

MONITORING OF THE MEDIA SCENE IN SERBIA

FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2024

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring of the media scene is carried out with the aim of continuous monitoring of events and processes affecting the state of media freedom in the Republic of Serbia. The authors of the monitoring deal with: freedom of expression; monitoring the implementation of existing regulations; adopting of new regulations, also by amending and supplementing the current ones - from the field of media as well as from other areas directly or indirectly affecting the freedom of the media; and also by analyzing SLAPP lawsuits (strategic lawsuits against public participation) directed against journalists and media.

Publicly available data, data obtained from journalists, editors and other media workers, journalist associations and media associations, as well as state and non-state bodies are used for monitoring.

I FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Radio Free Europe (RFE) had an insight into the Report of the European Commission on the progress of Serbia for the year 2024. The report, as reported by RFE, states that Serbia is requested to strengthen the safety and security of the media, and in particular to ensure that high-ranking state officials refrain from labeling and verbally attacking journalists, as well as to monitor promptly, if necessary publicly condemn, investigate or prosecute threats and cases of physical and verbal violence.

[...] cases of verbal attacks, slander campaigns, threats and violence against journalists continued both at the national and local levels, including verbal and physical violence against female journalists. Repeated statements by high officials about the daily and investigative work of journalists threaten the freedom of the media.

The report specifically notes the fact that the murder of journalist Slavko Ćuruvija, after 25 years, remained unpunished.¹

The European Commission called on Serbia to strengthen media pluralism, and to, in accordance with the Media Strategy, implement measures related to the functioning, mandate and independence of both the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media (REM) and public broadcasters.

REM did not adhere to shorter deadlines and did not publish a comprehensive report on the election campaign in a timely manner. The OSCE/ODIHR also found 'bias in the media' during the campaign, particularly with respect to public broadcasters.²

Serbia was also recommended to ensure transparent and fair co-financing of media content that serves the public interest, as well as full transparency in media ownership and advertising.³

At the beginning of September, the president of the European Federation of Journalists, Maja Sever, met with the Minister of Information and Telecommunications in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Dejan Ristić. In a statement to the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), she said that she asked the minister a series of specific questions. She warned him, as she stated, about

¹ [Brisel poziva Srbiju na napredak u pravosuđu, gonjenju ratnih zločinaca i poštovanju medijskih sloboda](#), author: Gjeraqina Tuhina, article published on September 6, 2024 at RSE portal.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

the problem of reducing funds intended for project co-financing, as well as the fact that the impression is being made that the competition commissions are (still) made up of people who distribute money along “party lines”. The president of the European Federation of Journalists focused her attention on the fact that the government has found a way to financially support tabloids (like Informer), as well as on the fact that the system of proceedings against media that violate the law does not actually work. She assessed the issue of safety of journalists as pressing.

The cases she pointed to in this regard were: the attack on the journalist Vuk Cvijić, the escape of the person who admitted to the prosecution that he had threatened Ana Lalić, the attacks and pressures to which the journalist Tamara Skrozza was exposed, as well as the SLAPP lawsuits that showered the research portal KRIK and the Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation. Maja Sever asked the minister not to extradite journalist Andrej Gnjot to Belarus.⁴

In the first half of September, the Platform for Rapid Response to Media Freedom Violations (MFRR) published the Monitoring Report, which documents and analyzes all violations of media freedom recorded on the MFRR platform, for the period from January to June 2024. In Serbia, there were 38 cases of media freedom violations recorded.

The attacks were directed against 51 natural or legal persons. The state of media freedom in Serbia was assessed as alarming. It was stated that verbal abuse constitutes the majority (63.2%) of recorded incidents. Almost one third of media freedom violations (34.2%) happened in the online world. Death threats were reported by the editorial staff of Television N1, journalists Ani Lalić Hegediš and Dinko Gruhonjić (due to their participation in the Rebedu festival in Dubrovnik). The cases of the escape of the person who admitted in the prosecution that he threatened Ana Lalić and the accusations brought against Dinko Gruhonjić by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia Miloš Vučević were also highlighted. The report notes the inappropriate behavior of politicians towards journalists observed in public debates.

