SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

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Milena Golubović
Faculty of Law, University of Niš, Serbia

Abstract. The paper explores the normative framework on special organizations in the Republic of Serbia. Being an integral part of the state administration, they have features which are common to all organizations as well as some specific and highly distinctive features. Special organizations are primarily instituted to perform professional and related administrative activities whose nature requires a higher degree of independence when compared to the independence required in the work of administrative authorities within the organizational structure of ministries. In this paper, the author discusses the concept, characteristics, significance and specific position of special organizations, as well as their activities and organizational structure.

Key words: special organizations, specific features, professional activities, administrative affairs, independence, ministries

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the State Administration Act (SAA)\(^1\), the state administration encompasses ministries (as the basic form of state administration authorities which are established to perform state administration tasks in one or more interrelated administrative fields), administrative bodies within the ministry, and special organizations. Unlike other administrative authorities primarily in charge or administrative activities, special organizations are in charge of performing administrative activities related to professional activities of administrative bodies (e.g. statistics, meteorology, surveying, procurement, storage of products, etc.) (Dimitrijević, 2019: 101).

In the Republic of Serbia, special organizations are an integral part of the state administration. As such, they have all common features stemming from their relationship with the state. Yet, they are not primarily formed for the purpose of exercising administrative power but for the purpose of executing specific professional tasks.

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Corresponding author: Milena Golubovic, LL.M., PhD Student, Faculty of Law, University of Niš, Trg Kralja Aleksandra 11, 18000 Niš, Serbia Serbia. E-mail: mikenag94@hotmail.com

Special organizations are formed in the same or similar way as administrative authorities. Their internal organization and managerial (personnel) composition are determined in a similar manner, they are financed in a similar way, and there are similar rules governing the employees’ responsibility. At the republic level, special organizations are formed in the same way as administrative authorities, as prescribed by the law. The heads (directors) who manage their work, deputy directors and assistant directors are appointed and dismissed by the Government, and the Government supervises their work (Milkov, 2009: 82).

Under the State Administration Act, the legislator may designate a ministry to supervise the work of a special organization. In the course of supervision, the ministry is only authorized to request reports and data about the work of a special organization, to establish the state of affairs in the execution of assigned tasks, to warn the organization about observed irregularities, to give instructions (guidelines), and to submit a proposal to the Government to take measures within its scope of competences (Article 50 SAA).

In the Republic of Serbia, special organizations are established for the purpose of performing professional and related executive tasks which call for a higher degree of independence when compared to the independence of administrative authorities in the organizational structure of ministries (Article 33 SAA). Notably, special organizations may be the executors of administrative functions (Popović, Petrović, Prica, 2011: 97-98). In Serbia, special organizations can be organized as agencies, institutes, secretariats, commissariats, directorates, administration offices and centers.

2. DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Special organizations are an important part of state administration. While administrative authorities are in charge of exercising state administration authorities, special organizations are authorized to perform highly specific professional activities. As a rule, the execution of certain professional, technical and other similar activities calls for establishing a collective body, a specially organized service which should be authorized to decide on certain professional, technical and related administrative issues (Popović, Marković, Petrović, 2002: 97-98).

Special organizations are primarily established for the purpose of performing professional activities (e.g. in the field of statistics, hydrometeorology, public procurement, storage of certain products, etc.) rather than for the purpose of exercising administrative powers (which is the task of state administration authorities). Yet, considering the need to ensure the undisturbed execution of their basic activities, special organizations may also have some administrative authorities. At the republic level, special organizations are formed in the same way as administrative authorities, in compliance with the State Administration Act and other subject-specific legislative acts, depending on the type of organization.

