



PRESS STATEMENT

European Confederation of Police

Responsible: Jan Velleman

☎ +352/43 49 61-22 📠 +352/43 49 61-33

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

✉ jv@eurocop-police.org
mobile: +49 174 20 29 033

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EuroCOP opens door to negotiations between Police Union and Government in Slovakia

Support from the European Parliament

Close to 60 Police officers from 20 European countries have gathered on 3 December in Bratislava in order to add pressure to their bid to restart the dialogue between government and the police union in Slovakia.

Already on the day before EuroCOP President Heinz Kiefer had broken the ice in a four hour meeting with Interior Minister Vladimir Palko, while some differences in opinion could not be resolved:

The Interior Minister agreed in principle to restart negotiating with the police union and distanced himself from the allegation that union members that had become too active had been threatened with disciplinary action. At the same time he promised to work towards a mutually acceptable solution as regards the position of the leadership of the police union within the service.

A joint message of EuroCOP president Heinz Kiefer and Interior Minister Palko after the meeting reads as follows:

- We welcome that in a meeting with Interior Minister Palko it was possible to ascertain that the Minister did not intend to sanction police officers because of their involvement in demonstrations and does not intend to do so in the future. We regret that there have been misunderstandings in relation to this issue in the past.
- The minister cannot revoke his decisions with regard to personnel. However, he recognizes that the leadership of the police union has to be able to perform its functions under adequate circumstances and will search for a solution. The minister is investigating solutions, that will enable the leadership of the police union to perform its functions free of service duties
- From the point of view of the minister a renewal of the partnership with the union is possible. In connection with this it is presumed that the union will respect the reputation of the police as well as the trust of the population into the police.

At a manifestation organised by the Police Union on Saturday afternoon 3,000 police officers, including 50 colleagues from countries throughout Europe, welcomed the results from the talks between Palko and Kiefer with cautious optimism.

Kiefer: 'Even if we were not able to resolve all our differences there is now a chance for a fresh start. We now expect that direct talks between the Interior Minister and the Police Union will resume within the close future.' Continuing disagreement still exists with regard



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to the judgement of the demotion of members of the leadership of the Police Union that occurred in the past.

Following a debate on the situation of the police in Slovakia on Thursday last week the European Parliament has now asked the European Commission to investigate a possible violation of European law in Slovakia. Kiefer: 'For the outcome of this investigation it will be of crucial importance that both sides make use of the opportunity for a fresh start between the Police Union and the Interior Ministry. It is important that the foundations for a constructive dialogue are laid.'

The European Confederation of Police, EuroCOP, is the umbrella organisation of 28 national Police Unions and Staff Organisations from 20 European States. It represents the interests of over 600.000 police officers in Europe. www.eurocop-police.org