Egregious examples are the inappropriate address of the President of Serbia to N1 journalist Gordana Bjeletić and the accusations made by the President of the National Assembly of Serbia against Television N1 that it creates “fake news” and causes “instability in society”. When it comes to physical

⁴ [Maja Sever o razgovoru sa ministrom Dejanom Ristićem: Postavila sam niz konkretnih pitanja u vezi sa medijima i bezbednošću novinara u Srbiji](#), article published on September 13, 2024 at NUNS portal.

attacks, the cases of journalists Vuk Cvijić, Uglješa Bokić and Marko Miletić were noted. Verbal attacks on journalists from Tanjug, Kurir, and Radio 021 were recorded during protest rallies organized in support of Ana Mihaljica, a mother whose three children were temporarily taken from her by the decision of the Social Welfare Center. The report also includes threatening messages received by N1 Television correspondent Ksenija Pavkov due to her coverage of the protest. The physical expulsion of Verica Marinčić from the building of the Municipality of Inđija was not neglected either. The legal harassment includes seven lawsuits filed against the same journalist - Verica Marinčić. The report states that the research portal KRIK is exposed to the largest number of procedures with the characteristics of SLAPP lawsuits, and the cases initiated by Court of Appeal judge Dušanka Đorđević against journalists Bojana Pavlović and Stevan Dojčinović are particularly highlighted.

At the beginning of September, support for Nenad Kulačin, journalist and co-author of the “The Good, the Bad, the Evil” podcast, came from PEN International. In the statement published by the said organization, some of the cases of threats, harassment and pressure that Kulačin and his family members have been subjected to over the years are listed. PEN International called for an end to the continuous harassment of Nenad Kulačin and his colleagues, independent writers and journalists in Serbia. The statement,⁵ among other things, states:

Nenad Kulačin is the co-host of the Dobar, Los, Zao podcast (The Good, the Bad and the Evil), with writer and honorary PEN member Marko Vidojković. Kulačin and Vidojković have been receiving threats for years on account of their work and independent views, with politician Aleksandar Šapić notably threatening to ‘rip out [their] hearts’. Already in October 2021, Kulačin’s mother was verbally attacked by an unknown individual who told her that her ‘son should be hanged’. Kulačin’s home address was disclosed in November 2022, also by unknown individuals. The journalist told PEN International he reported ten threats to the Prosecutor’s Office in 2023 alone. Only one investigation has been opened to date, and subsequently dismissed.

As documented by PEN International, the situation for freedom of expression in Serbia is at breaking point. Public officials routinely harass and smear outspoken journalists in public fora, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and impunity for verbal and physical

⁵ [Serbia: Mounting threats against journalist Nenad Kulačin condemned](#), article published on September 6, 2024 at Pen International portal.

*attacks. Distrust in the police and the justice system prevails, with inefficient investigations into cases of threats and attacks. Many writers feel they have no choice but to self-censor. PEN International calls for an end to the continued harassment and targeting of Nenad Kulačin and fellow independent writers and journalists in Serbia, and for all those responsible to be brought to account.*⁶

During September, the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office filed a request for the protection of legality against the legally binding verdict passed in the case of the murder of Slavko Ćuruvija.

Threats and pressures

Campaign against the investigative portal KRIK

At the beginning of September, a media campaign against the KRIK investigative portal was launched. On the Republika.rs portal and in the daily newspaper Srpski telegraf, the work of KRIK portal journalists was marked as a “special operation” that “attacks the families of state officials”. Investigative journalists have been accused of “grossly abusing social security numbers” by “publicly sharing” them. Newspaper articles and front pages were accompanied by photos of Stevan Dojčinović, editor-in-chief of KRIK media. In a statement for the daily newspaper Danas, in response to the tabloid's accusations, Dojčinović expressed his judgment about the goal with which the campaign is being conducted. The idea is to portray “classic journalistic work” as a “subversive activity”, and to force investigative journalists to stop dealing with the assets of officials.⁷

It is not the first time that tabloids in Serbia have campaigned against KRIK journalists.⁸ Stevan Dojčinović sued the founder of media Republika.rs and Serbian Telegraph three times. Twice because of a campaign in which he was associated with the Veljko Belivuk criminal clan, and once because of accusations that journalists from the KRIK portal physically followed the unmarried wife and baby of Sinisa Mali's brother, the Minister of Finance in the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Due to the same campaign, KRIK journalist Dragana Pećo also filed a lawsuit.⁹ One court case was concluded in

⁶ [Podrška Međunarodnog PEN-a Nenadu Kulačinu](#), article published on September 6, 2024 at Javni servis portal.

