



STABILITY PACT

FOR SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

Police Forum Initiative

Report

Meeting of Working Table for Security Issues
Tirana, 4th December 2003

The Police Forum initiative is one of the most successful one launched within the Stability Pact framework. It consists now in three projects: Regional Police Training (modules for the high ranked police officers), Organized Crime Training Network (a complex project involving Organized Crime Fighting Units) and the Stolen car project (recently included after a regional conference on this topic).

I. REGIONAL POLICE TRAINING

At the Stability Pact meeting in Sofia in October 2000, Working Table III (for Security issues) endorsed a Norwegian research proposal to make a study of the regional strategies for police training to enhance co-operation in South Eastern Europe (SEE). The mandate of the researchers was twofold: first, to map existing co-operation on regional police training and second, to discuss and propose new strategies for such initiatives.

The study has concluded that an essential characteristic of most of the countries of South Eastern Europe is that they are passing through a period of transition, in which they are reforming and restructuring their law enforcement institutions. This common feature holds across the region despite the fact that there are significant political differences, varying legal structures and systems, and differing types of law enforcement organisation among the countries. Another common element throughout the region is the will of the respective states to adopt EU policing standards and practices.

Given the necessity to reform the institutional rule of law arena in many countries in SEE, it was recognised the pivotal role of the different police forces and the strong need to strengthen regional police co-operation across South Eastern Europe. It was evaluated that one of the means of doing so was through regional training. Given the right conditions, training has had both short and long-term effects. It has increased police skills, enhanced democratic policing, and created and developed regional networks and cross-border co-operation. Furthermore, it has increased the knowledge and ability of bicultural and multicultural policing to achieve its desired goal of combating trans-national organised crime.

The study was presented at the **Chiefs of Police** meeting in Sarajevo on 14 December 2000. The meeting welcomed the study and supported the idea to take the initiative further.

Based on these recommendations, the Chairman of Working Table III took the initiative to establish a Working Group with representatives from Ministries of the Interior, police academies and police services in the region (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia & Montenegro, Hungary, Macedonia, Slovenia and Romania). The Working Group, which is chaired jointly by Croatia and Norway, has met four times.

Meanwhile, the Working Group involved the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPCC) in preparing a Training Project. It has its roots in the previously-mentioned Norwegian study, in which the European Commission's project 'European Curriculum for Police Training in Central and Eastern European Countries ("Enfopol 118")', conducted by the AEPCC, was given as an example of a possible project design. This project, which was implemented by the AEPCC in 1999 and 2000, contained 75 training module courses on 17 themes for 10 candidate member states.

The Working Group decided that the Project, named Regional Police Training, would also be realised in the same manner, by means of module training courses. The topics for the modules were determined within the Working Group, in consultation with the regional partner countries.

The training courses have been provided and co-ordinated by the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC), in co-operation with the Central European Police Academy (MEPA) and the Nordic Baltic Police Academy (NBPA). In consultation and agreement with the AEPC, other training institutions also have been involved in the training courses.

During the Belgrade meeting (6 June 2001) the Working Group agreed on a set of recommendations relating to objectives of the training, relevant training providers and training methodology.

The training project has been running for more than two years now, during which time a substantial number of modules have been implemented. The Regional Police Training project shows that long-term effect activities can be successfully implemented under the Stability Pact umbrella. The project also demonstrates that such an activity can result in regional police co-operation and the exchange of information both within the region and between countries in the region and the Western European countries. The first initiatives for building bilateral relationships are now presenting themselves. In addition, the project shows that the SEE countries attach importance to having well trained police officers in their police organisations.

In evaluating the modules implemented so far, the participants seemed extremely satisfied with the resulting exchange of knowledge and experience.

They did, however, express a desire for more details regarding the more technical modules, such as Trafficking in Drugs and Trafficking in Human Beings, in comparison with the more general modules, such as Police Management or Policing a Multicultural Society. Quite understandable given the nature of the modules.

Generally speaking, the delegations put a lot of effort into the presentations they give on the first day about the state of affairs in their particular country. These presentations give trainers and participants a good overview of the state of affairs in all participating countries.

The participants continue to press for the use of as many police case studies as possible. The trainers take good note of this.

As far as the aim of 'networking' is concerned, the delegations also seemed highly satisfied. The informal part of the day programme most certainly helps to reinforce the relationships established during the discussions and the exchange of experience during conference hours. The farewell dinner on the Thursday evening, in particular, has proved to be a binding, and sometimes bonding factor.