However, special organizations also have some specific and distinctive features in relation to administration authorities. The essential differences are reflected in the basic activities they perform, which generate other differences. In addition, special organizations may have the status of a legal entity (as prescribed by the law), which means that they can act in their own name and on their own behalf. It does not mean that special organizations are completely self-financed. Unlike administrative authorities, they may have their own sources of income but they also receive funds from the budget. The activities of special organizations are not market-oriented; as they are executed in the state interest, they are financed by the state.
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The Serbian State Administration Act envisages different forms of special organizations, which have a different status, depending on their positions in the organizational structure. The basic types of special organizations are secretariats and institutes but, as already noted, special organizations can also be organized as agencies, commissariats, directorates, administration offices and centers. A secretariat is established for the purpose of performing professional tasks and related executive tasks important for all state administration authorities. An institute is in charge of performing professional tasks and related executive tasks that require the application of subject-specific knowledge and methodology (Article 34 SAA).

3. SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

The normative framework for establishing special organizations is not uniform. They may be established in compliance with the Ministries Act and other subject-specific legislative acts, depending on the type of special organizations, they (e.g. the Security-Information Agency Act, the Refugees Act, the Railways Act, etc.).

According to the State Administration Act, a special organization is managed by a Director, who is appointed by the Government for a period of five years, upon the proposal of the Prime Minister in accordance with the law regulating the status of civil servants, and who shall be accountable to the Government (Article 35 SAA). A special organization may also have a Deputy Director, who is accountable to the director for his work. A Deputy Director assists the Director within the scope of competences determined by the Director and replaces the Director in case of his/her absence or incapacity to work. A Deputy Director may not be authorized by the Director to issue regulations. A Deputy Director is also appointed by the Government for a period of five years, upon the proposal of the Director and in accordance with the law regulating the status of civil servants (Article 36 SAA). In addition, a special organization may have one or more assistant directors, who are accountable to the Director for their work. An Assistant Director manages a sector-specific field of work of the special organization; he/she is appointed by the Government for a period of five years, upon the proposal of the Director and in accordance with the law regulating the status of civil servant (Article 37 SAA).

In the Republic of Serbia, there are eighteen special organizations:
1. the Security Information Agency;
2. the Geological Survey Institute of the Republic of Serbia;
3. the Railways Directorate;
4. the Intellectual Property Office;
5. the Social Insurance Institute (Office)
6. the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations;
7. the Republic Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labor Disputes;
8. the Republic Directorate for Property of the Republic of Serbia;
9. the Republic Directorate for Commodity Reserves;
10. the Republic Geodetic Authority;
11. the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
12. the Republic Seismological Institute;
13. the Republic Secretariat for Legislation;
14. the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies;
15. the Republic Hydrometeorological Institute (Service);
In the following subheadings, we will explore some special organizations in more detail. These special organizations have been selected for analysis because of the highly specific activities they perform within the public administration system.

### 3.1. The Security Information Agency

The Security Information Agency (Serb. BIA) was established by the Security Information Agency Act (hereinafter: SIA Act), which entered into force on 27 July 2002. It is a special organization of the Government of the Republic of Serbia which has the status of a legal entity (Article 3 SIA Act). The Security Information Agency is a civilian, national security service, and it is part of the unitary security and intelligence system of the Republic of Serbia. It operates on the basis of and within the framework of the Constitution, legislative acts, general acts and other regulations, the national security strategy, the defense strategy, and the established security and intelligence policy of the Republic of Serbia.

The primary tasks of the Security Information Agency are to protect the security of the Republic of Serbia, to detect and prevent the activities aimed at undermining or disrupting the constitutional order of the Republic of Serbia, to research, collect, process and assess the security and intelligence data and information significant for the security of the Republic of Serbia, to inform the competent government authorities about such data, and to perform other activities envisaged in the Security Information Agency Act (Article 2 SIA Act).

The Security Information Agency is managed by the Director, who is appointed and discharged by the Government (Article 5 SIA Act). The Director is accountable to the National Assembly and the Government for the operation of the Agency. The Director may have a Deputy Director, in accordance with the law. The Deputy Director assists the Director within the scope of competences entrusted to him/her by the Director and replaces the Director in case of absence, temporary incapacity and other cases prescribed by the SIA Act. (SIA, 2022: 8)

