



# Violence against the police and a common EU response

Law Enforcement Working Party, Council of the EU

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# About EuroCOP

- The European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) is the umbrella organisation for police unions and staff organisations in Europe. We represent the interests of police officers across the whole of the European landscape.
- EuroCOP is tackling issues from police cooperation across borders to a safer working environment for police officers on the street. We are determined to contribute to European policy debates and provide added value by giving a practitioners perspective.
- EuroCOP was established in November 2002, and is an independent, non-profit and secular organisation. EuroCOP is open to any organisation representing police officers in member countries of the European Union or the Council of Europe.
- EuroCOP is the only Police representative body that are members of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Trade Union Federation (ETUF). EuroCOP also has participation rights in the Council of Europe.





# THE VOICE OF POLICE OFFICERS

"HUMAN RIGHTS - DO POLICE OFFICERS HAVE ANY?"  
EURO COP CALLS ON THE EU TO ADDRESS  
VIOLENCE AGAINST THE POLICE



# Violence against the police in the EU- state of play

## EuroCOP position paper on violence against the police:

- Europe is experiencing epidemic of violence against police;
  - Various forms of violence: verbal abuse and hate crimes, sexual assaults, physical violence, hybrid threats;
  - Facts and figures: Spain, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, France;
  - Examples of violence: Denmark and Finland;
  - Situation in third countries- good practice: Norway, Iceland, UK, USA;
  - Social costs: cooperation with Dr. Lee Johnson: *“Understanding Assaults against Police Officers: A study of conflict escalation in police encounters with the public”*;
  - Economic costs: Luis A. García Segura- *“The cost of violence against Police and Civil Guard officers in Spain”*.
- **What EuroCOP is calling for: central repository of data in the EU as regards incidences of violence against police officers:**
  - Understanding the roots of the problem, exchanging best practice between Members States and adapting safety awareness training programs for police officers.



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### Violence against police officers- an urgent need for common EU response

#### *Executive summary*

*In Europe we are experiencing the increasing epidemic of violence against police officers. This violence can include verbal abuse and hate crimes, sexual assaults and most commonly physical violence against police officers and police staff. Development of social media creates its own specific challenges and the future will bring even more hybrid threats. EuroCOP has been vocal on that topic for an extended period of time, but this deteriorating situation has been routinely ignored by EU decision makers. In many EU countries data is not collected which makes it even more difficult to understand the causes and consequences of this dangerous phenomenon. However, data is recorded in third countries such as Norway, Iceland, United Kingdom or United States. The aim is to look at emerging trends, improve training, ensure consistent support for victims of assaults and work with the criminal justice system around outcomes and sentencing. This is why 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 understanding the roots of the problem, exchanging best practice between Members States and adapting safety awareness training programs for police officers.*

#### *Introduction*

In Europe we are experiencing the increasing epidemic of violence against police officers. This violence can include verbal abuse and hate crimes, sexual assaults and most commonly physical violence against police officers and police staff. EuroCOP<sup>1</sup>, an organization which represents 30 police unions and staff organisations across Europe as well as over 230,000 police officers in 25 European countries, has been vocal on that topic for an extended period of time. Already in February 2022 EuroCOP President has sent a letter to the Members of the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament, in which EuroCOP called for a parliamentary debate on the issue. **Thus far, this deteriorating situation has been routinely ignored at EU level.** This is a deplorable situation for police officers, who are society's front-line protectors, and have borne the brunt of civil unrest associated with e.g. COVID lockdown protests through enforcing said lockdowns. More recently police officers