In almost all of the evaluations, the participants express a wish to maintain the contacts established during the training.

In every module evaluation, ideas are put forward for follow-up conferences, focus conferences or subjects for other training modules. The participants proved to be enthusiastic and positive about the progress, content and outcome of the module training and the quality of the trainers.

Generally speaking, the participants have met the criteria of the target group. The trainers have received the participants' CVs prior to implementation and have seemed satisfied. It

has not yet been necessary for the AEPC to make any adjustments on the basis of the CVs submitted.

Once again, there is a difference between the more technical modules and the more general ones. It is easier to estimate whether or not the target group has been reached for the technical modules because they involve specific, technical positions. When it comes to more general modules, the topic often forms part of the participants' portfolio, together with other subjects.

Together with the Stability Pact Secretariat of the Working Table for security issues and the co-chairs, the AEPC will start a monitoring process starting with the next year, to see if the participants still occupy the same position as during the implementation and what has happened with the knowledge, insights and networks acquired during the training.

As far as the didactic methods used are concerned, the trainers primarily use cases, introductions, presentations (by both participants and trainers) and various types of discussion. In a number of modules, the participants worked in groups. One factor that must be taken into account when introducing group work is the need to keep an interpreter with a delegation. As a result, it did not prove possible in most cases to compile groups from different delegations. The participants were positive about working in groups.

The co-operation between the AEPC staff and the organisers at the venue was excellent in all module implementations. Thanks to the enormous effort by those involved and the good co-ordination between the various parties, it was possible to organise the module implementation in great detail beforehand. As a result, training staff, chair of the day and participants were hardly ever confronted with surprises during the implementation and they were able to devote their full attention to the module programme. During the implementation, one or two facilitators are always present on the spot, to support the chair of the day.

Various countries in which a module was organised not only provided personnel, but also a material contribution, for example in the form of free transport, the group photo or other services.

For two modules, the organiser on the spot arranged interpreters for delegations unable to provide these themselves.

Contact and co-operation between the AEPC Secretariat and the participating countries is very good. The module is prepared via extensive correspondence with the national contact persons. The participating countries respond, in general, promptly and adequately to AEPC requests. The AEPC Secretariat is easily accessible for questions and a solution is always found to problems involving, for example, visas, travel and interpreters.

After the implementation, the participants receive a certificate of attendance. The trainers also receive a certificate.

Update Regional Police Training Project

Since the Seventh Meeting of Working Table III on 26 May 2003 in Cavtat, three modules are implemented within the Regional Police Training Project.

- Module Police Ethics from 16 – 20 June 2003 in Valbandon, Croatia
- Module Training Methods from 15 – 19 September 2003 in Valbandon, Croatia
- Module 'Financial Crime and Money Laundering' has been recently implemented, from 24-28 November 2003, in Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia.

The participants very well evaluated the module 'Police Ethics' as well as the module 'Training Methods'. In both implementations, the project aims of exchange of knowledge and best practices and of initiating broad regional police co-operation and networking were satisfactory met.

At the date of writing the underlying document, the module 'Financial Crime and Money Laundering' is not yet implemented.

The total number of modules successfully implemented in the Regional Police Training Project, including 'Financial Crime and Money Laundering, is eleven.

All modules in the Project have been and will be implemented by experts of the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC).

For 2004 three more module are scheduled to be implemented, according to the wish expressed by the participating countries at the Belgrade Meeting of the Police Forum's Working Group on 6 June 2001. These are the following modules:

- Smuggling Stolen Vehicles
- Forging Documents
- Maintaining Public Order

The module 'Smuggling Stolen Vehicles' is financially covered and will be organised in early 2004. The other two modules remain open for now due to lack of financial support.

In May 2003 an interim report was published. In 2004, after the last implementation a final report will be drawn up.

II. ORGANISED CRIME TRAINING NETWORK (OCTN) FOR OPERATIONAL MANAGERS

Description

Austria, Norway and Switzerland (and possibly UK) are ready to support an "Organised Crime Training Network (OCTN)" for operational managers. The network will:

- Provide organised crime (OC) investigators in South-East European Countries with **joint training** based on EU norms and international standards;
- Provide a **networking frame for OC investigators** in the region as well as among the region and the international partners;
- Give the opportunity to **share best practices** and to **enhance common investigation activities**; and
- Introduce and support a process for the **further organisational development of the OC investigation units** in the countries of South-East Europe (SEE).

