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# East European Constitutional Review



Volume 8 Number 4

Fall 1999



Demand for Law

Supporting Civil Society

Hungary's Constitutional Court Reborn

The Legal Status of Looted Art

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# East European Constitutional Review

Volume 8 Number 4

Fall 1999

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pension from Kuchma's \$6.50 to, once again, \$12. Thus, right before the election, Kuchma was forced to take the unpopular stand of vetoing the bill; he called the whole affair provocative and populist.

Earlier, speaking on national television, on June 28, Kuchma said that parliament was "turning into an instrument of political fighting in which open demagoguery and populism have become usual tricks." He added that the trend had become particularly evident since the beginning of the presidential election campaign. Speaking on the third anniversary of the Constitution's adoption, Kuchma noted that most problems arise from the "improper implementation" of the Basic Law. In addition, he gave himself credit for issuing economic decrees over the past three years that addressed economic problems not covered by laws.

In June, the government approved a 2000 draft budget that projected the country's GDP at \$33 billion and provided for revenues totaling some \$8 billion. The government expected to gain \$800 million from the privatization of state property. A list of enterprises designated for sale in 2000 was submitted to parliament earlier. Additionally, for the first time in the history of Ukrainian budgetary planning, the government planned a small surplus of about \$11 million. In the government's opinion, such deficit-free planning would improve Ukraine's international financial reputation. But parliament refused to adopt the draft and introduced amendments demanding additional allocations to pay wage arrears to teachers, finance the agricultural sector, and increase the financing of the presidential election. President Kuchma vetoed the amendments, but, on September 15, parliament overrode the veto, forcing the government to prepare a new draft for parliament's consideration.

In addition, on September 8, Kuchma appealed to the Constitutional Court. He argued that parts of the Law on Foreign Investment were unconstitutional under Art. 26, which maintains, in essence, that all subjects are equal under law. (Article 150 of the Constitution gives the president standing before the Court.) Kuchma objected, in particular, to a provision giving foreign investors the right to demand from the government special guarantees of security for their investments.



On May 30, the district court in Vyshhorod, in the Kyiv region, annulled the results of the Kyiv mayoral election. According to the official results, the election was won by Oleksander Omelchenko, the incumbent mayor. The court, in response to an appeal by two losing candidates, Hryhoriy Surkis and Mykola Hrabar, found various violations in the campaign, including financial irregularities and a lack of media access for the candidates who lost. Omelchenko won 76.5 percent of the vote, while Surkis gained 16.5 percent. President

Kuchma protested the court's decision, saying that it "trampled the will of thousands of Kyiv voters." Omelchenko then appealed to the Supreme Court, which, on August 6, overruled the lower court, thus legitimizing Omelchenko's election.



Pavlo Lazarenko, a former prime minister and leader of the Gromada Party, was also back in the news, trying to make a deal that would allow his return to Ukraine. (For more on the allegations of money laundering and embezzling leveled against Lazarenko, and his flight to the United States, see *Ukraine Update*, *EECR*, Vol. 8, Nos. 1/2, Winter/Spring 1999.) Lazarenko asked parliament to reinstate his parliamentary immunity. In exchange, he offered to withdraw his appeal for political asylum in the United States. Lazarenko's asylum application was scheduled to be heard by the Immigration Court, in San Francisco, on October 27. Lazarenko's request was first sent for consideration to the Committee on Parliamentary Ethics. The committee agreed to the arrangement, and the issue could be discussed by parliament in the middle of October. Kuchma registered his protest.

On September 14, parliament failed to ratify the US-Ukrainian agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal cases (the agreement was signed on July 22, 1998). Analysts believe that the refusal to ratify the agreement was connected with Lazarenko's still-unresolved case.

**Yugoslavia** While the Kosovo conflict settles into Serbia's collective memory, national attention has shifted to the opposition's attempts to secure prompt and free elections and to the serious crisis within the Yugoslav federation. The opposition has struggled to quell the fierce rivalries among its various members in order to develop a common political platform and create a political force with the strength to pressure President Slobodan Milosevic (Socialist Party of Serbia [SPS]) to step down. Against the onset of winter and the fear of economic devastation (in September inflation had reached 50 percent and prices were soaring), opposition sentiment seemed finally to coalesce around three main goals: pressuring Milosevic from office, either by public demand for his resignation or by initiating impeachment procedures in the federal parliament; forming a transitional government, preferably headed by Dragoslav Avramovic, former governor of the national bank, that would stand ready to fill the gap when or if Milosevic stands down; and holding early parliamentary and local elections in Serbia, and, subsequently, on the federal level. (Under the current parliamentary cycle, the next elections are scheduled for 2001.) But due to continued bickering, the focus was not always on substantive issues.

