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Latest developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the situation in Kosovo

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1368 (1998)
Committee of Ministers

Since the beginning of the Kosovo crisis, the question has been regularly discussed by the Committee of Ministers and its Rapporteur Group for Democratic Stability (GR-EDS), as the Parliamentary Assembly was informed in the Committee of Ministers' replies to its [Recommendations 1288 \(1998\)](#) on Albanian asylum seekers from Kosovo and [1360 \(1998\)](#) on the crisis in Kosovo adopted at the 628th meeting (15-16 April 1998) of the Ministers' Deputies. At their 632nd meeting (18-20 May 1998), the Deputies decided to bring [Recommendation 1368](#) to the attention of their governments. At their 639th meeting (7-9 September 1998) they decided to do the same with [Recommendation 1376](#), bearing in mind the Assembly's proposals in paragraph 15 and, as appropriate, paragraph 14.

Furthermore, the Ministers' Deputies have continued to deal with the situation in Kosovo as a matter of priority within the framework of their political dialogue, and indeed have pursued discussion of the four-point plan proposed by the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, the Alternate Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr G. Papandreou, on the occasion of the presentation of the statutory report of the Committee of Ministers to the Parliamentary Assembly, on 24 June 1998.

In this respect, the Committee of Ministers recalls its support in principle for on-going and credible monitoring by the Council of Europe, as appropriate, of democracy and human rights in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Kosovo in particular, bearing in mind the need both for co-ordination with other organisations active in the field, and for bringing the Council's experience and expertise to bear on making a specific, additional contribution.

It has been made clear that the lack of seriousness and credibility of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's application for membership of the Organisation has led to suspension of discussion of this issue. A radical change of policy by Belgrade would be needed before the application can be considered.

As far as proposals aimed at strengthening co-operation between the Council of Europe and representatives of civil society in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are concerned (see paragraph 16.ii of [Recommendation 1376](#)), a number of activities have already been carried out or supported by the Council of Europe, including, in the media field, a seminar on freedom of expression organised by the non-governmental organisation "Article XIX" in Podgorica (3-4 July 1998), civil society school programmes carried out by the Local Democracy Agency in Subotica within the framework of the Confidence-building Measures programme, and, in the human rights field, support for a seminar on conscientious objection organised by the Yugoslav Bureau for Conscientious Objection (Belgrade, June 1998).

Further activities in the media and civil society sectors, including the field of higher education, have been approved by the Ministers' Deputies. Specific reference might be made to the conference "Broadcasting for a democratic Europe – the case of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM)", to be held under

1. Joint reply to [Recommendation 1368 \(1998\)](#) and [Recommendation 1376 \(1998\)](#), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7-9 September 1998 at the 639th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.



the auspices of the Secretary General, and organised by ANEM with the support of, *inter alia*, the Council of Europe on 2 and 3 October 1998 in Belgrade. The Chairman of the Committee of Ministers has agreed to open this conference.

In a general sense, the topic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and actions undertaken with regard to that country, have featured in recent high-level discussions between the Council of Europe and the European Union, the OSCE and the United Nations, with a view to preparing for an effective coordination of work when the conditions for Council of Europe involvement will be met.