred until 2016. Until then, RTS and RTV will be financed directly from the state budget.

Закон о јавном информисању и медијима

http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/zakoni/2014/2511-14.pdf

Act on Public Information and Media, 2 August 2014

Закон о електронским медијима

http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/zakoni/2014/2512-14.pdf

Act on Electronic Media, 2 August 2014

Закон о јавним медијским сервисима

http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/zakoni/2014/2513-14.pdf

Act on Public Service Media, 2 August 2014

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026