Still, practically all of the opposition, in one way or another, held to these three basic goals, which were reinforced by an explicit statement, on July 29, by Vuk Draskovic (Serbian Revival Movement [SRM]) urging Milosevic to step down. (Draskovic and his SRM were ostensibly seduced into entering the federal government in January but were ousted in April for criticizing Milosevic's Kosovo policy. See *Yugoslavia Update*, *EECR*, Vol. 8, No. 3, Summer 1999.)

In early August, Dragoslav Avramovic agreed to be the candidate of the Alliance for Change (AC) as head of a transitional government. (The alliance currently includes the Democratic Party [DP], the Civil Alliance [CA], the Serbian Democratic Christian Party [SDCP], the Together Movement for Serbia, and Fatherland. The Democratic Alternative [DA] left AC in June, and the Social Democratic Party [SDP] quit in October.) In addition to AC, Avramovic was also supported by Dusan Mihajlovic's New Democracy (ND), Nebojsa Covic's DA, and Dragoljub Micunovic's Democratic Center (DC). Vuk Draskovic's SRM has not yet offered its support. It is difficult to decipher Draskovic's position regarding the opposition's campaign. To date, he has declined to join AC efforts, a major setback to the movement.

On August 3, Mladjan Dinkic, the current coordinator of Independent Group 17 (IG17), a collection of economists, presented the Pact for the Stabilization of Serbia and the Platform of the Transitional Government. The Serbian Orthodox Church was among those supporting the initiative, as expressed at a meeting between opposition parties and groups and Serbian patriarch Pavle, on August 10. The complex and frequently confusing opposition political scene also gained a new presence. Former chief of staff of the Yugoslav Army, General Momcilo Perisic, established a political organization called the Movement for a Democratic Serbia (MDS), declaring the resignation of the ruling regime as its primary goal.

But the SPS regime showed plenty of signs of life. Vesna Pesic (CA, a part of AC since October 17) stated, at a public rally in Vrsac, that, "if necessary, Serbia will follow a Romanian method." The Serbian prime minister Mirko Marjanovic took advantage of this apparently inflammatory remark and, on August 16, called the AC "a terrorist organization," adding that its leaders were "hired assassins" who had been "seduced by NATO." This marked the start of a vigorous antiopposition campaign that denounced the regime's opponents daily as "traitors to the people and cronies of NATO."

The opposition public rallies that have swept Serbia since the end of the NATO air campaign peaked symbolically in Belgrade, on August 19—the traditional, religious holiday of the Transfiguration—when an estimated 120,000 to 150,000 people gathered to protest the Milosevic regime and call for his resignation.

Prominent opposition members addressed the crowd, including Mladjan Dinkic (IG17), Zoran Djindjic (DP), Vladan Batic (AC), Dragoljub Micunovic (DC), and representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Draskovic made an unexpected appearance, provoking both euphoria and jeering from the crowd.

The rally led to a series of opposition roundtables. After several closed meetings, the representatives of 21 political parties and organizations (including AC and SRM) and the proposed transitional-government leader Avramovic agreed that the opposition had to resolve its internal disagreements and formulate conditions—in accordance with European and international standards—for staging early parliamentary and local elections. In the weeks that followed, more roundtables convened on September 2, September 30, and on October 7. A common agenda for legislation and the conditions under which elections would take place was accepted, and an expert group was formed to work out the details. In an effort to end intraopposition rivalries, the opposition used models of electoral laws elaborated by an NGO to decide on procedural and related issues (financing, media in the electoral campaign, and so on). On October 14, eight major parties and organizations (excluding SRM) signed an agreement creating an election coalition and specifying the minimum acceptable electoral conditions. These included the use of the proportional electoral formula in federal and republic elections, along with the stipulations that Serbia be divided into no more than eight electoral units, that the threshold to enter parliament should be 4 percent, and that the Law on Information be abrogated. Later, the opposition roundtable, still fragile and now without Vuk Obradovic's SDP, Vuk Draskovic's SRM, and Andras Agoston's Democratic Coalition of Vojvodina's Hungarians (DCVH), issued an official demand for early elections, as well as a demand for a roundtable with the ruling coalition on reforming the prevailing electoral conditions and related legislation.