The organizational units of the Security Information Agency are: the Director’s Office/Cabinet, the Situation Center, the Administration, and the Regional Center. The Director’s Office performs various activities for the Agency, the Director and the Deputy Director. The Situation Center at the Agency’s headquarters performs the activities aimed at ensuring the SIA operative alertness and coordination of activities. The Administration is the basic organizational unit is in charge of a number of interrelated tasks: planning, organizing, coordinating, directly implementing and controlling the performance of all assigned tasks within its sphere of activity; it is also in charge of developing operative and functional cooperation with all other organizational units of the Agency. The Administration is competent and responsible for the actual performance of SIA activities on the entire
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territory of the Republic of Serbia. The Regional Center is a basic territorial organizational unit of the Agency which plans and directly executes the tasks within the competence of the Agency in a certain territory (SIA, 2022: 7).

In 2013, upon the proposal of the Security Information Agency, the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the National Security Academy. It is an independent higher education institution of special interest for the security of the Republic of Serbia.\(^6\)

3.2. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations is a special organization in the state administration system established by the Refugees Act\(^7\) for the purpose of performing professional and other administrative duties related to care, return and integration of refugees, in accordance with the Refugees Act. After the adoption of the Migration Management Act (2012)\(^8\), the Commissariat for Refugees has continued to operate as the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations (hereinafter: the Commissariat), in accordance with the competencies envisaged in the Migration Management Act and other laws.

According to the Migration Management Act, the Commissariat performs the following activities: proposing the goals and priorities of migration policy to the Government; proposing measures for emanating the positive effects of legal migration and combating illegal migration; monitoring the implementation of migration policy measures; providing state administration authorities, autonomous provinces and local self-government units with relevant data important for drafting strategic documents in the field of migration; proposing projects in the field of migration management within the scope of its work; and submitting an annual migration management report to the Government (Article 10 MM Act).

In accordance with ratified international agreements and generally accepted rules of international law regulating the position and rights of refugees to care, integration and reintegration (voluntary return to their country of origin), the Commissariat initiates and pursues international assistance from the United Nations and other international organizations. The Commissariat also cooperates with the Red Cross organization, various humanitarian, religious and other organizations, associations and citizens at the national and international level.

The National Strategy for Resolving Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the period 2015-2020 defines the basic goals and directions of the Commissariat in terms of providing permanent and sustainable solutions to the refugee problem in the Republic of Serbia, ensuring their access to all rights, services and resources on equal terms as Serbian citizens and working to improve their living conditions during the displacement period and their full social inclusion. The Commissariat is headed by a Commissioner, who has a deputy and an assistant.\(^9\)

3.3. The Traffic Accident Investigation Center

The Traffic Accident Investigation Center is a special organization which performs professional activities related to the investigation and analysis of accidents and serious incidents in air traffic, in railway traffic, as well as maritime and navigation accidents and

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\(^7\) The Refugees Act, Official Gazette of RS, no. 18/92, Official Gazette of FRY, No. 42/02 – FCC and Official Gazette of RS, no. 30/10.

\(^8\) Migration Management Act, Official Gazette of RS, no. 107/12.

incidents in water transport. The Center has the status of a legal entity. In order to exercise its competencies, the Center must have professional, technical and financial capacities. The Center is functionally, organizationally and financially independent from all authorities and organizations responsible for air, railway and water transport, as well as from all legal entities and individuals whose interests may be contrary to the tasks and authorities of the Center.

Professional activities related to accident investigation are independent from criminal investigations or other concurrent investigations. The investigation and discovery of the causes of traffic accidents is not aimed at establishing criminal, misdemeanour, economic, disciplinary, civil or any other form of liability. The Center may conduct investigation proceedings in cooperation with competent accident investigation authorities for other countries in accordance with the law and ratified international agreements. The competent judicial authorities conducting the investigation of air traffic, railway traffic and water transport accidents may submit copies of files and documents to the Center which are necessary for conducting the investigation if it does not interfere with the investigation in accordance with the law governing criminal proceedings.10

