

## **Opinion on the Draft Strategy for Consumer Protection in the Republic of Serbia**

The Commission for Protection of Competition reviewed the Draft Strategy for Consumer Protection with the customary due diligence, submitted on April 15, 2013 on the part of the Ministry of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunications, both owing to the fact on the existence of joint interests in relation to the protection of consumer well-being, and also due to the need to establish a cooperation toward strengthening the role that consumers should have in the segment of development and consolidation of market competition as well. From the perspective of the Law on Protection of Competition, whose objective is to achieve the well-being of consumers, facilitating conditions for the establishment and protection of effective market competition consequently creates the possibility for consumers to opt or select products that will satisfy their needs, foremost relating to the quality, price and adequate supply. However, the Commission pointed that is necessary to note and accept the currently prevailing essential differences between the Law on Protection of Competition and the Law on Consumer Protection pertaining to the very “objective of protection”, as well as to the violations of law and specificities of proceedings implemented on the part of relevant authorities. There are no doubts that between the competition policy and consumer protection policy exist an interaction, but as per assessment of the Commission presented in its opinion, conditions for unification of these areas in terms of solutions proposed in the Draft Strategy are still lacking. Namely, efficient implementation of the Law on Protection of Competition is a competence that involves numerous activities implemented on the part of the Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Protection of Competition. The increase in its obligations at this moment would jeopardize and potentially cause adverse effects reflecting on the quality of its overall acting. However, it is highlighted that such position should not be understood as a refusal of the Commission to cooperate in this area with all relevant institutions, foremost with the said Ministry, but is also underlined that it should be noted that only consistent implementation of competition policy can contribute to the development of consumer protection policy.