The roundtables sparked strong hopes both that the opposition could overcome its internal differences and that demands for early elections were a legitimate and democratic way of bringing about political change. Surveys showed that more than 80 percent of those questioned in Belgrade favored an early ballot. The opposition also issued a statement that if the regime did not agree to a roundtable on the electoral conditions, other means of extrainsitutional political pressure (such as public protests) would become the only legitimate way of achieving political change.

On October 24, Djindjic met with US presidential special envoy to the Balkans James Dobbs and proposed that the US suspend sanctions on the condition that free and fair elections be allowed. In early November, US secretary of state Madeleine Albright, meeting with an AC delegation in Washington, agreed

to lift the ban on oil sales and flights if free elections were held. The announcement was a relief; many feared that if the US took a hard line, opposition efforts would be undermined. Instead, the decision showed that the US—like the EU—supports the opposition. The UN also appears to favor a similar approach. On a recent visit, UN secretary-general Kofi Annan announced that if democratization were to be achieved, the public would have to be helped rather than punished.

Despite its support for the opposition, the EU's recent effort to hold a meeting with its leaders ended in a fiasco. The EU had invited the leaders to an October 12 session with EU foreign ministers, in Luxembourg, indicating that the embargoes on oil and heating gas, as well as air travel to Belgrade, could be lifted. Only Vuk Obradovic and his SDP—which recently opted out of the AC for fear of being dominated by DP—and a large contingent from various Serbian NGOs attended. Members of DP, SRM, DA, DC, and Dragoslav Avramovic all declined to attend. They claimed that the EU had no intention of treating them as equal partners in their common effort to bring about political change. They argued that the EU was also asking them to sign a unilateral declaration (termed an ultimatum in the opposition press) that promised support in exchange for free and fair elections and the delivery of indicted war criminals. To compound the difficulties, the opposition had received the EU declaration—delivered by the Finnish ambassador in Belgrade—only the day before its members were supposed to leave for Luxembourg.

Speculation abounded about the cause of this uproar. One theory was that the opposition feared the government's reaction if they signed the declaration, which obligated them to turn over Milosevic, who was indicted as a war criminal on May 27, to the International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The opposition promptly denied this, stating that Yugoslavia already had an obligation to cooperate with the tribunal. Another theory centered on the Serbian NGOs, whose representatives were also invited to Luxembourg and who had in fact attended the meeting (namely, Natasa Kandic of the Humanitarian Law Fund, Vojin Dimitrijevic of the Belgrade Center for Human Rights, and Sonja Biserko of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia). These NGOs had supposedly offered their services to the EU in drafting the list of participants, but because of a misunderstanding, the NGOs were invited alongside the political organizations. The opposition apparently did not like being given the same treatment as the NGOs and claimed that inviting the latter made the opposition appear incompetent and unable to speak for themselves.

Whatever the reason for the confusion, it looked as if the EU had blundered and the opposition had sustained a blow. A follow-up meeting between the EU

and the opposition took place shortly thereafter near Banjaluka, in Bosnia, on October 18. That meeting, with former US ambassador to Yugoslavia Bryan Donnelley and EU parliamentarians, managed to reestablish the opposition's role as the main force in the anti-Milosevic movement.

In the meantime, daily antigovernment rallies and protest marches continued in Belgrade and other cities with various levels of attendance and success. While the regime and, recently, even SRM point to the low attendance at these events, it has become clear that fear of police brutality is growing. Indeed, since the end of the Kosovo conflict, police repression has increased, culminating recently with the arrests of civic leaders and opposition politicians and the imposition of astronomical fines, as well as the detention, in some instances, of leaders of the opposition media. (The media are most often charged with spreading "misleading information" under the Law on Public Information. For example, Cedomir Jokanovic, editor of AC's bulletin was sentenced to 30 days imprisonment and fined 350,000 dinars [\$10,000] and the publishing house that prints the bulletin was fined 3.5 million dinars [\$100,000].) On several occasions, the police have used force to stop the regular evening street marches in Belgrade. On September 30, a number of demonstrators and civic leaders were beaten and arrested. The police recently announced they will begin knocking on doors to check whether occupants' addresses are properly registered in personal documents—obviously an attempt to intimidate citizens.