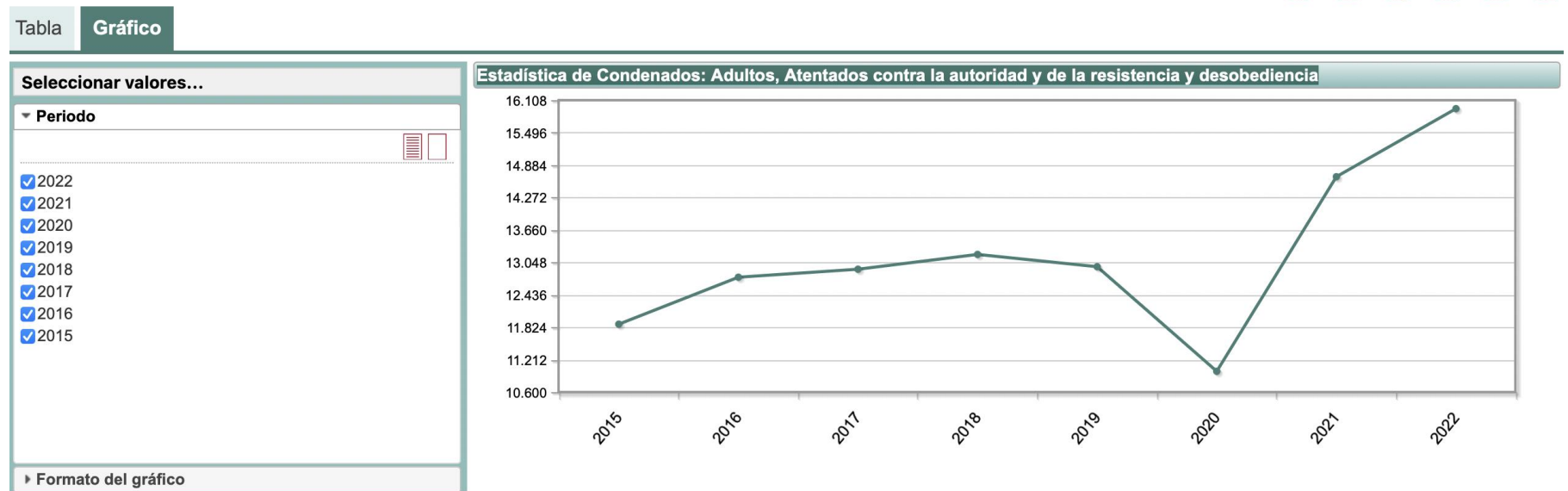
<sup>1</sup> <https://eurocop.org>



# Data collection in EU MSs- example of Spain

- There is a lack of reliable data of cases of violence against the police at national as well as EU level, which makes it even more difficult to address this challenge.
- Where data are recorded, EuroCOP has identified a trend on the rise regarding the number of cases of violence against police officers:

- **Spain**
- Germany
- Sweden
- Belgium
- France



Notas ( 3 )

El 10 de enero de 2019, debido a un error detectado, se ha corregido la tabla del año 2017 relativa a los delitos correspondientes de los Capítulos del Título 8

Fuente: Explotación del INE del Registro Central de Penados

En julio de 2015 entró en vigor una reforma del Código Penal que suprimió las faltas, convirtiéndolas en delitos leves

# Violence against police- collection of data in Catalonia

- Catalan police maintains a record of assaults on the police officers (this type of crime is categorised as criminal offence);
- Information about cases of violence against police officers is available on the [transparency portal of the Generalitat de Catalunya](#), and can be accessed by utilizing the filtering options provided by the application.
- Data on the number of resolved cases and the number of arrests related to the specific incidents is also included.
- **What is missing:**
  - Only statistics are published;
  - No information about duration of sick leave caused by violence and due to injuries sustained from these assaults;
  - No information about any subsequent physical or psychological effects.

(These aspects are crucial in understanding the impact of the attacks not only on individual officers but also on the overall effectiveness of public security services.)



