

# LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In terms of the areas covered by the section of the White Book dealing with the legal framework in general, there hasn't been much legislative progress in the recent period. However, it's important to mention that, when speaking generally about legislative developments, significant new laws have been enacted, which delve more deeply into other areas covered by the White Book. Primarily, this includes a set of regulations in the field of labour – the Law on Occupational Health and Safety has been amended to introduce new (more contemporary) concepts related to workplace safety. Furthermore, amendments to the Law on Foreigners and the Law on Employment of Foreigners have streamlined the government apparatus by implementing an electronic procedure for foreigner registration. It's worth noting a package of important laws related to real estate (such as amendments to the Planning and Construction Act, which have abolished conversions with fees and introduced a batch of new requirements related to the green agenda).

When it comes to novelties, it's necessary to mention the introduction of electronic company registration with the Business Registers Agency, which represents a positive step and simplifies this process for new investors. Additionally, this registration process allows the simultaneous electronic registration of the ultimate beneficial owner, further improving the efficiency of this procedure (and, in general, expediting the arrival of new companies in the Serbian market).

Notwithstanding the mentioned changes, there is a need for new laws to be introduced in various additional areas, as it is primarily the case with the new Competition Protection Law. Of course, in the same sense, it's necessary to continue improving existing regulations, such as laws dealing with data protection, civil and bankruptcy proceedings, foreign exchange transactions, etc. In this regard, it's important to highlight that there have been certain legal amendments in the previous period that haven't actually contributed to the investor protection and legal certainty - a good exam-

ple of this is one of the amendments to the Law on Business Companies (as one of the "main and umbrella" laws) that undermines the trust in the public register (Business Registers Agency) by investors when purchasing companies i.e. shares in companies.

In general, it is important to note that in Serbia, laws are constantly being enacted and amended to harmonize the domestic regulatory framework with the EU regulatory framework. However, despite this, it appears that there is significant room for improvement and enhancement in the implementation of (new) legal provisions, on which the FIC's Legal Committee, along with all its partners, will continue to work. In this regard, as emphasized previously by the FIC Legal Committee, the following is necessary:

- More uniform practice of the Serbian courts, as well as greater overall efficiency of the judiciary and regulatory authorities. Despite some efforts, the duration of legal proceedings remains one of the most significant issues in creating a more favourable climate for investors.
- More work and resources to be allocated for the training of authorities and the establishment of adequate law enforcement mechanisms, considering the large number of new and specific areas relevant to the business environment (as it is the case, for example, with competition protection regulation or intellectual property rights protection).
- More efforts to be invested in public education regarding legal provisions and available options (for example, for consumers and potential whistleblowers).
- More practical options to be made available for the implementation of various legal solutions (such as the introduction of "foreign" electronic signatures, which would significantly facilitate business operations in Serbia).