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Press release

EuroCOP calls on the EU to address violence against the police

In Europe we are experiencing an increasing epidemic of violence against the police. This includes verbal abuse, hate crimes and most commonly physical violence against police officers and police staff as well as more often hybrid threats. Unfortunately, so far this trend has not received appropriate attention from EU decision makers. This is why, at its Autumn Committee Meeting in Torremolinos (Spain), EuroCOP launched its Position Paper on the matter, in which it is calling for a common EU response, including collection of data.

*“There is a human being behind each police officer- a father, brother, mother, sister or a friend. Each day, these people sacrifice their lives in order to protect citizens and keep societies safe. **It is high time for the European Union and its Member States to take common action in order to “protect the protectors”.** Without this commitment, we risk facing increasing crime as well shortage of police officers and problems with retention of the most experienced ones” said **Jonne Rinne, EuroCOP President** at the opening of the meeting on 8th November 2023.*

*In her video message, the **European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson** addressed directly EuroCOP members by saying: “You are often the only ones, who stand between people and criminals. You shield people from danger. Often with your own bodies. At the risk of your health, at the risk of your life. Sometime at the cost of your life. Now all across Europe we see increasing threats, intimidation and more and more online targeting of police officers and also increasing physical violence. They became the target of anger by people, who sometimes forget that inside the uniform there is a human being. I would like to thank you for putting this issue on the EU agenda. We take the issue of police violence very seriously. **We should also take the issue of violence against police equally seriously. We need to tackle this growing problem together.** Thank you for raising awareness. **Together we must say, that violence against the police is completely unacceptable.** (...) You can count on my support”.*

The address by Commissioner Johansson received great applause from EuroCOP delegates, who represent 30 police unions and staff organisations across Europe as well as over 230,000 police officers in 25 European countries. EuroCOP truly believes, that the issue of violence against the police should be taken seriously by EU decision makers in the near future. For the time being, this deteriorating situation has been routinely ignored.

As a first step, EuroCOP is calling on EU decision makers to establish a **central repository of data in the EU as regards incidences of violence against police officers**, potentially via Eurostat. Collection of data at EU level would help understand the roots of the problem, exchange best practices between Members States and adapt safety awareness training programs for police officers. This happens already in third countries such as Norway, Iceland, the United Kingdom or the Unites States but also in a number of EU countries like Spain, Germany, Belgium or France.

[EuroCOP position paper](#) is available on EuroCOP website.