

EDITORIAL

Financial crisis: Police caught between the line



Luxembourg.
At the EU Commission.

As governments across Europe are struggling to deal with the effects of the financial crisis, police officers find themselves caught between the lines once more: Demonstrations followed by violent outbreaks have hit Greece, Iceland and Latvia, to name some examples. This is one side of the financial crisis that police officers face. The other side are political campaigns directed against allegedly well off public services and panic driven ideas to cut public spending by drastically cutting public service pay. The question is not, whether we can afford to pay police officers a decent salary. The question is, whether we can afford **not** to do so. Pay cuts up to 20 percent as in Latvia are hardly the right way to bring police services up to a European standard. If politicians argue to not place a burden on our children by creating huge budget deficits, they should think about the burden they create by downsizing public services, among them the police, until they cease to function properly. Ultimately, low pay and bad working conditions are not the only but one of the

main reasons for the existence of corruption. On a slightly different note in Greece, the police have been shamelessly used as scapegoats for political shortcomings during the December riots. A big compliment to the police trade union in Greece for an extremely straightforward approach in addressing shortcomings and arguing for dialogue. This is maybe what we have to offer, especially in times of crisis: Solutions based on mutual agreement are what we aim and fight for. This is the simple meaning behind 'social dialogue'. Promoting social dialogue remains high on the agenda of EuroCOP. It is more necessary than ever. We will stand together to remind the EU and if necessary also its member states of the necessity to proceed by mutually agreed and fair solutions, now and in the future.

Heinz Kiefer
President

Spain: Speak to me

20,000 members of Spanish police unions met in Madrid to demonstrate for their consultation rights.

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I want to talk you. "I am not speaking because they won't let me."

Autumn EuroCOP Committee



EuroCOP adopts new charters

One Charter on Collective Rights for police staff and one on Gender Mainstreaming were adopted by the EuroCOP Committee in Luxembourg.

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At the European Commission in Luxembourg. The EuroCOP Executive Committee leads the work.

Strasbourg:

Human Capital

On December 16th around 15,000 police officers from all over Europe took part in a demonstration in Strasbourg.

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Not all capital can be measured in euros and cents.



COMING UP NEXT

Spring EuroCOP Committee
09-10 March 2009
Lisbon

News from EuroCOP

EuroCOP Committee

It takes two - two charters and two new members welcomed



Guest speaker Joerg Semmler from the EU Commission talked about the EU's aims as far as Justice and Home Affairs cooperation is concerned.

(Luxembourg, November 4th, 2008)

On its session in Luxembourg in November the EuroCOP Committee welcomed two new members, adopted a Working Time Directive Resolution and two EuroCOP Charters. During the next EuroCOP Committee in Lisbon the Committee is expected to handle motion for a new resolution on the post Hague Programme and member twinning projects.

EuroCOP greeted two new members; UPOL, Spain, full member as of January 1st, 2009 and KPU, Kosovo who achieved associate status. "Thanks to the membership of UPOL now about 70 percent of all police workers in Spain are members of EuroCOP," President Heinz Kiefer said in a comment.

A resolution to support the Police Trade Union in Latvia was adopted in which EuroCOP calls upon the government of Latvia to improve the conditions of the police services, to prevent further deterioration of the police services efficiency

and engage in meaningful social dialogue with the police union.

The Information and Consultation Subcommittee put forward a Charter on Collective Rights for police staff. This includes basic police officers' rights such as the freedom of association, right to collective bargaining, right to be informed and consulted and the right to participate in decision making concerning their working environment. Mentioned is that staff representatives should be protected when carrying out their functions.

The Gender Subcommittee which changed its name to Equality Subcommittee presented a Charter on Gender Mainstreaming which aims to strengthen the role of gender equality in the member organisations, focusing on implementing equality plans, taking gender mainstreaming in consideration during collective bargaining, strength-

ening the role of equality bodies, balancing sent EuroCOP delegations according to gender and gathering and comparing statistics in this area.

Guest speaker Joerg Semmler from the EU Commission presented the roadmap towards the adoption of a new multi-annual framework for Justice and Home Affairs cooperation in the European Union. The first proposal from the Commission is expected in the Spring of 2009. As a direct reaction to this presentation, the EuroCOP Committee in March in Lisbon is expected to handle a motion for a resolution on the post Hague Programme entitled "For a strong police in a secure Europe". The Programme deals with the priorities of the EU in the area of Justice and Home affairs for the next 5 years and the EuroCOP Committee will be asked for its input on this matter.

