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Strategic Police Matters – Addressing Threats to Security and Stability

Policing and the Rule of Law

The rule of law is a hallmark of a modern democracy. Put simply, it means order and stability in society. It means reasonable predictability concerning decisions made by the authorities. It means decisions that are enforceable and enforced. It means safeguards against arbitrariness not foreseen by the law.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law are at the core of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. Strong democratic institutions and the rule of law play an important role in preventing the emergence of threats to security and stability. Weak governance, and a failure on the part of states to secure adequate and functioning democratic institutions that can promote stability, may in themselves constitute a fertile environment for a range of threats.¹

The potential for intra-state and inter-state conflicts in weak or transition states correlates inversely with the success of poverty reduction strategies. Economic growth leads to internal stability and political maturity, which prevails upon power groups in their claims for control of the state and opens the way to democratic governance. In the absence of the rule of law, economic growth is unlikely to be sustained, and this creates a risk that state mechanisms will further decline and weaken, which inevitably has a destructive effect on the human rights and basic freedoms of the population and creates a breeding ground for threats to security and stability, including the proliferation of organized crime.²

The objective of establishing the rule of law requires not just law enforcement capacity- and institution-building, but comparable and synchronized improvements across the entire criminal justice sector. The new paradigm further requires shifting priority attention to crime prevention rather than detection, as protecting a person from becoming a victim of crime represents the ultimate effort to safeguard a basic human right.³

The police are the foundation of the rule of law and play a vital role in establishing it; they provide citizens with a point of entry into the criminal

1 Cf. OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 1 and 2 December 2003, Maastricht 2003, MC.DOC/1/03, 2 December 2003, pp. 1-10. All OSCE documents are available at: <http://www.osce.org>.

2 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, *Annual Report of the OSCE Secretary General on Police-Related Activities in 2005*, SEC.DOC/2/06, 2 November 2006, para. 1.6.

3 Cf. *ibid.*, para. 1.7.

justice system. The main purposes of the police in a democratic society governed by the rule of law are:

- to maintain public tranquillity and law and order in society;
- to protect and respect the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms as enshrined, in particular, in the European Convention on Human Rights;
- to prevent and combat crime;
- to detect crime;
- to provide assistance and service functions to the public.⁴

The police can support the rule of law only by being accountable for their actions, adhering to internationally recognized standards, and demonstrating respect for human rights, especially the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. Wherever truly effective policing has been achieved, it is invariably based on a partnership with the public that is characterized by mutual trust and respect.⁵

The rule of law presumes that the police should serve the citizen and remain free from the influence of the political establishment. It creates the requirement for transition from the concept of a "police force" to that of a "police service", which means a ground-breaking change in the philosophy and the culture of policing: from protecting the state to serving the population.

The need for the transition described above must be recognized and accepted by both the population and the political establishment. The culture and attitudes of the police can only mirror those prevailing in the society they strive to serve and in the current system of governance – they cannot be more mature or more democratic. The public has the right to demand that the police change, but at the same time it has the obligation to support this change by direct participation and by sending a clear message to the political establishment, as local politics remains a decisive factor. Police reform must be based on local ownership – a country's own history, culture, and traditions are powerful drivers of change – and strong leadership by local politicians, which need to send a clear message to the top of the police hierarchy. In the first place, police reform is a top-to-bottom process.

4 Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, *Recommendation Rec(2001)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the European Code of Police Ethics*, 19 September 2001, Section 1, Objectives of the Police, para. 1.

5 Cf. *Annual Report of the Secretary General on Police-related Activities in 2005*, cited above (Note 2), para. 5.9.

The OSCE and Policing

Co-operative security and good governance are two of the OSCE's main supporting pillars, and policing has a contribution to make to both. The *Charter for European Security* adopted by the Istanbul Summit meeting (1999) is the platform for the OSCE's involvement in policing. It contains the commitment of the OSCE participating States to enhance the OSCE's role in civilian police-related activities as an integral part of the Organization's efforts in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Such activities may comprise:

- police monitoring, including with the aim of preventing police from carrying out such activities as discrimination based on religious and ethnic identity;
- police training, which could, include the following tasks, among others:
 - improving the operational and tactical capabilities of local police services and reforming paramilitary forces;
 - providing new and modern policing skills, such as community policing, and anti-drug, anti-corruption, and anti-terrorist capacities;
 - creating a police service with a multi-ethnic and/or multi-religious composition that can enjoy the confidence of the entire population; and
 - promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in general.⁶

The OSCE's involvement in policing started in the Balkans and focused on post-conflict restoration of the rule of law through rebuilding and ultimately reforming police forces. The situation was dire; there was a lack of authority, unknown numbers of weapons were in public hands, unemployment was high, and the economy was in decline, while corruption, a lack of trust in public institutions, and the rise of organized crime in collusion with political elites led to an increase in delinquency and insecurity, ultimately generating more political instability. The realization of this threat led to inclusion of comprehensive chapters devoted to the reform and monitoring of the public security system – and particularly of the police forces – in the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Accords of Rambouillet and the Ohrid Framework Agreement.