⁷ [Stevan Dojčinović: Napadi režimskih tabloida imaju za cilj da uguše novinarstvo, a da korumpirana vlast neometano uživa u novcu koji je pokrala](#), author: A. Latas, article published on October 2, 2024 at Danas daily portal.

⁸ [Dojčinović na suđenju „Srpskom telegrafu“: Tabloidi pokušavaju da učtkaju svakoga ko govori o vezama Belivuka i vlasti](#), author: Jelena Radivojević, article published on January 26, 2023 at KRIK portal.

⁹ [Tajna "japanskog praćenja": Zbog čega nas gaze vlast i tabloidi](#), author: Stevan Dojčinović, article published on July 27, 2019 at KRIK

KRIK editor's favor, while the other two cases are still ongoing. The procedure initiated by Dragana Pećo was concluded in her favor.

Campaigns against the KRIK portal were condemned by domestic and foreign journalist and media associations, civil society organizations, representatives of embassies and the European Union.

Pištaljka's journalist prevented to attend the opening of bids for the purchase of the largest state shipping company - Yugoslav River Shipping (JRB)

According to the Pištaljka portal, the Ministry of Economy offered the state enterprise at a price of 21.9 million euros. This amount is seven million euros less than the amount that JRB earned from just one deal obtained immediately before the sale was announced. The opening of bids took place in the Ministry's premises. The Pištaljka portal, one of the media outlets that continuously reported on the privatization of JRB, duly announced its arrival at the bid opening. The Ministry found the basis for denying the presence in the Regulation on the conditions, procedure and method of selling capital and property by the method of public collection of bids with public bidding, which does not prohibit the presence of journalists.¹⁰

Threats to Jelena S. Spasić, Kurir journalist

At the end of September, journalist Jelena Spasić and the Kurir editorial office filed criminal charges because of disturbing and threatening messages that the journalist received on the Instagram accounts "dusanrajic" and "diabetesrevolution". The journalist's photos were also published on those accounts.

Jelena Spasić wrote a series of articles in which she dealt with the problems faced by children and people suffering from diabetes, while the media she works for, Kurir, also published articles in which they dealt with the questionable actions of the Rajić brothers and their association Diabetes revolution. The Special prosecutor's office for high-tech crime requested the police to investigate the threats. Dušan Rajić and Saša Mirović were identified within a month, on the basis of information

portal.

¹⁰ [Novinarke Pištaljke zabranjeno da prisustvuju otvaranju ponuda za kupovinu JRB-a](#), author: Snežana Đurić, article published on September 5, 2024 at Pištaljka portal.

received from the authorities from Meta. Those persons were deprived of their liberty and detained for 48 hours.¹¹

The Association of Journalists of Serbia reacted to the threats, demanding in its statement that the targeting of the journalist be stopped.¹²

Threats sent to the Tanjug news agency

At the end of September, the Tanjug news agency received an email with the following content:

*We see that lately your propagandistic, chauvinistic and warmongering machinery called 'Tanjug' has become more and more aggressive, using the chauvinistic name 'AP KiM' for the Republic of Kosovo, in the service of dictator and warmonger Aleksandar Vučić. Just so you know that we follow the lies you spread every day about the state of Kosovo and the Albanians, just as we follow the movements of every journalist of your pseudo-media agency in Kosovo. Rest assured that one of them will get a bullet in the back of the head the next time they set foot on the soil of the Republic of Kosovo. We follow everything.*¹³