The Center is managed by the Chief Investigator, who has the position of Director of this special organization. The Chief Investigator is appointed by the Government for a five-year term, at the proposal of the Prime Minister. In addition to the requirements prescribed by the law regulating the status of civil servants, the person who is appointed chief investigator must have at least nine years of work experience in air, rail or water transport, at least three of which shall be related to handling matters pertaining to safety in air, rail or water transport and accident investigation. The Chief Investigator has one assistant chief investigator for each area: Chief Air Traffic Investigator, Chief Railway Traffic Investigator, and Chief Water Transport Investigator. In addition to the requirements prescribed by the law regulating the status of civil servants, the Assistant Chief Investigators must have at least nine years of work experience in air, rail or water transport, at least three of which must be related to handling matters pertaining to security in air, rail or water transport and accident investigation. The Center may also engage relevant experts and seek professional assistance of competent authorities, organizations and legal entities, in exchange for a fee which is determined on the basis of the length of engagement and the complexity of work. The Chief Investigator, the assistant chief investigators for air, railway and water transport, all Center employees, and all persons involved in the investigation of accidents are obliged to keep the information obtained during the investigation secret.11

3.4. The National Hydrometeorological Service of the RS

The National Hydrometeorological Service of the RS is a state administration authority and a special organization with the status of a legal entity which performs meteorological and hydrological activities of interest to the Republic of Serbia, as well as defence against hailstorms and protection against floods, natural disasters, pollution, etc. (Article 1 MHA Act)12 The organizational structure of the Hydrometeorological Service includes the following basic units: Department of meteorological and hydrological forecasts, warnings and alerts; Department of meteorological observation system; Department of hydrological observation system and analysis; Department of the national center for climate change,

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10 The Traffic Accident Investigation Center (2022), https://www.cins.gov.rs/o-nama.php#centar
11 The Traffic Accident Investigation Center (2022), https://www.cins.gov.rs/o-nama.php#centar
climate model development and risk assessment of natural disasters; and Department of hydrometeorological computer-telecommunication system, general affairs and joint services. common affairs. In addition, the Hydrometeorological Service includes several internal units: Center for defense against hail; Department for international cooperation, European integration and public relations; Professional regulations and standards group; Public Procurement group; and Internal Audit group. Certain tasks within the scope of the Hydrometeorological Service, which require special expertise and independence in work, are performed by independent experts outside the basic internal units. (Hydrometeorological Service, 2021: 5).

The Hydrometeorological Service performs professional and state administration tasks related to meteorological and hydrological activities, including: a) planning, establishment, maintenance and development of the national network of meteorological and hydrological stations; b) systematic meteorological and hydrological measurements and observations in the network of meteorological and hydrological stations; c) planning, establishing, operating and developing meteorological and hydrological computing and telecommunication system for collection, exchange and distribution of data and information on actual and forecasted weather, climate and water conditions, as well as data about air and water quality; d) establishing, operating and developing a meteorological and hydrological analytical system, forecasting system and hydrometeorological early warning system in case of disasters, incidental pollution, hailstorms, etc.; d) establishing, developing and maintaining databases in the field of meteorology, hydrology and hail protection in accordance with the law; e) international cooperation and implementation of international conventions and standards in the field of meteorology, hydrology agrometeorology, biometeorology; f) research and monitoring of climate changes, air and water quality; etc. (Article 5 MHA Act).

In accordance with ratified international agreements, the National Hydrometeorological Service represents the Republic of Serbia in international meteorological and hydrological organizations, conventions and protocols in the field of hydro-meteorology (Article 27 MHA Act). The National Hydrometeorological Service is part of the system of regional climate centers within the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). As a subregional climate change center for Southeast Europe, the Hydrometeorological Service performs professional, technical, operative, research and development activities (Article 28 MHA Act).

The Director of the Hydrometeorological Service represents and manages the work of this special organization in accordance with the law. The Director is a civil servant in position; he is appointed and dismissed by the Government, upon the proposal of the Prime Minister, and he is accountable for his work to the Prime Minister and the Government of the Republic of Serbia. In accordance with ratified international agreements, the Director of the Hydrometeorological Service is the permanent representative of the Republic of Serbia in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and represents the Republic of Serbia in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the European Center for Medium Term Forecast (ECMWF), and the Earth Observation Group (GEO). The Director of the Hydrometeorological Service also represents the Subregional climate change center for Southeast Europe, which was established within the National Hydrometeorological Service. The Director of the Hydrometeorological Service makes decisions in accordance with the law.