Health and Safety to top EuroCOP agenda in 2009

Led by its Health and Safety Subcommittee, EuroCOP is putting a priority on occupational safety and health (OSH) of police officers in 2009. At the centre of attention will be the application of the EU framework directive on OSH (Dir EC 89/391), one of the few EU labour related directives that in principle apply for the police as for any other worker.

Of specific interest for EuroCOP member organisations are the directive's clear cut rules on mandatory consultation and participation of workers on OSH matters. "The EU Health and Safety framework

directive contains a number of important instruments that can be used to improve welfare of police officers," comments the subcommittee's chairman Dinonisos Marinos-Xanthos from Greece. The subcommittee has already established a working link with the European Commission Directorate responsible for OSH matters in 2008. In addition, EuroCOP has become an official campaign partner of the EU Agency for occupational safety and health in Bilbao. The EU Agency is actively promoting thorough assessments of work

related risks in a broad campaign that runs until 2010. The Subcommittee has just started a survey of OSH legislation for police among EuroCOP member organisations. The goal is to assess, to which degree the EU framework directive is applied to the police on the national level. A joint presentation with the EU Agency of the results of this survey is foreseen for June 2009.





It's human nature. The slogan carried by EuroCOP members read "Human Capital – Better rights Not longer working hours". Vice President Jan Schonkeren talks to the press.

Success demonstration against longer working hours

(Strasbourg, December 16th, 2008)

On December 16th around 15,000 trade union members, including EuroCOP members from all over Europe, took part in a demonstration organised by the ETUC in Strasbourg to urge the European Parliament not to weaken the Working Time Directive. The action proved to be a success as the parliament by a large majority voted against a revision.

This means that for the time being, the working time directive will remain unchanged. In order to put pressure on the EU Parliamentarians the ETUC had called for a manifestation in Strasbourg on 16 December 2008. A 130 strong EuroCOP delegation participated in the event with members from Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland and the UK.

The revision proposal from the Council of EU ministers for employment included features such as defining so called inactive parts of on-call duty as not being working time or to keep the possibility for employers to agree with individual workers to work overtime, the so called 'opt-out'. The latter would have paved way for opt-outs without consent of the social partners.

EuroCOP Heinz Kiefer welcomes the outcome of the vote in the Parliament: "The European Parliament has made it clear that it is willing to act as the guardian of social Europe. I thank all our member organisations that have supported us and the ETUC in this important event."

ETUC's claim was that a weakening of the Working Time Directive, especially during times of economic recession and

FACTBOX

Name: EU Working Time Directive

What: Regulations concerning hours of work, designed to protect the health and safety of workers. Main features include a limit of the maximum length of a working week to 48 hours in seven days and a minimum rest period of 11 hours in each 24 hours.

History: Legalized in 1993.

ahead of European elections would be sending out the wrong signals. "The Working Time Directive is a key element of social Europe and cannot be likened to a cut-price sale item" ETUC said in a statement.

Spain: Police demonstrates to renew social dialogue

(Madrid, October 18th, 2008)



Lillemor Melin Sving and Manuel Lopez, EuroCOP Executive Committee address the crowd at Plaza Colon.

Over 20,000 police officers gathered in Madrid in the largest ever manifestation of police in Spanish history. The manifestation was the reaction of police unions towards the refusal of the Interior Minister to return to the negotiation table. Instead the minister has tried to put pres-

sure on the unions of the Policia Nacional and Guardia Civil by denying them statutory rights and taking disciplinary measures against activists. The manifestation was supported by a delegation from EuroCOP headed by Lillemor Melin Sving and Manuel Lopez. "What kind of dialogue is this where one side assumes the power to decide upon the rights of the other?" they asked. This was followed by a strong message of support to colleagues in Spain: "EuroCOP has fought with you for the right of the Guardia Civil to organise. We will fight to see this implemented and we will fight to ensure that the recognised rights of our colleagues in the National Police are not trampled upon ." Members in Spain SUP (Policia Nacional) and AUGC (Guardia Civil) contributed heavily to the success of the manifestation. Delegations from ErNE (Basque Country) and SPC (Catalonia) were present to support their colleagues.

Guardia Civil elects for the first time

(Madrid, January 22nd, 2009)



On a brighter note, Guardia Civil could reap the fruits of success from their staff representatives having their first professional elections take place on January 22nd, 2009.