Through the mechanism of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, the Association of Journalists of Serbia contacted the competent prosecutor's office, after which the public was informed that the High-Tech Crime Service of the Ministry of Interior had been sent a request to collect the necessary information.¹⁴ It was found that the IP address “belongs to the range used by Internet service providers in Kosovo and Metohija”. UNS, its branch in Kosovo, the Union of Journalists of Serbia (SINOS) and NUNS condemned the death threats addressed to Tanjug.¹⁵

¹¹ [Uhapšen Dušan Rajić zbog pretnji novinarki Kurira Jelene S. Spasić: Policija privela i Sašu Mirovića zbog ugrožavanja njene sigurnosti](#), article published on October 30, 2024 at UNS portal.

¹² [UNS: Da prestane targetiranje Jelene S. Spasić](#), article published on September 24, 2024 at UNS portal.

¹³ [Pretnje Tanjugu: Vaši novinari će dobiti metak u potiljak kada kroče na Kosovo](#), article published on September 30, 2024 at Tanjug portal.

¹⁴ [Pretnja ubistvom novinara agencije Tanjug stigla sa Kosova](#), author: Dragana Bejljica, article published on October 3, 2024 at UNS portal.

¹⁵ [NUNS: Neprihvatljive pretnje redakciji Tanjuga](#), article published on October 1, 2024 at NUNS portal.

The case of Andrei Gnyot, a Belarusian journalist, director and political activist

In the first half of September, the Appellate Court in Belgrade accepted the appeals filed by Gnyot and his lawyer against the decision of the High Court in Belgrade. In this way, the decision to extradite the Belarusian journalist, director and political activist was revoked.

According to the opinion of the Appellate Court, the first-instance court made a decision on the basis of an incompletely established factual situation, which resulted in a significant violation of the provisions of the criminal procedure. The violation occurred, it is stated in the explanation of the Court of Appeal, because the reasons for the facts that are the subject of proof were not stated in the explanation of the first-instance decision, and the stated reasons are completely unclear, at the same time mutually contradictory, which made it impossible to examine the legality and regularity of the first-instance decision. .

Although the extradition decision was revoked, Andrei Gnyot addressed the media and announced a visit to representatives of domestic institutions:

As you know, although the Court of Appeal annulled the decision on my extradition to the Lukashenko regime, I remain a prisoner here without the right to leave my rented apartment for more than one hour.

During the next week, I plan to use the short permitted walk to officially deliver an open address to the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, and also to the Prime Minister of Serbia, Miloš Vučević, as well as to the Minister of Justice, Maja Popović, and the Minister of Culture, Nikola Selaković, to over 780 world and Serbian creators, artists and intellectuals who are asking for my release.¹⁶

More about the case of Andrei Gnyot can be read in several monitoring reports: for [June](#), [July](#) and [August](#) 2024.

At the time of writing this monitoring report, Andrei Gnyot left Serbia. His lawyer, Filip Sofijanić, confirmed for Radio Free Europe that after the expiration of the legal term of one year, the High Court in Belgrade, on October 31, terminated Andrei Gnyot's detention.¹⁷

¹⁶ [Andrej Gnjot najavio da će se obratiti srpskim institucijama, prva adresa - Predsedništvo](#), article published on September 19, 2024 at Insajder portal.

¹⁷ [Beloruski aktivista Andrej Gnjot napustio Srbiju nakon ukidanja pritvora](#), article published on October 31, 2024 at RSE portal.

The response of the public prosecutor of the Higher Prosecutor's Office in Vranje regarding the missing files in the case of OK Radio

You can find more about the disappearance of the case in which Dejan Nikolić Kantar was sentenced to one year and six months in prison in the first instance due to the threats made to the owner of OK Radio, Olivera Vladković, and the employee of that radio, Svetlana Ivanov, in the Monitoring of the media scene in Serbia for [July 2023](#) and for [August 2024](#).

Regarding the complaint that he sent to the acting public prosecutor in the case of missing case files, member of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists Veran Matić received an answer from the chief public prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Vranje, Danijela Trajković. The response listed the actions ordered by the prosecution, as well as the actions implemented by the police department. It is concluded that those actions did not produce the desired result – the perpetrator was not discovered and sanctioned. For this reason, the chief public prosecutor, by virtue of the right of supervision, ordered more efficient action by the prosecution.