# Violence against police- collection of data in Catalonia

- **Printscreen of data collected in Catalonia on violence against police**
- [https://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els mossos desquadra/indicadors i qualitat/dades obertes/](https://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els_mossos_desquadra/indicadors_i_qualitat/dades_obertes/)
- [https://analisi.transparenciacatalunya.cat/Seguretat/Fets-penals-coneguts-fets-coneguts-resolts-i-deten/qnyt-emjc/data preview](https://analisi.transparenciacatalunya.cat/Seguretat/Fets-penals-coneguts-fets-coneguts-resolts-i-deten/qnyt-emjc/data_preview)
- [https://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els mossos desquadra/indicadors i qualitat/estadistica/index.html](https://mossos.gencat.cat/ca/els_mossos_desquadra/indicadors_i_qualitat/estadistica/index.html)
- <https://visors.icgc.cat/mapa-delinquencial/#8.2/41.702/0.917>

# Data collection in 3rd countries- example of United Kingdom

- In the United Kingdom, data on assaults against police officers are [collected centrally by the Home Office](#), inviting **submissions from the main 43 police forces and British Transport Police.**
- In March 2022, there were just over 41,000 assaults on police officers in England and Wales (including British Transport);
- The data source for assaults on police officers is the police recorded crime series, which are published quarterly in '[Crime in England and Wales](#)', released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS); it is **updated on an annual basis**;
- **Focus on a better understanding of assaults** through recording data and encouraging reporting by police officers- [Operation Hampshire](#), which is a national programme of work around violence against police officers. The aim is to **look at emerging trends, improve training, ensure consistent support for victims** or assaults and work with the criminal justice system around outcomes and sentencing.

National statistics

## Annex: Statistics on the number of police officers assaulted in the year ending March 2022, England and Wales

Published 27 July 2022

Applies to England and Wales

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### Key findings

In the year ending March 2022 there were just over 41,000 assaults on police officers in England and Wales (including British Transport). Of which:

- 29,491 were crimes of “assault without injury on a constable” recorded across all forces an increase of 11% compared with 26,539 in the previous year
- 11,730 crimes of “assault with injury on a constable”<sup>[[footnote 1](#)]</sup> recorded across all forces (including British Transport Police), a small increase of 2.6% compared with 11,429 in the previous year



# Data collection in 3rd countries- example of United States

- The FBI publishes **Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA)** each year to provide information about officers who were killed, feloniously or accidentally, and officers who were assaulted while performing their duties;
- The FBI collects these data through the **Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program**;
- FBI started to collect data on officers, that were killed already in 1937; statistics regarding assaults on officers were added in 1960; in 1971 collection of data was extended to include more details about the incidents in which law enforcement officers were killed and assaulted;
- **LEOKA Program provides free Officer Safety Awareness Training (OSAT)** to city, college and university, county, state, tribal, federal, and international law enforcement agencies in order to provide relevant, high quality, potentially lifesaving information to law enforcement agencies **focusing on why an incident occurred**, as opposed to *what* occurred during the incident.



The screenshot shows the top portion of the FBI's 2017 LEOKA report page. At the top left is the FBI seal. The main title is "2017 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED & ASSAULTED". Below the title is a navigation bar with links for "Criminal Justice Information Services Division", "Feedback | Contact Us | Data Quality Guidelines | UCR Home". A secondary navigation bar contains links for "Home", "Officers Feloniously Killed", "Officers Accidentally Killed", "Federal Officers Killed and Assaulted", "Officers Assaulted", and "About LEOKA". The "About LEOKA" section is highlighted in blue. Below this, there is a link to "Download Printable Document". The main content area begins with a paragraph explaining the report's purpose: "The FBI publishes Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) each year to provide information about officers who were killed, feloniously or accidentally, and officers who were assaulted while performing their duties. The FBI collects these data through the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program." This is followed by a "History" section starting with "Beginning in 1937, the FBI's UCR Program collected and published statistics on law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in its annual publication, *Crime in the United States*." At the bottom of the screenshot, there are two columns of links: "Resources" and "Data Tables". The "Resources" column includes links for "Summaries of Officers Killed, by State", "Criteria", "Methodology - Officers Killed", "Methodology - Officers Assaulted", "Methodology - Federal Officers Killed and Assaulted", "LEOKA Definitions", "Topic Guide", "Tables by Title", "Downloadable Files", "Summary of LEOKA 2017", "Feedback", "About the UCR Program", "FBI UCR Program Directory", and "State UCR Program Directory". The "Data Tables" column includes a "Roll over table numbers for table titles" link and a list of tables from "Table 1" to "Table 17", with "Table 1" specifically labeled as "Law Enforcement Officers Feloniously Killed".