The political scene was further marred by a tragic and mysterious episode. On October 4, on a highway outside Belgrade, a truck crashed into cars carrying Vuk Draskovic and his associates. Draskovic narrowly escaped death; three others were not so fortunate. Among the dead was Veselin Boskovic, Draskovic's brother-in-law and financial backer; Zvonko Osmajlic, head of SRM security; and one other SRM member. The truck and driver that caused the accident were never found. Draskovic claimed that it was an assassination attempt, while the authorities, without giving further details, said that the accident was probably the result of speeding.

Foul play or not, the regime seems well entrenched. The political tenor is business as usual. The former deputy federal prime minister, Zoran Lilic (who just recently fell out of favor with Milosevic), went to Libya to award the highest Yugoslav honor, the Big Star, to Muammar el-Qaddafi. At the same time, Zarko Jokanovic (ND), in a public statement on September 10, said that he had received "serious indications" that Serbian president Milan Milutinovic was essentially under house arrest. A government spokesman denied this, and subsequently Jokanovic was prosecuted under various provisions of the Law on Public Information

for "spreading misleading information."

Further business as usual, as it were, included the drafting of a new municipal law, which the government presented to parliament in mid-October. The law was adopted on November 10, a day after riot police violently broke up anti-Milosevic protests in Belgrade. The law, a hefty 226 articles long, contains measures that effectively would allow SPS and its allies to regain control of local governments, which have been opposition strongholds since the local elections in 1996. The law limits the funds available to local governments, enables government ministers to overrule local government decisions, and provides the central government with power to deny local governments control over local media. The law aims to ensure the victory of the governing coalition in the next local elections, currently set for some time next year. To this end, it would annul the two-round majority system and introduce a first-past-the-post formula in cities and municipalities. This would allow the ruling regime, familiar with electoral manipulation, to secure victory for its candidates more easily. The status of large cities such as Kragujevac, Novi Sad, and Nis would be reduced from city to municipality, that is, to single electoral units. Control of the local governments is also key for victory in parliamentary or federal elections, because they are charged with updating voter registration rolls, another route to manipulate future ballots and secure SPS's hold on power.



On the federal front, federal prime minister Momir Bulatovic engaged in a substantial government reshuffle on August 13, which intensified the conflict between Montenegro and Serbia. (Indeed, Bulatovic warned Montenegro, on October 18, that any attempt at secession would be resisted by the Yugoslav army.) The government reshuffle has consolidated President Milosevic's federal executive power. Eight members of the federal government were removed; among the victims was prominent SPS member Zoran Lilic (former president of Yugoslavia and rumored to be opposed to Milosevic's hard line), who lost his post as deputy federal prime minister and was given the largely meaningless job of "adviser to the federal president."

In total, the federal government gained 13 new ministers, the bulk of whom were from Milosevic's SPS, his wife Mirjana Markovic's United Yugoslav Left (UYL), and Vojislav Seselj's extreme nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRP). Five of the new ministers came from SRP. Maja Gojkovic and Tomislav Nikolic, both deputy prime ministers in the Serbian government, were appointed deputy prime ministers in the federal government, and Serbia's deputy minister of justice Petar Jovic was appointed federal minister of justice, replacing Montenegro's Zoran Knezevic. Three of the new ministers were from SPS; Milan Beko, head of the

Zastava automobile plant in Kragujevac, was appointed federal minister of the economy, and Borka Vucic, director general of the Beogradaska Banka (one of the top Serbian financial tycoons and a close ally and financial adviser to Milosevic), was tapped to head the newly established office of federal minister for cooperation with international financial organizations. UYL also got three slots. Most notably, party spokesman Ivan Markovic became federal minister of information.

On September 17, Vuk Draskovic revealed that, during his time in office as federal deputy prime minister, the federal government had planned a coup in Montenegro. Draskovic said that federal prime minister Momir Bulatovic had proposed a decree that was practically equivalent to introducing martial law in Montenegro. Draskovic also stressed that he and the federal ministers from his SRM party opposed the plan and that "luckily the proposal did not pass." The federal government promptly denied the allegation.



On August 5, the government of Montenegro published "Platform on the New Relationship between Montenegro and Serbia," a document that calls for a redefinition of Montenegro's status in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The proposal comes on the heels of nearly two years of constitutional and political conflict between the two republics, a conflict which reached its latest peak during the war in Kosovo.