Escape of a person with a electronic surveillance device (case of Ana Lalić)

The case of the escape of a citizen of France and Serbia who admitted to the prosecution that he sent threatening messages to Ana Lalić Hegediš in March 2024 - was covered in the [Monitoring of the media scene in Serbia for July 2024](#). The prosecution established communication with the institutions of the Republic of France, however, there were no results. A member of the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, Veran Matić, wrote to the French ambassador, asking him whether the person on the run, according to the knowledge of the services of that country, had returned to Paris. In response, the ambassador informed Matić that the case was being worked on, and that the response had been forwarded to the prosecution. Officials of the competent authority of France visited the place of residence of the person on the run, but he was not found. Meanwhile, that person bought a car in France. According to the information received by the Permanent Working Group for the Safety of Journalists, due to formal reasons, a warrant has not yet been issued for him.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE KILLING OF A JOURNALIST FROM KOSOVO

Disappearance of Marjan Melonaši, Radio Kosova Serbian newsroom journalist, on September 9, 2000 in Pristina

When he disappeared, Marjan Melonaši was 24 years old. He disappeared 24 years ago. At two o'clock in the afternoon, on September 9, 2000, he finished his half-hour broadcast on the Serbian desk of Radio Kosova. He left the studio in the center of Pristina and got into an orange taxi. That's the last thing known about his whereabouts.¹⁸

Marjan was previously employed by the Swiss organization "Media Action International". Shortly before his arrival, Aleksandar Simović Sima worked in that organization, a journalist whose name will be on the list of missing persons for two years, and then it will be known that he was killed.¹⁹

The disappearance of Marjan Melonaši was immediately reported to UNMIK, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Red Cross of Yugoslavia and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia. UNMIK opened the investigation after five years. No one was questioned in connection with the journalist's disappearance.²⁰

The murder of Šefki Popova, a Rilindja journalist, on September 10, 2000 in Vučitrn

Journalist Šefki Popova was killed in Vučitrn, on the threshold of his apartment, on September 10, 2000. The killer entered the building where Popova lived with a book in which he hid a gun. He was waiting for the journalist to return home. Witnesses saw two men running away. Popova died immediately after being transferred to a nearby hospital. The family of Šefki Popova believes that he was killed because he was an "authority of the pen".²¹

The murder of Popova took place after the attempted murder of Serbian journalist Valentina Čukić, the editor of the Serbian-language program at Radio Kontakt in Pristina, in June 2000. The Bota Sot

¹⁸ [Kobni ulazak u taksij](#), author: D. Ranojić, article published on February 23, 2011 at Vesti online portal.

¹⁹ [Zločini nad novinarima bez kazne, sloboda govora na meti](#), author: Jelena L. Petković, article published on December 27, 2022 at Bezbedni novinari portal.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ [Istraživanje UNS-a o ubijenim i oteetim novinarima na Kosovu :: Ubistvo Šefki Popove: Gde su dokazi iz istrage?](#), author: Jelena L. Petković, article published on December 18, 2017 at UNS portal.

journalist Bardulj Ayeti wrote several articles about the murder of Popova. He was killed in 2005.²²

Murder of Krist Gegaj, editor of RTV Pristina, on September 12, 1999 in Istok

Krist Gegaj was one of the two commentators and editor of the program in the Albanian language at RTV Pristina. He edited Dnevnik and news on radio and television. Krist Gegaj disappeared on September 12, 1999. That day, around 7 in the morning, he took the cattle out about 200 meters from the house. Family and friends searched for him for hours. Around 10 p.m., he was reported missing at the nearest KFOR checkpoint. The soldiers told them to go to the KFOR base in the East. The next day, September 13, Gegaj's body was found in a nearby river, two kilometers from his house. Gegaj was shot - in his head and heart.²³

