

throughout the country and is, consequently, the most influential media outlet; RTS allots 50 per cent of its air time to political reporting but remains under tight government control, although it has begun to provide limited coverage of some opposition activities; in one week in June 1997, RTS news coverage mainly addressed activities of state agencies and officials, all were presented in positive terms and no officials were questioned or criticized; 75 per cent of the coverage of party activities was devoted to the ruling coalition of the Socialist Party and the Yugoslav Left, and opposition parties were presented in negative terms or else shown when criticizing other opposition parties; in the case of Studio B, however, owned by the Belgrade municipality and seen only in Belgrade, criticism of the government was a dominant theme and protests against the government — which were ignored by the state electronic media — were given twice as much time as governmental activities; programmes produced by independent Radio B-92 could now be heard throughout most parts of Serbia, except Kosovo and Sandzak and broadcasting facilities to Radio Boom 93 were restored in Pozarevac; in March 1997 the transmission strength of privately owned BK TV was limited at a time when its owner was considering running as a presidential candidate and, despite an order by the Belgrade Economics Court that transmission be restored, as of early May 1997 BK TV was still unable to broadcast south of Belgrade; the government of Montenegro granted permission in July 1997 to independent Radio Antenna to extend its broadcasts outside the capital, Podgorica, but TV Montenegro remained under the firm control of the government; with regard to access to information, the new Public Information Law, when adopted, will require state bodies to provide free access to information in their charge, unless it is officially secret; the draft media law contains several articles, however, which can be used to restrict the right of editors and journalists to express themselves freely through such provisions as those prohibiting media from publishing or reproducing information “offending the honour or respectability of a person, or containing offensive formulations or indecent expressions” and broadly phrased formulations such as those placing on the media the obligation to provide “true information” and not to publish or transmit “false information” on “a person’s life, knowledge and capabilities”; and the draft media law also requires each copy of a newspaper to carry details of sources of capital and financial structure and stipulates that information on financial assistance from abroad be officially declared and published at least once a year.

The section addressing the situation of minorities in Kosovo notes, *inter alia*: ill-treatment and torture against persons in police custody in Kosovo, mainly in connection with police raids and arrests undertaken as a response to violent attacks against the Serbian police and private individuals; so-called “hostage” arrests, in which the police have detained relatives or family members of persons being sought by the police; violent attacks against Serbian police and persons employed by the local authorities in Kosovo; emergence of the previously unknown “Liberation Army of Kosovo”; verbal abuse of

returned asylum seekers and summonses to them for “informative talks” by the police; temporary detention of returned asylum seekers upon arrival and isolated cases of alleged police abuse; failure to take concrete steps to implement the memorandum of understanding, signed in September 1996, on the normalization of education in Kosovo; the 1989 Act on Special Conditions for Real Property Transactions, which applies to the whole of Serbia except for the province of Vojvodina and places severe restrictions on the purchase, sale, exchange and renting of real property between members of different ethnic groups; under the law, approval of real-property transactions only if the transaction is deemed to have no impact on the ethnic structure of the population; and, under the law, ethnic Albanians and other members of minorities with permanent residence in Belgrade wishing to buy apartments in that city reportedly having their applications rejected, and members of the Turkish minority in Prizren prevented from purchasing property in that municipality.

The situation of minorities in Sandzak is described, with the report noting, *inter alia*: in July 1997 the Serbian government dissolved the town administration and assembly and introduced a mandatory rule bringing the functions of local administration under the control of a new municipal council composed of the local branches of the Socialist Party (SPS) and the Yugoslav Left (JUL), the ruling government coalition in Serbia; these measures were reportedly taken because the municipal organs had been ethnically and politically biased when filling key public offices, and because it had failed to meet its obligations to cover the expenses of the local primary and secondary schools; while no systematic abuses were reported, information was received related to violent attacks against Muslims in the first months of 1997; the police had taken no action to investigate the crimes; the situation of internally displaced persons in Pljevlja and Priboj remained a concern because of security questions and the fact that many houses were destroyed or uninhabitable.

On the situation in Vojvodina, the report states that the main issues of concern to minorities are related to representation in public offices and companies, the use of minority languages in official matters, and education and refugee settlement in the region. In terms of Montenegro, the report notes that information continued to be received on discrimination against the Roma community.

Concerning humanitarian issues, the report notes that large parts of the population in the FRY were struggling for survival in the depleted post-war economy, partly as a result of delayed payments of salaries and wages to workers in the educational, health and other public sectors, delays in the payment of pensions and social benefits, and a deterioration in health care services that has resulted in delays in treatment and difficulties securing essential medicines.

With regard to refugees and citizenship, the report notes a number of points, including that: the Refugee Law stipulates that refugees have the right to employment and