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with his competences envisaged in relevant legislative acts and bylaws. The sectoral
departments are managed by assistant directors (Hydrometeorological Service, 2021: 45).

3.5. The Public Procurement Office

The Public Procurement Office is a special organization which performs a range of
professional activities in the field of public procurement, supervises the implementation of
public procurement regulations, adopts bylaws, monitors the implementation of public
procurement procedures, controls the implementation of certain procedures, manages the
Public Procurement Portal, prepares public procurement reports, proposes measures for the
improvement of the public procurement system, provides professional assistance to
procuring entities and bidders, and contributes to creating conditions for economical,
efficient and transparent use of public funds in the public procurement procedure. The
organisation and operation of the Public Procurement Office is regulated by legislation
governing public administration, unless otherwise provided by the Public Procurement Act
(Articles 178-182 PP Act).\footnote{The Public Procurement Act, Official Gazette of the RS, no. 91/19.}

The Public Procurement Office performs the following activities: 1) prepares the strategy
for the development and improvement of public procurement in the Republic of Serbia; 2)
monitors the implementation of public procurement legislation and prepares the annual
reports on the conducted monitoring; 3) files a request to initiate misdemeanor proceedings
for misdemeanor offences prescribed by the PP Act; files a request for the protection of rights
and initiates other appropriate proceedings before competent authorities pertaining to
observed irregularities in the implementation of public procurement regulations; 4)
participates in drafting laws and other regulations, and adopts bylaws in the field of public
procurement; 5) provides opinions on the application of the provisions of the PP Act and
other regulations in the field of public procurement; 6) provides professional assistance,
prepares guidelines, manuals and other publications in the field of public procurement, and
ensures that they are equally accessible to contracting authorities and economic entities free
of charge; 7) collects statistical and other data on conducted procedures and concluded public
procurement contracts, and prepares a special annual report on public procurement; 8)
prescribes the procedure and conditions for obtaining the certificate for public procurement
officer and maintains the register of public procurement officer; 9) manages the Public
Procurement Portal; 10) undertakes necessary activities related to the EU accession
negotiations in the field of public procurement; 11) cooperates with domestic and foreign
institutions and experts in the field of public procurement in order to improve the public
procurement system; 12) cooperates with other state authorities and organisations, bodies of
territorial autonomies and of local self-governments; and 13) performs other activities in
accordance with the law (Article 179 PP Act).

The Public Procurement Office is managed by the Director who is appointed by the
Government from among the ranks of public procurement experts; he must have at least
seven years of work experience in public procurements and meet other requirements set
forth for the work in state administration bodies (Article 178 PP Act). The Director
organizes, consolidates and directs the work of the PP Office, assigns tasks to the heads of
internal units, and performs other activities within the competency of the Office. A Deputy
Director performs tasks within the scope of PPO activities by acting on the Director’s order,
assigns tasks to the heads of internal units, assists the Director within the assigned competences, replaces the Director in case he is absent or incapacitated to work, and performs other tasks within the scope of the PPO activities. Given the fact that two sectors have been established as organizational units (the Sector for regulation and monitoring of the implementation of public procurement legislation and the Sector for the development of the public procurement system and financial and material affairs), these sectors are managed by assistant directors. An Assistant Director plans and manages the work of civil servants in the sector, establishes cooperation with other bodies and organizations within the scope of Sector activities, performs the most complex tasks within the scope of the Sector, and performs other tasks acting upon the order of the Director (Public Procurement Office, 2022: 14-15).

One of the most important activities of state administration is to ensure national security and safeguard the public interest but also to provide a safe and organized state administration system. These special organizations have been selected for analysis because of the highly specific activities they perform within the public administration system.

