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Foreword from the President



Dear all,

Welcome to this special edition of the newsletter following up to our Prague Committee meeting on the 29th – 30th of October. This was an extremely important meeting which offered everyone the opportunity to contribute to the development and future direction of EuroCOP. I am very pleased with the outcome and results, which have given us a great foundation for EuroCOP’s success in 2014 and beyond.

As you know, the two objectives of our Committee meeting were firstly, to ensure that EuroCOP is fit for purpose and secondly, that we engage in a programme of advocacy activity which directly and accurately reflects our members' priorities. On the first element, the Committee’s decision to adopt the alternative budget constituted a turning point for our organization as we move towards improved financial performance. I also look forward to the outcome of the working group which will review our statutes and standing orders. A call for members of this group was circulated to all of you after the meeting.

Regarding our meeting’s second objective, we can look back on some very fruitful discussions during the workshop run by FleishmanHillard. An initial overview of results is included below and we will see a lot more output as we move into next year. We have got a much clearer idea of members’ collective priorities and your input will form the basis of our future communications and public affairs materials. I cannot deny that the workshop also demonstrated differences among our members, but throughout the

discussions it became clear that in essence we have very similar needs and EuroCOP can only gain from us acting and speaking as one united force. We will be translating much of the outcomes of discussions into concrete wording for our EuroCOP Charter on Policing in 2025.

Finally, I would like to reflect on the elections for the Executive Committee. We had seven excellent candidates for the three vacancies. Such competition is a good indication of the health of EuroCOP. Following the vote, I am pleased to announce the new members of our ExCOM: Jörg Bruchmüller, Roger Mercatoris and Milan Stepanek.



On behalf of the entire Executive Committee, welcome! We have a lot of hard work ahead of us and it is great to have you on the team.

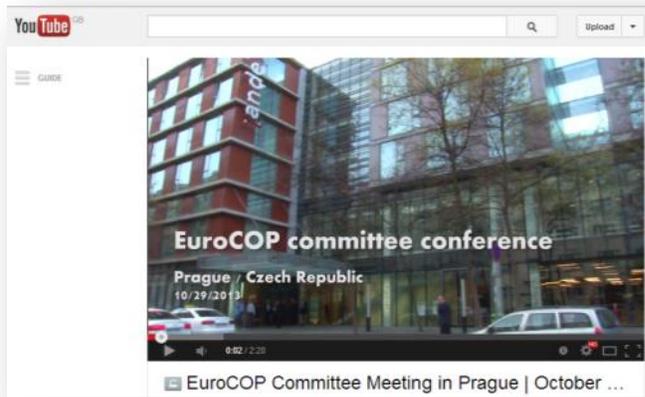
Best wishes,

Anna Nellberg-Dennis

President

First video impressions from the Committee meeting

In the margins of the workshop our cameraman and assistant held video interviews with individual delegates, which aimed to gather members' personal opinions, experiences and aspirations for policing in Europe.



Editing of these video interviews is still on-going, but please do take a [sneak peek](#) at some first impressions from the conference in this video and share it with your members!

EuroCOP's Members' Priorities

In order for EuroCOP to become an effective organization, raising awareness for policing issues with European policymakers, it needs to speak as one and truly be the voice of Europe's police officers. That means a common outlook on priorities as established by the members, as well as agreed key messages and actions.

The first discussion in the Committee's six working group focused on establishing EuroCOP's priorities. Taking into account the different circumstances of many members, the results of this exercise provided a strong consensus around some of the key themes:

1. Police Safety
2. Public Confidence & Salaries (shared 2nd place)
3. Political support & Crime levels (shared 3rd place)
4. International cooperation
5. Ethics
6. Training & Administration (shared 6th place)

Each of the Committee working groups focused on a particular issue, discussing these in more detail. The summaries below only scratch the surface of group discussion and the majority of your input received during the workshops will be used to put together in-depth materials in the coming months.

Summary working group issue discussions

Group 1:

Police Safety

Policing is an occupation in which officers can find themselves in significant danger and the nature of police tasks means that risks cannot always be controlled. At the same time, public expectations regarding police work are not always realistic. If we want police officers to be professional, they need to be treated as professionals, which means supported by tailored health and safety legislation just as any other profession. It is important to also emphasise other areas which all contribute to police safety including training, equipment, remuneration, ethics, and so on. A safer police force is able to provide a more secure environment for its citizens. The EU should invest in police health and safety and promote best practices among Member States, consider the set-up of common minimum standards for personnel, and promote the support of police operations by political and judicial institutions.

Administration

“We need more police on the streets” is an often heard phrase in countries across Europe. In practice, however, a police officer will spend a significant portion of their time dealing with administrative requirements and reporting rather than being on the frontline. This begs the question what tasks should a police officer fulfil and how do we strike a balance between the front office and the back office? A number of concrete ideas to tackle these issues include updating IT systems and making sure they are compatible, employing standard forms across borders to facilitate international cooperation, adopting new reporting methods, and making information sharing as easy as possible – both on a national and on a European level.

Group 2



Crime levels

Although crime statistics have improved over the years, police officers still see a rise in the feeling of insecurity and organized crime in particular. Organized crime groups (OGCs) are becoming more sophisticated and use every opportunity to innovate their practices, something that Europe’s police forces should emulate. Open borders within the EU provide huge benefits to legitimate business operations and consumers alike, but the differences that undeniably, still exist between different regions also incentivize professional criminals to take advantage of the situation. The art of crime is changing, most notably in the area of cybercrime, and Europe’s police forces must become more agile to deal with today’s new security threats. Europe’s policymakers are key in driving this change.

