



European Confederation of Police

+352/43 49 61-1 +352/43 49 61-33
contact@eurocop-police.org
www.eurocop-police.org

EURO COP – 617, rue de Neudorf – L-2220 Luxembourg

Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic

to the European Union,
15, Rue Caroly
1050 Bruxelles
Belgium

REGISTERED LETTER

Open Letter

to the Chairman of the EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers' Council
Mr. Ivan LANGER, Minister of Interior of the Czech Republic

Luxembourg, 03 March 2009

Rapidly deteriorating situation in police services in EU Member States hit worst by the financial crisis.

Dear Chairman,

I approach you on behalf of the European Confederation of Police, EuroCOP, umbrella organisation of police unions and staff organisations in Europe.

Reports from our Member Organisations in Lithuania and Latvia are suggesting that there is a serious risk, that police services especially in these Member States will be virtually crippled by the austerity measures adopted by governments in order to address the financial crisis. Should even more Member States adopt similar approaches the effect will be detrimental.

Police services in these Member States, as in a number of others, are underfinanced already today. As evidenced by several Eurobarometers public trust in the police is far below EU average.¹ Cutting police budgets further will have a devastating effect on the progress that has been achieved since 2004. Moreover it will diminish the ability of these Member States to assume their part of the responsibility for the fight against crime in the EU. Internal security in the EU is dependent of the weakest part of the chain.

¹ see for example: EB Special Eurobarometer 291 / Wave 68.2.



European Confederation of Police

☎ +352/43 49 61-1 📧 +352/43 49 61-33
contact@eurocop-police.org
www.eurocop-police.org

EURO COP – 617, rue de Neudorf – L-2220 Luxembourg

It is our therefore conviction that EU Member States in this situation must make a joint effort. We cannot accept that individual Member States systematically cripple their police services in order to achieve short term savings to the detriment of citizens' safety and security in all Member States.

Citizens across the EU will have to bear the sustained burden of short-sighted austerity measures far beyond the current financial crisis through higher levels of crime and corruption. We hope that the EU will stand together to prevent this from happening.

In Latvia and Lithuania, as in Romania about 20% of posts in the police are vacant today and the shortage of personnel already severely hampering the services' ability to perform their functions. Partially even fuel for police vehicles is lacking and crime rates have risen sharply in the past months.

Especially in times of crisis it is of crucial importance for Member States of the European Union to provide for a police service that is capable of maintaining citizens' trust in public order and the capability of the state to act.

On behalf of our member organisations we are ready to enter into a dialogue with you in order to find the appropriate responses. I remain available for your questions and look forward to your reply as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,

Heinz Kiefer

President