

candidates and distribution of voter registration lists to political parties, observe campaign rallies and monitor media coverage and candidate access to the media. The Dusseldorf-based European Institute for Media (EIM) began comprehensive media monitoring on 1 October 1998. ODIHR expects to have about 150 election observers deployed throughout the country on polling day and will publish a snap assessment of the elections the day after polling (19 October 1998). A final report will later be issued from Warsaw and Vienna.

ODIHR currently has 11 long-term observers deployed in ten regions. The observers monitor activities at a district level. Their efforts will be enhanced by the deployment of 80 election weekend observers supplied by OSCE member states, delegations from the Council of Europe and the European Union Parliamentarian Group, and volunteers from local embassies will supplement the polling day observations. Other independent monitors include the US Embassy in Skopje, two American-based NGOs -- the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs -- and observers deployed by the Dutch Embassy.

Current investigations by ODIHR relate to technical complaints filed by political parties and independent candidates. VMRO-DPMNE has charged that the voter registration lists are inaccurate and voiced concern that counterfeit voter identification cards have been distributed. In addition, an independent candidate from the Republican Party charges that his deletion from the candidate list by the SEC was biased. He claims that his failure to open a campaign finance account before the required deadline should not disqualify him because other candidates from the PDP-PDPA/NDP coalition also failed to meet the deadline but are being allowed to stand as candidates.

V. POLITICAL PARTIES AND PRE-ELECTION COALITIONS

Party politics in Macedonia appears confused with a plethora of small parties, some ethnically-based, others based around the personality of a charismatic individual. The survival and proliferation of such parties has in part been due to the boycott of VMRO-DPMNE and DP in 1994, in part the result of personal patronage. The original VMRO, for example, has spawned three smaller parties following the secession of dissidents. Prior to 1994, there was only one ethnic Albanian party, but PDP has since split into four smaller parties, of which two have merged to form a new party.

Many of the smaller political parties can be categorised more as celebrity followings rather than as fully-formed parties. The continuing