Montenegro is led by President Milo Djukanovic and his To Live Better coalition. The coalition comprises the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), the People's Party (PP), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and controls 42 of parliament's 78 seats. In May 1998, the Montenegrin parliament (the Skupstina Republike Crne Gora, or assembly) elected 20 members to the federal upper house, or Chamber of Republics, all of them Djukanovic supporters. (According to Art. 80 of the federal Constitution, Montenegro elects half of the members of the upper house.) At the same time, the Montenegrin parliament amended the electoral law to ensure that Djukanovic's influence in the federal upper house would remain intact. (Article 81 of the federal Constitution provides that the "election and termination of the mandate of federal deputies in the Chamber of Republics of the Federal Assembly is regulated by the law of the member republic.") But the federal Constitutional Court ruled the revision of the electoral law unconstitutional. In response, the Montenegrin government declared it would no longer recognize the federal assembly.

Another dispute concerned the election of the federal prime minister. President Slobodan Milosevic installed his crony and Djukanovic's enemy, Momir Bulatovic (Socialist People's Party [SPP]), to the post of federation prime minister. Although Bulatovic was

elected according to established procedure, Djukanovic and his supporters claimed his election was invalid because he was elected by a body—the upper house—they did not recognize.

Finally, another major conflict between Serbia and Montenegro erupted over the Supreme Defense Council. (According to Art. 135 of the federal Constitution, "in wartime and peacetime, the army of Yugoslavia shall be under the command of the president, pursuant to decisions by the Supreme Defense Council. The Supreme Defense Council shall consist of the president and presidents of the member republics. The president shall preside over the Supreme Defense Council.") Djukanovic, however, was excluded from membership in the council. Moreover, the council did not function during the war in Kosovo, violating Art. 135 of the federal Constitution.

In essence, the rift between the two constituent members of the federation was created in large measure by the unwillingness of Milosevic to share federal power. The crisis culminated during the war in Kosovo, when the federal administration punished Montenegro for opposing its actions in Kosovo. The federal government accused, and ultimately pressed charges against, high-ranking Montenegrin officials—including Deputy Prime Minister Novak Kilibarda, Minister of Justice Dragan Soc, and Minister of Finance Miodrag Ivanisevic—for dodging the draft. Additionally, federal army troops stationed in Montenegro sought to provoke the government by, among other things, establishing so-called road checks and obstructing the flow of traffic and goods. In addition, the federal troops often strayed into the UN-proclaimed demilitarized zone, adjacent to the Croatian border.

In addition to disputes at the governmental level, several opinion polls in late September indicated that the public was divided over Montenegro's place in the federal state. Support for the federation has declined somewhat, indicating a shift away from previous, unconditional support for unity with Serbia. Polls revealed three evenly divided attitudes toward the federation: those who favored an independent Montenegro; those who supported a loose union, or confederation, with Serbia; and federalists who unconditionally supported unity with Serbia on the basis of the 1992 federal Constitution. By and large, supporters of confederation favored the government's proposed new relationship, which calls for greater independence. But if Belgrade balks at the plan, supporters of the more moderate option will likely gravitate toward independence.

Legislative support breaks down neatly along party lines. Of course, Djukanovic's coalition supports the plan. The Liberal Union (LU), which has only five seats and often opposes the government, wants complete independence from Serbia. The parties that represent the Albanian minority and hold two seats have never

supported the federal state. Delegates from the pro-Milosevic SPP, led by Bulatovic, which holds more than a third of the assembly (29 seats), are the only firm supporters of the current federal arrangement.

The federal Constitution of 1992 is an approximate mixture of three-quarters federalism and one-quarter confederalism; the Montenegrin government's plan would reverse this. The proposal maintains that the 1992 Constitution is not functional and should be substantially rewritten or perhaps even scrapped. The plan seeks to rename the federal republic the Union of Montenegro and Serbia and establishes the two as equal partners. It also affords the two republican governments far more independence.

According to the proposal, the union's presidents would be elected by a union assembly in agreement with the Montenegrin and Serbian parliaments. The federal bicameral assembly would be replaced with a single chamber. In place of the federal government, a council of ministers would be established, consisting of a maximum of six ministries. Military matters would still be guided by a common supreme defense council, but the presidents of each republic would be the supreme commanders of their own armies. Montenegrin recruits would not have to perform their military service in Serbia. Rather than having joint ministries, the proposal envisions a system where several of the power ministries (defense, interior, and foreign affairs) would be separately established in each republic, and these would, each in their respective spheres, perform the duties of a common ministry on a rotational basis, changing every two years. The Montenegrin proposal did not address the issue of a common currency.

