

## F. Domestic Observers

The new election law contains several confidence-building provisions, which incorporate the participation of the political parties in election administration and make the system more open to public scrutiny. For example, political party nominees will serve on all three levels of election commissions. At the request of the parties, election monitors will be able to put their remarks to the election process directly on the reports submitted by the Polling Election Boards (PEB) and District Election Commissions (DEC), rather than simply enclosing the additional remarks.

Under the new law, there are explicit provisions for monitoring all activities of the campaign and polling day by both Macedonian and international organisations. It is estimated that more than 9,000 domestic monitors will be deployed throughout the country. The majority of these monitors will be party agents, who may follow the work of the DECs and the PEBs from the beginning of the elections to the announcement of the results. In addition, several domestic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) plan to train 500 observers to monitor the elections.<sup>8</sup>

## IV. INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Both the Macedonian governing coalition and opposition parties are wary of international election monitors. SDSM and SPM, in particular, have been critical of the international community's decision to send long-term observers. They view this as a signal of distrust and an indication that Macedonia is not quite European. The opposition parties VMRO-DPMNE and LDP, are more ambiguous in their stance towards the international monitors. They welcome the observation but also remember the international community's endorsement of the 1994 election results, which they considered flawed.

International monitoring will be primarily conducted by the Warsaw-based Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in conjunction with the OSCE. ODIHR does not have a mandate for providing technical assistance to administer the elections. It will exclusively provide election observation from mid-September through 1 November 1998 with a core international staff comprising three experts. Prior to polling day, ODIHR will analyse the electoral framework and monitor its application, oversee the registration of

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<sup>8</sup> Domestic NGOs monitoring the elections include: the Association for Democratic Alternatives, Association for the Development of Democracy, Centre for Civic Initiatives, Helsinki Commission for Human Rights, Women's Association of Macedonia, and the Youth Information Centre.