The OCTN will be based on the Central European Police Academy (MEPA) model with a **permanent secretariat and roaming training structures** which will take into account the particular needs of SEE member states in a participative manner. SEE countries will decide upon priority setting.

The network has been launched under the umbrella of the Stability Pact and **integrated into the Police Forum Initiative** by using its existing decisional structures to avoid duplications and to

benefit from synergies. The Southeast European Police Chiefs Association will be included in an appropriate manner. Therefore, and in accordance with the conclusions of the Police Forum Core Group meeting of February 2003, the proposed network will not create an “isolated” structure but will become an integrated part of the international efforts to defeat cross-border organised crime.

Rational for an “organised crime training network”

The breakdown of the communist system and the Balkan wars led to a propagation of cross-border organised crime. It has gained a prominent and devastating role affecting all levels of society. Organized crime undermines democratization, human rights, individual security, respect for the rule of law, social progress and trust in both investment and reform efforts. Without the application of international standards, the appropriate equipment and international cooperation, the police authorities in South-East Europe can hardly fulfil their duties. Cross-border organised crime and a lack of legal security represent a threat for the political and economic stability as well as for internal security in the region with repercussions for Central and Western Europe.

Similar to MEPA, the OCTN will establish an efficient regional cooperation in SEE. Its roaming joint training structures will not only allow practice-oriented continuing education of investigators and sharing best practices, but improve informal contacts among investigators from all over Europe as well. Members of the OCTN will be kept informed of the latest news and international standards through written material regularly issued by its secretariat. In the frame of the Police Forum Initiative of the Stability Pact, the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPCC) has also just opened its structures to include SEE Police Academies and provide their students with international experiences on combating cross-border organised crime. Both MEPA and AEPCC are willing to transfer their experiences to the SEE countries. The OCTN will merge the advantages of these two institutions. It will provide its target group in the SEE countries with joint training based on EU norms and international standards. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to share best practices and to enhance common investigation activities by improving both formal and informal working contacts. The network will establish institutionalised relationships among the police investigators of the region and will link them to other international partners. The proposal fits with and brings added value to the Police Forum Initiative and complements other related regional initiatives (i.e. SECI-Centre, SPOC).

Stability Pact Commitments and Objectives

Further enhance regional cooperation by:

- Sharing best practices on implementing reforms necessary to meet the obligations under SAP and other relevant EU processes, and sharing lessons learned on improving internal inter-agency cooperation, exchange of information and coordination;
- Ensuring consistency of new legislation from one country to the next, and across the entire region;
- Participating in joint capacity building programmes to further develop South-East European crime-fighting institutions to a common European standard across the region; and
- Developing operation mechanisms in line with EU standards, and cooperation across borders to mount joint anti-crime operations, promote judicial networking and mutual legal assistance, and exchange information necessary for tackling crime at a regional level.

Progress to Date

On behalf of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, a detailed analysis of the region has

been presented in the “Regional Civilian Police Training in Southeast Europe”¹ report. The analysis contains an overview of the current police initiatives that cover part of or the entire region.

The conclusions of the London Conference on defeating organised crime in SEE, November 25th, 2002, outline the need to strengthen regional and international efforts and state the engagement of the EU and partners in this field.

Based on the London Statement, Austria and Switzerland convened in Vienna on March 31st, 2003 to discuss launching a special organised crime training network for police investigators to reinforce the international cooperation. The Association of the European Police Colleges and MEPA cooperated in developing the conceptual base.

In the presence of a representative of the Stability Pact WT III, a follow-up meeting took place on May 5, 2003 in Bern, when Norway, the main supporter of the Police Forum Initiative, was also included in the Core group.

The proposed network has been presented at the Working Table III Meeting and the Meeting of the Regional Table of the Stability Pact for SEE, May 26-27, 2003 in Dubrovnik and integrated into the Police Forum Initiative.

In September 10th to 12th, 2003 the 1st Expert Meeting/Workshop took place in Traiskirchen, Austria. The workshop was undertaken with participants from the Organised Crime units of the SEE region to elaborate a project with the objective of improving the cooperation and collaboration of crime fighting units in the region, and to improve the overall training and skills of the Organised Crime units in the South East European region.