The murder of photojournalist Momir Stokuća on September 21, 1999 in Pristina

During the night of September 21, 1999, the UNMIK police received a call informing them that something dangerous was happening in the family home of photojournalist Momir Stokuća (Peyton settlement, center of Pristina). When officers arrived, the side entrance door was open. Momir's lifeless body lay on the bedroom floor. Stokuća was 50 years old. He was a long-term contributor to the daily newspaper Politika and a photographer for the weekly magazine Vreme. A police investigation into his murder never took place. Neither the police officers nor the prosecutor invited Stokuća's family for an interview. There was no information about the murder in the documentation of EULEX and the Special Prosecutor's Office of Kosovo, nor in the documentation of the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor's Office.²⁴

²² Ibid.

²³ [UNS otkrio još jedno ubistvo novinara na Kosovu, Krist Gegaj usmrćen septembra 1999. godine](#), article published on August 3, 2017 at UNS portal.

²⁴ [Zločini nad novinarima bez kazne, sloboda govora na meti](#), author: Jelena L. Petković, article published on December 27, 2022 at Bezbudni novinari portal.

II MONITORING OF THE PROCESS OF ADOPTION OF NEW LAWS

In the second half of September, the first meeting of the Working Group for the preparation of the working version of the Draft Law on Public Media Services was held. The working group consists of 14 members representing the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, public media services, journalistic and media associations. The task of the Working Group is to submit the text of the working version of the Draft Law on Public Media Services to the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications no later than November 1.²⁵

At the end of September, the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Trade announced that the public debate on the Draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Advertising will be held within the minimum legal term of 20 days, in the period from September 30 to October 20, 2024. Although the expert public requested an extension of the public hearing,²⁶ that extension did not happen.²⁷

During September, the Ministry of Justice announced a public debate on the Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, for the period from October 1 to November 1, 2024. The draft laws caused stormy reactions from the professional public, which will be discussed more in the next monitoring.

III IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING LAWS

Project co-financing

For the co-financing of projects for the production of media content in the field of public information, there were no registered media in the competition of the Municipality of Rekovac. The allocated funds amounted to 200,000 dinars. According to the owner and editor of Radio Levač, Mile Vlaisavljević, the media did not apply for the competition because it was estimated that the development of the project, the obtaining of documentation and the invested time needed to

²⁵ [Formirana Radna grupa za izradu radne verzije Nacrta zakona o javnim medijskim servisima](#), author: A.N, article published on September 18, 2024 at UNS portal.

²⁶ [Koalicija za slobodu medija: Ministarstvo da produži javnu raspravu o Zakonu o oglašavanju](#), article published on October 3, 2024 at Nova ekonomija portal.

²⁷ [Javne rasprave](#)

prepare the application would exceed the amount of funds allocated.²⁸

In the competition for co-financing of media content, the Medijakult cooperative from Novi Sad was awarded 4,950,000 dinars, although, contrary to Article 23 of the Law on Public Information and Media,²⁹ they will engage other persons for the realization of the project, given that the applicant of the project does not have personnel or equipment. Another controversy that follows the allocation of funds to the Medijakult cooperative concerns the evaluation procedure in the category of accessibility of media content to the target group. The maximum number of points that can be awarded is 10. Despite this, the Medijakult cooperative received 15 points both from Branko Sančanin and Biljana Ratković Njegovan, while Miodrag Miljković awarded them 20 points.³⁰

In the answer to the UNS, the Provincial Secretariat stated that, in the category of accessibility of media content to the target group, all members of the commission gave more points than the maximum to the Medijakult cooperative. Except in that case, during the evaluation of the project of the Macedonian Association of Journalists MAK-INFO, the number of points awarded by Biljana Ratković Njegovan exceeded the maximum. The Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information and Relations with Religious Communities announced the adoption of an appropriate solution.³¹

According to the information published by the Association of Journalists of Serbia, eight municipalities (Kovačica, Opovo, Inđija, Bač, Kovin, Plandište, Alibunar and Rekovac) allocated significantly less money from the budget than the previous year.³²

²⁸ [Rekovac: Bez prijavljenih na medijskom konkursu](#), article published on September 21, 2024 at Glas Šumadije portal.