EuroCOP President Heinz Kiefer commented: "Our colleagues have fought long to be allowed to exercise their democratic rights as citizens. Today we also remember the officers that have sacrificed their career and accepted punishment to make this day possible."

EuroCOP Twinning Projects: It's a twin-twin situation

Following the EuroCOP Committee in November 2008, when member organisations were encouraged to form partnerships, several members have proven that this is a very efficient way to support each other across the border. The Nordic Police Union and VMHP lead the way.

The Dutch Police Union VMHP invited the Portuguese colleagues from Sinapol and AGP-GNR for a study visit in the Netherlands in December 2008. The visit was made possible largely thanks to financial support from the Dutch government allocated for these kind of events. "The aim of the visit was to get more information about the two police unions and to share experiences, knowledge and best practises," Rob Vervoort, International Committee, VMHP



VMHP, Sinapol and APG-GNR pay a visit to the Centre for Labour Relations in the Public Sector (CAOP) in the Hague.

said. The visit included an insight view of the training facilities in Haaglanden and a meeting with MP's of the police committee.

Danish and Nordiska active in the east
Meanwhile the Danish Police Union and Nordiska have been involved in two partnerships: One that has been in the works for a longer time with the Kosovo Police Union KPU and a more recent one, including a study visit from the Union Secretary in the Police Union in Denmark and Secretary for the Nordic Police Union Claus Redder Madsen to Lithuania in February 2009, on behalf of the Nordic Police Union.

"I am very pleased with these two partnerships," Redder Madsen said. The Nordic Secretary had the opportunity to see different police stations in Vilnius, meet the Deputy Police Commissioner and visit the Vilnius Police Headquarters. The financial crisis has put the Lithuanian police through some hardships, including pay cuts and the cutting of funding aimed for police education, reconstruction and material. Redder Madsen stresses the importance of such partnerships.

"Yes, indeed! If the police standards in our 'backyard' are low, we risk to have lower conditions in the Nordic countries, and we risk, that the number of criminals coming over from other countries will give us problems with the crime-rate. At the same time we - being representatives from 'old' unions - can get some ideas from the young unions and the other way around."



Chief of Vilnius Region Police Headquarters Kestutis Lancinskas together with Nordiska's Claus Redder Madsen and LPTU's Martynas Stanislovas Demse.

“ We have an excellent beer in the Czech Republic, so you drink quite a lot ... If you are French, I can imagine it's pleasant to meet a French policeman who speaks your language and who will assist you and bring you to your hotel,"

Ivan Langer, Czech Interior minister, now holding the EU Presidency, said to an Irish paper as a comment to the then French Presidency wanting to introduce a special tourist police for popular destinations, staffed from all over the EU.

(Source: The EUobserver, 2008)

About EuroCOP

The European Confederation of Police, founded in 2002, is the umbrella organisation of 36 Police Unions and Staff Organisations from 27 European Countries. It represents the interests of over 500.000 police officers across Europe. EuroCOP is registered as a non-profit organisation in Luxembourg.

EuroCOP is recognised by the ETUC as the Industry Federation for the police in Europe and thereby the social partner for the police in Europe.

It is self financed, politically independent and democratically organised. EuroCOP represents the professional interests of its members and is available to the Public and EU Institutions as a partner in policy making.

EuroCOP stands ready to transmit the practitioners' perspective and knowledge onto the

European level in order to actively contribute to the development of a European Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.

EuroCOP offers the practitioners' perspective on:

- Police cooperation in Europe
- Human rights of police officers
- Police ethics
- Safer policing

EuroCOP actively promotes:

- The development of standards for the qualification of Police
- Civil status of Police
- Efficiency of police service under democratic control
- Policing as a public task

EuroCOP enjoys participatory status at the Council of Europe and maintains close contacts to EU Institutions.

MARK THE DATE

Upcoming Events

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|----------------------|---|
| 09-10.03.2009 | EuroCOP: Spring EuroCOP Committee
Lisbon, Portugal |
| 11-12.05.2009 | EuroCOP: Information and Consultation Conference
Luxembourg |
| 27-29.05.2009 | EuroCOP: PF Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark
Annual Conference |
| 02-03.06.2009 | EuroCOP: OSH Survey Presentation
EuroCOP Health and Safety Subcommittee and OSHA
Brussels, Belgium |
| 05.11.2009 | EuroCOP: Autumn EuroCOP Committee
Luxembourg |

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