# Central EU repository of data on violence against the police- possible outline

**Awareness raising:** organise an EU awareness raising campaign e.g. European Day.

**Intelligence gathering:** draft a report about situation in the EU with regards to collection of data on violence against police; examples of best practice;

**Collection of data:** Establish compatible national systems to collect data on violence against police officers;

**Repository of data:** ask Member States to share data with Eurostat in order to establish a repository of comparable data at EU level;

**Maintenance of data:** keep data safe and up to date; ask Member States to exchange data on a yearly basis;

**Data analysis:** ask Eurostat to aggregate data and analyse it in order to understand roots of the problem, identify trends and the most common forms of violence;

**Exchange best practice between Members States and adapt safety awareness training programs for police officers.**



# Support of the European Parliament

- In 2019 the European Parliament *has been calling for training of police officers and exchange of best practices in its [Resolution](#) from 14th Feb on the right to peaceful protest and the proportionate use of the force;*
- [A Written Question on “Violence against the police in EU Member States”](#) has been tabled on 22nd March 2023 by Assita Kanko (ECR), Lena Düpont (PPE), Jeroen Lenaers (PPE), Dragoş Tudorache (Renew), Malik Azmani (Renew):
  - 1.Does the Commission agree that the level of violence against police officers, as well as the increasing intensity of such violence in several Member States, is extremely worrying?
  - 2.Can the Commission commit to improving the collection and exchange of data on this issue?
  - 3.What further measures, including raising awareness and exchanging best policies and practices, can the Commission propose to help reduce the intensity of violence against police officers and to better equip Member States’ police organisations?



# Reply from the European Commission to the WQ

- **Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission (May 2023):**

The Commission recognises and values the efforts and hard work of law enforcement authorities, often under difficult circumstances, across the EU.

The Commission strongly condemns any use of violence, including violence targeting police officers and other repositories of public authority such as for instance firemen and women, ambulance crew or hospital personnel.

Violence is not a legitimate part of our EU values. National authorities must investigate individual cases of reported violence and ensure that justice is served.

The Commission recognises that it is for Member States to protect and support their police officers and security forces and ensure that they can carry out their duties in the safest way possible.

**The EU has limited competence in this area, as the maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security is in principle the responsibility of the Member States.**

**As a result, the Commission does not systematically collect or receive information on violence perpetrated against the police forces in EU Member States.**



# Support of the European Commission

Message delivered by Ilva Johansson, European Commissioner For Home Affairs at the EuroCOP meeting in November 2023, showing her support of protecting the protectors:

*“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”.*



# EuroCOP Manifesto for European Elections 2024

*“We want Europe to be the place, where police officers are operating together in an environment of equality, safety and support, provided with the rights, resources, and training to keep Europe’s citizens safe and secure. With our 2024 European Parliament Elections Manifesto we call on all European democratic parties and candidates as well as newly elected MEPs and Commissioners to endorse our values and priorities in order to build a fair and secure European Union through 3 commitments”* Jonne Rinne, EuroCOP President.

- 1. COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST THE POLICE**
- 2. GUARANTEE FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS AND SOCIAL RIGHTS FOR POLICE OFFICERS**
- 3. FACILITATE COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN POLICE FORCES IN EUROPE**



# Discussion with representatives of MSs- questions

1. Which Member States are collecting data about violence against police officers?
2. Which Member States would be willing to collect and share such data at EU level?
3. Do Member States see the need to collect and exchange data about violence against police officers at EU level?



# THANK YOU!

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