The participants represented all of the different countries in the region with the exception of Montenegro, together with representatives of the international donors, existing regional organisations (e.g. Stability Pact, SECI) and the UN crime-fighting unit in Vienna.

The expressed aim of the workshop was to understand more fully the actual, real and current difficulties being faced by the operational units, and to address these needs through focussed and directed project activities and actions. The outcome of the workshop will build the framework of the final project planning.

It is anticipated that a formal Letter of Intent will be sent to each minister of interior as an attachment to the common letter of the donors with the request to sign it in case of agreement with the project to be planned. This letter will also state clearly the readiness of the different Ministries of Interior, and by inference their relevant departments, to actively support the project planning process. In the spring of 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding with attachment as the project document will be signed in the frame of a minister conference in Austria.

Contact - Lead Agency

Austrian Ministry of Interior

Mr Peter Pasecky – Project Manager

Phone: +43-1 53126-4856

Telefax: +43-1 53126-4873

Email: peter.pasecky@bmi.gv.at

SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION (SDC)

¹ Norwegian Institute of International Affairs: Tor Tanke Holm and Kari Margrethe Osland.

Ms. Elisabeth Heer – project coordinator

Staff for international development and crisis management (SINDEC)
Federal Office of Police
Bundesrain 20
CH-3003 Bern
Phone: +41 31 324 44 20
Fax: +41 31 323 05 44

Funding

For the first three years, main funding shall be covered by the members of the core group. The Core Group (Austria, Norway and Switzerland) is open to all donor countries and organisations interested in supporting the network.

III. STOLEN CAR Project

Introduction

The theft of cars and trade in stolen vehicles is a significant problem in Europe. More than three million cars are stolen every year in the world and more than one million in Europe (according to the INTERPOL analysis, the stolen car business is the second as importance for the organized crime networks, after drugs) and a large number of them are transported from the country of theft to another country to be sold. According to statistics from 2002 a total of 1.149.114 vehicles were stolen in Europe and 388.779 were not recovered. The average net profit on one stolen vehicle is estimated to 15.000 € so the net profit accumulated by organised criminal groups in 2002 concerning trafficking in stolen vehicles is estimated to more than 5.8 billion Euro. The trade in stolen cars is mainly in the hands of organised criminal groups and is related to other forms of organised crime. It is also trans-national. Violence is being used to an increasing extent to obtain luxury cars that are then transported out of the country of theft and sold in another country.

Limiting and eventually eliminating the illegal vehicle trade is crucial to the fight against Organized crime. It is therefore important to limit and impede the flow of financial gains from the trade. The rules applying to companies that trade in vehicles and component parts must be made more stringent and control must be tightened. The registration system should also be reformed and harmonised.

Thus the ability of law enforcement agencies to prevent the export of stolen cars and procedures for recovering stolen cars should be improved, including, if necessary, introducing new legislation. Legislation must also be developed or amended to enable the law enforcement agencies to confiscate the financial gains or property acquired from this illegal activity. The registration procedures must be improved and harmonised and illegal re-registration prevented.

National action plans

In order to achieve these aims, national action plans should be developed, covering training, identification of equipment needs and legislation. Policy must be reformed, relevant legislation developed and effective procedures, standards and management of

the process of recovering stolen vehicles must be established and harmonised. The plans should aim to meet international and European standards.

The national authorities may be assisted in preparing their action plans by another country (twinning - country teams). The plans should identify areas where assistance is required. There are envisaged cooperation/assistance systems, including twinning arrangements, as well as possibilities for their financing via European Commission's programmes and by the non-EU countries.

It is important to ensure that the implementation of these plans is co-ordinated at the national level. It is therefore recommended that in each country a national platform be established by the relevant public and private actors in the fight against stolen vehicles (police, customs, vehicle registration authorities, insurance companies, manufacturers), who will meet frequently to discuss the problems at the national level.

Preferably, National Action Plans should be formulated before the Stability Pact Regional Table meeting in May-June 2004.

Regional co-operation

Car thefts must also be dealt with at the regional level, and regional co-operation is essential to achieve results. Co-operation with Interpol and Europol is vital in this regard. Links should also be established to the SECI Regional Centre for Combating Transborder Crime, based in Bucharest. Also, the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEP) could be used to endorse, at the Ministerial level, any expert level proposals. Duplication of work should be avoided and the optimal usage of resources should be encouraged. Regional cooperation should be established, including efforts done in this respect by other initiatives like Adriatic Ionian initiative and Central European Initiative.