Montenegro approved this plan on August 5 and sent it to the Serbian government for evaluation with a request for talks. The Serbian parliament, however, refused to consider the proposal, forwarding it to the federal parliament, the body that the Montenegrin government does not recognize. Finally, on October 25, Djukanovic's DPS met with one member of Milosevic's coalition—the extreme nationalist Serbian Radical Party—in the Montenegrin resort town of Sveti Stefan, on the Adriatic Coast. The negotiations stalled after only 90 minutes but resumed the next day—this time between DPS and Milosevic's SPS—only to end without agreement but with plans to begin again on an unspecified date. The two governments quarreled over the level at which discussions should take place.

Serbia subsequently responded to Montenegro's plan by intensifying the trade war with the smaller republic. The conflict had begun in September 1998, when the Montenegrin government ceased sending customs revenues to the central government. Reminiscent of a similar squabble with Slovenia, in the late 1980s, the dispute has effectively established a blockade of goods between Serbia and Montenegro; it is

being enforced by the Serbian border police. The federal government has also introduced a double-taxation system by taxing Montenegrin goods entering Serbia. The Montenegrin government responded by taking trade issues into its own hands, immediately reducing import duties on foods coming into Montenegro.

On October 28, the Montenegrin parliament, in a further step toward autonomy, ratified the Law on Citizenship, which provides for a Montenegrin citizenship distinct from that of Serb or Yugoslav citizenship. Deputies loyal to Milosevic left parliament during the vote, protesting its separatist intent. The law, which grants citizenship on the basis of parental citizenship (*jus sanguinis*) and birthplace (*jus soli*), abides by international norms and follows the framework of several international treaties. But the law also stipulates that those applying for citizenship who were not born in Montenegro and are not ethnically Montenegrin, will have to prove permanent residence in Montenegro for the previous ten years. As a result, many Serbs living in Montenegro will not qualify for Montenegrin citizenship. This provision would also bar Kosovar refugees—numbering around 20,000—from naturalization in Montenegro. SDP insisted on the ten-year residence requirement, arguing that a small state such as Montenegro had to protect itself from the “demographic engineering” that resulted from the wars and other crises over the past decade in the former Yugoslavia.

In another step toward independence, on November 2, the Montenegrin government introduced the German mark as its legal tender. At the same time, the government also established a monetary council. Previously, all monetary policy was administered by the federal national bank, according to Art. 114 of the federal Constitution. The government began paying pensions and salaries in marks immediately after its decision. Djukanovic claimed he had no choice but to legalize the use of the mark. With Milosevic continually printing new money, the dinar fell from 11 to the mark, in September,

to 20, just two months later. In the last ten months in Yugoslavia, retail prices have skyrocketed by 45 percent and the cost of living by 51 percent. Unemployment in Montenegro hovers at about 80 percent.

Although the government's latest moves have certainly set the stage for independence, the government is wary of pushing too far, fearing a violent reaction from Milosevic and pro-Milosevic factions within Montenegro. (After Bulatovic lost the presidential race to Djukanovic, in 1997, he staged a demonstration, which turned violent during the presidential inauguration. See Yugoslavia Update, *EECR*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter 1998.) This fall, Bulatovic and his allies staged numerous “clan” meetings where Djukanovic's proposals were soundly criticized. (Most Montenegrins can trace their ancestry to one of the 40 large extended families in the region. Each family, which has certain characteristics such as geographical origin or World War II affiliations, has a council that meets regularly.) Although the heads of quite a few families have denounced independence vociferously, they do not present a force sufficient to mount a full-scale armed conflict. Nonetheless, the quite substantial fear remains that Milosevic, Bulatovic, and their supporters could issue a call to arms.



The Montenegrin parliament adopted a new law on nongovernmental organizations, on July 22. The law replaced the Law on Citizens' Organizations, considered by most to be inadequate and outdated. The 35-article draft was created by the Center for Democracy and Human Rights, in Podgorica, and later was reviewed by almost all the relevant Montenegrin NGOs. The law simplifies the registration process for NGOs, details various taxation benefits, and awards domestic and foreign NGOs equal status under law.

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