Political support

Political support is essential for police work, although it is not automatically given. Internal security is often taken for granted and is not a subject that wins elections. It is up to Europe's police forces to speak up and make the case for political support. Major incidents impacting European policy in the area of justice and home affairs, such as the tragic accident on the coast of Lampedusa, provide added instances where EuroCOP can promote a more European approach to policing, built on solidarity and supported by politicians across the continent.

Group 3

Equipment

With a lack of access to necessary equipment and supplies (from fuel, to building maintenance, to computers) on the increase across European police forces, and some officers being forced to pay for their own equipment, a common approach to equipment budgets may be necessary. One suggestion in particular is to follow the lead of NATO, which requires members to devote at least 20% of their defence expenditures to major equipment spending. Overall, minimum standards and longer term strategic thinking on equipment investment is needed. The economic crisis saw politicians resorting to short-term crisis measures, which only increased inefficiencies, particularly with regards to the use of EU funds.



Public Confidence

There is a general trend in Europe towards weakening public trust towards the police, with all but one of the countries represented in the working group seeing a decline in public confidence recently. Without trust the public doesn't report crime and this in turn impacts the political will to deliver much needed increases to police budgets.

Group 4



International Cooperation

As European integration evolves, the borders between internal security and external security have begun to blur, and increasing attention to international police cooperation is necessary to maintain Europe's safety and security as a whole. However, it is clear that significant work still needs to be done to overcome the linguistic and legislative challenges that come with working across borders. The EU needs to make smarter use

of Schengen. Cross-border working groups on issues such as football hooliganism and city riots are one such solution; as is more training on issues such as forensics to ensure common standards of policing and skills across the union.

Salaries

As Europe suffers under austerity measures brought about by the economic crisis, police salaries have stagnated or been cut significantly over the past few years. With officers struggling to stay in jobs that do not allow them to support their families, well-trained and experienced officers are being lost to other sectors. Creative solutions need to be found to stop this trend and ensure police forces can weather the storm of recession. Some suggestions include flexible working hours for police officers.

Group 5



Legislative Implementation

The EU legislative process is a lengthy affair and the implementation of laws at the national level, particularly those regarding justice and home affairs issues, has proven to be equally protracted and is often unevenly delivered. The harmonisation of implementation of EU laws is a real concern for Europe's police forces, particularly on those issues, which impact their work most: from police health and safety, to legal protection and compensation, to the right to unionise.

Staffing

With current police staffing in Europe following a downward trend there is a sense that the security of Europe's citizens cannot be guaranteed. This pattern has, in some countries, been mirrored by the rise of private security. For Europe's professional police forces to thrive, they need to know they are working with the best, selected through high-quality recruitment procedures. To retain good-quality officers and ensure they are promoted accordingly, they need the best training, and personal and professional protection to feel secure in their job.

Group 6

Ethics

The basic principles of ethical policing are known and applied everywhere, but the way they are applied in various European countries depends on their respective interpretation. When a police officer cannot sustain their family on their salary, which is the case in certain countries in the EU, the system itself promotes unethical behaviour in the form of corruption. Alternatively, valuable human capital is lost when officers leave the organization for a position with better conditions. Public servants including police are all facing budget cuts. At the same time, the police are tasked with maintaining public order

during austerity protests. Authorities as well as the general public need to understand the dynamics at play here and support the police's right to protest and union activity.

Training

The recruitment situation is deficient, with an ageing police force across the continent and less new recruits joining the force. Although the effects are starting to become apparent, they will increase in the next 5-10 years due to many officers reaching the legal pension age. This situation should be anticipated now and policymakers need to adopt a long term vision, rather than focusing on short term gains. When police organizations are restructured, proper attention should be paid to increasing efficiency, improving operations, and doing more with less – rather than just cutting costs and leaving organizations to their own devices. Education should always focus on both the practical as well as theoretical elements of police work. Many police organizations are still built on military structures, while they should be built on a civilian basis instead, which uses an entirely different range of principles.

Outcome of the vision exercise and working towards a European Charter for Policing in 2025

The FH Workshop's final exercise focused on EuroCOP's vision for the future, with the ultimate goal of developing a EuroCOP Charter with a Vision on European Policing in 2025. The results of the Working Group discussions were inspiring and sometimes surprising but overall provided insights into the core issues that will create the framework of a EuroCOP Charter 2025.

Across the board, Working Groups highlighted called for particular focus on two issues in the future: building public confidence and strengthening international cooperation. While public confidence was not highlighted as a key concern today in member responses to the EuroCOP questionnaire responses, it is clearly seen as an issue for the future. Working Groups noted that strengthening public confidence not only builds legitimacy for police activities, but it also strengthens police morale by reinforcing officers' sense of pride in their work, which can only enhance standards of policing. Some members went one step further calling for a need to rebuild the European police forces' reputation as the guardians of democracy and a police force **for citizens** – a strong image to support the future development of the European ideal.

Working group discussions around the development of stronger channels for European police cooperation demonstrated some members' concerns surround the inefficiency of current internal police force organisation. Future scenarios for better international communication and cooperation amongst policing will need to take into account and help mitigate the complexities of national policing structures.

Underlying the two central themes emerging from working group discussions, the need for minimum European standards in policing was made particularly evident. The future of European policing needs to ensure that police officers can go to work safely with the necessary equipment, training and staff support, and come home with the knowledge that their wage will allow them to support their family.

Finally, overriding the key themes of the EuroCOP charter, many working groups highlighted the future role of EuroCOP as becoming the definitive voice of all Europe's Police forces at EU level.

Wrapping up

For any feedback, comments, or suggestions following on the Committee meeting, please do not hesitate to contact us. A small reminder that responses to the questionnaire, for those who have not submitted these yet, are still very welcome.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming Committee meeting in Vilnius in April 2014!