The work of the SECI Centre's Task Force on stolen cars is highly commendable. Its strategy plan, together with the two-draft action plans (Steps to Reduce the Stolen Car Market in South Eastern Europe and Recommendations to combat vehicle crime) done by the WT III Secretariat, could be a good start for this wide organized crime problem. The Stability Pact's Police Forum Initiative will have a co-ordinating role in the regional framework and will involve all the necessary law enforcement agencies.

Cross-border co-operation is recommended.

Subject areas

Training and capacity-building

Under the auspices of the Stability Pact's Police Forum initiative and the Regional Police Training project, the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC) will arrange a training module in 2004 to train trainers in the field of checking and identifying stolen vehicles. It is also to be mentioned that within the Police Forum initiative, the Organized Crime Training Network (OCTN) project may include a specialized regional training module for organized crime investigators.

Based on the experience gained by the working group on stolen vehicles of the Baltic Sea Task Force, the following measures are recommended:

- Each country should have a training programme to help the police and customs officers in identifying stolen vehicles in connection with export and transit

procedures. Interpol's training project FORMATRAIN and Europol's EuVID training programme can be used as a basis for national training programmes. Europol's training programme (funded via Taiex) will be extended to the new EU – members by November 2003 (first Poland, the Baltic countries, and then eventually to other countries). Also, a course for law enforcement officers on stolen vehicles is to be organized by Italy within the Adriatic Ionian initiative by June 2004.

- The SP member countries are expected to exchange programmes when necessary. It should be possible for police from a member country to participate in another country's training programme so that experience and expertise can be shared.
- The training programmes should target police officers (border police, traffic police, police cadets, stolen car squads), Registration Agencies' personnel and Customs Administrations' personnel.
- Internal information campaigns on ASF (automatic search facilities): information about function, raising awareness of needs, highlighting advantages, and convincing the users and others of added value. Adequate training programmes must be regularly available.

Exchange of information

- A national information exchange mechanism should be created between all the law enforcement agencies having responsibilities in the field, and between them and other investigation structures (i.e. from the insurance companies).
- Information exchange is needed on regional operational level.

Strengthening border control

The police at all border posts should have access to the databases on stolen vehicles: Interpol's ASF or, when available, that of Europol. This can be arranged through the European Union Integrated Border Management concept. Also, the EUCARIS system could be extended to all the SEE countries. ASF should be made available also to other law enforcement agencies than the police, if possible.

Further efforts in this area should build on the common platform and the Way Forward document from the Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management.

Equipment

Equipment needs should be identified. Practical and technical assistance must be provided for new AFS user countries.

Registration

Reform of the registration system is required in order to reduce the illegal re-registration and re-circulation of vehicles.

Each country should constantly seek to improve its measures to prevent re-registration of stolen vehicles, for instance by having more recourse to the ASF, Eucaris (the European database for registration authorities) and physical verification of vehicle identification numbers and registration documents. (Interpol's new communication system I 24/7 (Information 24 hours 7 days a week) will provide new opportunities for extended access to the ASF and other relevant vehicle databases.)

Recovery

It is essential that when the police or customs has seized a car it be put at the disposal of the owner as quickly as possible. This should in principle be arranged free of charge for the owner or insurance company providing that they recover the car within an agreed time limit. Also, the investigators should secure the evidences for the trial.

Legislation

Countries must, as soon as possible, establish the necessary legislation enabling the car to be handed over to the owner or insurance company within a short time limit. Legislation covering collection of evidence when the car has been released must be drawn up. Adequate legislation to cover the seizure of stolen vehicles, speedy recovery by the owner, and confiscation of profit from the illegal activity, together with procedures that ensure that these cases come to trial promptly are essential in the fight against this form of organised crime.

At this point, the Stability Pact's initiative to fight the Organized Crime, SPOC, could be supportive through its Bucharest based Secretariat.

Public awareness

Public awareness of the risks involved in acquiring a stolen vehicle should be raised. The general public should be better informed about how to avoid the acquisition of a stolen car and about the risks they would take in buying such a car.

STABILITY PACT FOLLOW – UP ON STOLEN CARS

The Stability Pact, through the Police Forum Working Group, is to establish a mechanism to monitor the development and actions taken in the field of stolen vehicles where all the relevant parties will be actively involved (i.e. SECI Centre's Task Force on stolen vehicles, registration agencies, insurance companies, car manufacturers).