²⁹ Article 23 para. 8 of the Law on Public Information and Media stipulates that a tender participant who does not have the appropriate capacities can hire another person for the production of media content whose value does not exceed 20% of the amount of funds allocated by the authority for the realization of the project, provided that this person is registered in the Record of Media Producers content.

³⁰ [Medijska komisija „Medijakultu“ za dostupnost sadržaja ciljnoj grupi dala veći broj poena od maksimalnih 10](#), author: A. Ničić, article published on September 19, 2024 at UNS portal.

³¹ [Pokrajinski sekretarijat nakon pisanja UNS-a: Članovi komisije utvrdili da su projektima greškom dodelili veći broj poena od maksimalnog](#), author: A. Ničić, article published on October 14, 2024 at UNS portal.

³² [Još osam opština izdvojilo značajno manje novca za medijske projekte nego lane](#), author: A. M, article published on September 5, 2024 at UNS portal.

IV SLAPP LAWSUITS DIRECTED AGAINST JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA

The first (first-instance) verdict in the civil proceedings against Verica Marinčić, the chief and responsible editor of the IN Medija portal

At the beginning of October, the High Court in Belgrade issued a verdict obliging Verica Marinčić, the editor-in-chief of the IN Medija portal, to pay (the plaintiff) 100,000.00 dinars in the name of compensation for non-material damage due to the fact that she published a photo of underage karate fighters, as part of the text about the packages that were handed to them at the reception by the President of the Municipality of Inđija, which contained jars of honey “Fruškogorski Skočko - joy in home”, which is also advertised as an aphrodisiac.³³

In a statement for the Raskrikavanje portal, Verica Marinčić said that she expects the same outcome in other verdicts. A legally binding verdict in which it will be decided that she must pay such an amount - will represent, according to her words, “the last nail in the coffin in which they pushed us”, IN Media does not have that much money.³⁴

More about the legal proceedings initiated against Verica Marinčić by the parents of minor athletes in the [Monitoring of the media scene in Serbia for June 2024](#).

Legally rejected private criminal lawsuit filed by Nikola Petrović, the President of the Republic of Serbia best man and former director of the public company “Elektromreže Srbije” against BIRN editor Milorad Ivanović and journalist Jelena Veljković, due to the alleged unauthorized collection of personal data

The editorial office of BIRN was handed a decision rejecting the private criminal lawsuit filed by Nikola Petrović against the BIRN editor and journalist. The court reasons that the provision of the private lawsuit does not state the objective features of the criminal offense - that the defendants “gathered information about citizens against the law or that, contrary to the law, they used the collected data, which represents the act of committing the criminal offense for which the defendant is charged”. The lawsuit did not even state that the defendants acted with intent, but only that they *wanted* to carry

³³ [Prva presuda u slučaju „Skočko“: „Ovo će biti poslednji klin u našem kovčegu“](#), author: Marija Vučić, article published on October 2, 2024 at Raskrikavanje portal.

³⁴ Ibid.

out the actions they are accused of. Due to the aforementioned shortcomings, the court's opinion is that the subject of the accusation does not constitute a criminal offense.³⁵ Petrović did not appeal against the decision, so it became legally binding.

This is not the only case that Petrović conducted against journalists for the criminal offense of Unauthorized collection of personal data. Two journalists of the KRIK portal were legally acquitted of the charge of unauthorized collection of personal data. In the second case that Petrović leads against the journalists of the KRIK portal, a first-instance verdict of acquittal was brought. Petrović appealed against the verdict. The second-instance procedure has not been completed.³⁶

This publication is produced with the assistance of the European Union and the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications of Serbia. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of Association of the Independent Electronic Media and may in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union and the Ministry of Information and Telecommunication.

³⁵ [Pravosnažna odluka: Odbijena tužba Nikole Petrovića protiv BIRN-a](#), article published on September 4, 2024 at BIRN portal.

³⁶ [Novinarke KRIK-a oslobođene po tužbi Nikole Petrovića](#), author: Jelena Radivojević, article published on January 24, 2024 at KRIK portal.