4. CONCLUSION

While administrative authorities are in charge of executing state administration authorities, special organizations are authorized to perform important and highly specific professional and related executive activities which require a higher degree of independence when compared to the independence of administrative authorities. Notably, special organizations may also perform some administrative authorities. Special organizations may be under the supervision of the Government (if they are independent) or they may be under the supervision of a ministry (if they are not independent but they have a higher degree of independence than the administrative authorities in the organizational structure of ministries).

Under the State Administration Act, the legislator may designate a ministry to supervise the work of a special organization. In supervising the work of a special organization, the designated ministry is only authorized to request reports and data about the work of a special organization, to determine the state of affairs in the execution of the assigned tasks, to warn the organization about the observed irregularities, to give instructions and to propose to the Government to take measures within its scope of authorities (Article 50 SSA).

Special organizations are part of the state administration. They are established for the purpose of performing professional tasks aimed at accomplishing the general public interests as dynamic expressions of the common good. For this reason, special organizations need to be part of the state administration; they are an expression of the need to coordinate and direct the execution of professional activities, which are an inseparable part of state administration and essential for the successful functioning of the state as a territorial community.

Professional tasks are also performed by individual holders of public authorities (e.g. public agencies), which do not belong to the state administration and are not subject to official supervision of the Government or a competent ministry. The holders of public authorities are subject to inspection or legality control (e.g. local self-government authorities) while special organizations are subject to official supervision of the Government or a ministry. Thus, holders of public authorities may be independent, which is not the case with special organizations.

In the Republic of Serbia, there are eighteen special organizations whose status, characteristics and organizational structure differ. Some special organizations have a distinctive status and perform highly specific activities. For example, due to the specific nature of its activities which are aimed at preserving the constitutional order, territorial integrity, sovereignty and national security, the Security Information Agency has a very high level of independence.

Another important special organization in the state administration system is the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, which is established by the Refugees Act. The Commissariat cooperates with different humanitarian, religious and other organizations, associations and citizens. Due to its cooperation with international bodies and organizations in resolving the status of refugees and migration issues, the Commissariat is essential for solving the global migrant crisis and ensuring humanitarian assistance to all refugees and migrants.

The Traffic Accidents Investigation Center is a special organization which is functionally, organizationally and financially independent from all state authorities and organizations responsible for air, railway and water transport, as well as from all legal entities and individuals whose interests may be contrary to the tasks and authorities of the Center. The most prominent feature of this Center is its operative independence, particularly in relation to the judicial authorities. The primary function of the Center is not to conduct investigations and prosecute offenders but to act preventively and ensure the preservation of traffic safety.

The National Hydrometeorological Service is a special organization with the status of a legal entity which performs meteorological and hydrological activities of interest to the Republic of Serbia, including protection against hailstorms, floods, natural disasters, pollution, etc.

The Public Procurement Office is a special organization which performs a range of professional activities in the field of public procurement, supervises the implementation of regulations and adopts bylaws, monitors the implementation of public procurement procedures, and prepares reports, proposes measures for the improvement of the public procurement system, provides professional assistance to procuring entities and bidders, and ensures transparent, efficient and cost-effective use of public funds in the public procurement procedure.

In the Republic of Serbia, special organizations are an integral part of the state administration. As such, they have all common features pertinent to any other organization but they also have some distinctive features. Depending on how they are established, they may have a greater or a lesser degree of independence. In Serbia, they are organized as agencies, institutes, secretariats, commissariats, directorates, administration offices and centers.

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POSEBNE ORGANIZACIJE

Rad je posvećen posebnim organizacijama, koje imaju sva obeležja koja ima i bilo koja druga organizacija, ali i određene specifičnosti. Posebne organizacije u Republici Srbiji se obrazuju za vršenje stručnih i sa njima povezanih izvršnih poslova čija priroda zahteva veću samostalnost od one koju ima organ uprave u sastavu ministarstva. U ovom radu biće reči o pojmu, karakteristikama, značaju i specifičnom položaju posebnih organizacija, kao i o njihovoj delatnosti i organizacionoj strukturi.

Ključne reči: posebne organizacije, specifičnosti, stručni poslovi, izvršni poslovi, samostalnost, ministarstva.