

EuroCOP: issue summary for German Council Presidency (September 2020)

Presidency priorities, including a European Police Partnership

- EuroCOP welcomes the Presidency priorities to establish a European Police Partnership, update Europol's mandate, and strengthen cross-border and cross-institutional (police, customs, border protection, migration authorities and judiciary) collaboration.
- EuroCOP believes that that these priorities should also include adequate training, resources, and access to data in order for Europe's police officers to work effectively.

Resources and equipment and training

- It is necessary that proposals to update Europol's mandate and to introduce new rules around a Security Union provide for adequate training, resources and access to data in order for Europe's police officers to be able to work effectively.
- **Resources:** All police officers should be equipped with adequate and effective tactical and personal protective equipment. The police cannot protect the public if they themselves are not protected.
- The security threats facing European countries are ever changing: those working in law enforcement must have the resources required to respond to these threats.
- **Training:** Training should be coordinated by the European Police College (CEPOL) to ensure standardised training is designed and delivered in all police forces. CEPOL should have its capacity developed in respect of this and help it develop beyond a primarily "on-line" service.
- In particular, all European police officers should receive practical and theory training and resources to deal with current threats, including terrorism. Police training for terror incidents needs to be more than for elite officers – regular officers are inevitably the first to respond to such incidents.
- Training needs to be more than just for "after the event" and needs to help officers identify risks and threats before they materialise into actions.

Access to data

- The free flow of information and intelligence between all European police forces, InterPol and EuroPol is essential. If investment in technology is required to facilitate this, it must be made without delay. Delays in information sharing and access can have fatal consequences.
- Information received by national police forces is not readily accessible by "officers on the ground". This is compounded in nations where autonomous or semi-autonomous police forces / services exist within member states (as they are rarely the lead agency on National Security). Examples where this is an issue include Spain, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Belgium. The reluctance to get involved in the reserved powers of member states is understood but this does not address the issues.

Health and safety, including Covid-19

- EU police officers are fighting a series of work-related illnesses due to the working environment, and exposure to physically and mentally extreme situations.
- In some cases police officers are excluded from key EU legislation that protects workers, such as the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has required police forces across Europe to adapt quickly to new ways of working and to enforce rapidly changing lockdown rules.
- Police officers working during the Covid-19 pandemic should be considered as at risk to an occupational disease and have the same health protection as other workers.

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Migration and asylum

- The refugee issue is something that has and will continue to be an issue heavily used in national politics. Police officers are put into the difficult position of acting as the government's hand in battling any potential refugee crises and suffer the political fallout of such actions as well. Police officers have not been trained to deal with the complex issues created by the refugee/migration crisis and some of our police forces are simply overwhelmed by the volume of people coming to our shores.

EU-UK future relationship

- EuroCOP support the preparations that are currently being undertaken by both the EU institutions and the UK as they work to establish new working relationships.
- It is of vital importance to the Police Service across the European landscape that the process of Brexit does not allow the criminal fraternity to take advantage of the operational challenges that face the Police Service during this period of time and beyond.

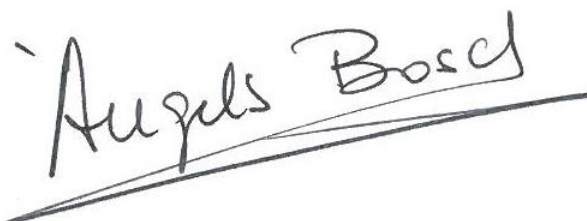
EuroCOP activity at national level

- EuroCOP takes an active role in national issues. For example, EuroCOP is actively engaging with national unions on the need to review and revise the current police disciplinary processes of the Spanish Police and Civil Guard. A recent report from the Council of Europe Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), recommends: reviewing the disciplinary regime of the Police and the Civil Guard, with a view to strengthening its transparency, objectivity and proportionality, among other things and in particular, by excluding any possibility of a supervisor deciding on discipline matters single-handedly.

Anti-racism protests

- Some police forces across Europe and globally have faced significant criticism in relation to the treatment of ethnic minorities, particularly in light of the recent anti-racism protests.
- EuroCOP supports the recent European Parliament resolution which states that the use of force by law enforcement authorities should always be lawful, proportionate, necessary and used as a last resort. Up to now every police force has internal proceedings to prevent bad behaviour. Renewing the European Code of Police Ethics (2001) could be an opportunity to look for a European common approach to this matter (duties/rights).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Àngels Bosch". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with two parallel lines.

EuroCOP President