When the OSCE participating States decided to extend the Organization's participation in police development to the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, the focus had to be changed and new approaches sought. In these regions, transition to democratic governance and market economy had resulted in economic hardship, widespread poverty, and conflicts (since fro-

⁶ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Charter for European Security*, SUM.DOC/1/99, Istanbul, November 1999, para. 44.

zen), but institutional collapse was largely avoided, and the fabric of governance mostly remained intact. Police claimed that they were protecting the rule of law – the caveat being that due to the fact that legal systems remained mostly unreformed, the police were perceived as protectors of the interests of political and economic elites or ethnic majorities. There remained a clear distance between the police and the problems faced by citizens in their daily lives. The OSCE thus had to focus on defusing internal tensions and preventing the flare-up of conflicts by promoting and supporting the gradual introduction of the principles of democratic policing.

It needs to be emphasized that the OSCE is not – and does not aim to be – a technical co-operation agency. Its guiding documents do not foresee the provision of large-scale technical assistance to the police. The OSCE leaves that to bilateral co-operation and international organizations. Rather, the OSCE role is to achieve consensus on the necessity of organization-wide implementation of certain accepted common standards, including in the field of strengthening democratic governance structures. The aim is to make the police one of these structures.

The OSCE places particularly strong emphasis on the protection of human rights, which is truly a cross-cutting issue for the Organization. Terror and crime use violence, corruption, and intimidation to undermine the rule of law and replace it with the law of the jungle. But even the fight against organized crime does not relieve the police from the need to observe human rights. In order to facilitate access of the participating States – and even more importantly, criminal justice system practitioners – to relevant internationally recognized standards, norms, and good practices, the OSCE has compiled the *Guidebook on Democratic Policing by the Senior Police Adviser to the OSCE Secretary General*.⁷ It articulates the objectives of democratic police services, the importance of their commitment to the rule of law, policing ethics and human rights standards, and the essential nature of the police's accountability to the law and the society they serve, and elaborates on structural and managerial tools that are necessary to achieve and sustain democratic models of policing.

Mandate and Tasks

The adoption of the *Charter for European Security*, which in a way offered the first vision of the OSCE's police-related activities, was followed by a steadily growing number of Ministerial Council decisions that aimed to put that vision to work. In particular, the Ninth Ministerial Council in Bucharest (2001) declared the decision to increase and promote co-operation among participating States in countering new security challenges, including by pro-

7 *Guidebook on Democratic Policing by the Senior Adviser to the OSCE Secretary General*, Vienna 2006, available at: http://polis.osce.org/library/details?doc_id=2658.

viding advice or arranging for the provision of expert advice on requirements for effective policing (needs assessments) and how to meet them, and encouraging where appropriate the exchange of information among and between participating States regarding lessons learned and best policing practices in countering these new security challenges.⁸

Coinciding with steep growth in OSCE police-related activities in South-Eastern Europe, the post of Senior Police Adviser (SPA) in the OSCE Secretariat was established towards the end of 2001.⁹ His activity is supported by a team of police officers and civilian policing experts jointly referred to as the Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU). The SPMU was set up to improve the capacity of participating States to address threats posed by criminal activity and to assist them in upholding the rule of law.¹⁰ The tasks of the SPA and the SPMU are defined in the growing list of decisions of the Ministerial Council and the Permanent Council and in OSCE action plans.

The first relevant document was the *Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism* (2001), adopted on the same occasion as the decision on police-related activities. It recognized the need to assist participating States, on their request, through measures to combat trafficking in human beings, drugs, and small arms and light weapons, in accordance with relevant Permanent Council decisions. This assistance could also include provision of advice and assistance on restructuring and/or reconstructing police services; monitoring and training of existing police services, including human rights training; and capacity building, including support for integrated or multi-ethnic police services. To this end, the declaration acknowledged the requirement for reinforcing existing police-related activities in conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation.¹¹

In the *Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings* adopted at Porto in 2002, the Tenth Ministerial Council called on the participating States to enhance international co-operation in combating criminal acts such as trafficking in drugs and arms, as well as the smuggling of migrants. They emphasized the need to include international law enforcement bodies, such as Europol and Interpol, in this co-operation as well as the Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI), with a view to investigating and prosecuting those responsible for trafficking in human beings in accordance with domestic law and, where applicable, international obligations. In this regard, they

8 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, *Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, Bucharest, 3 and 4 December 2001, MC.DOC/2/01, 4 December 2001, Decision No. 9, Police-Related Activities, MC(9).DEC/9, pp. 33-35.

9 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, Decision No. 448, *Establishment of the Seconded Post of Senior Police Adviser in the OSCE Secretariat*, PC.DEC/448, 4 December 2001.

10 Cf. OSCE Strategy to Address Threats to Security and Stability in the Twenty-First Century, cited above (Note 1), para. 32.

11 Cf. Ninth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, cited above (Note 8), Decision No. 1, *Combating Terrorism*, MC(9).DEC/1, 4 December 2001, pp. 7-13.

also asked the Senior Police Adviser to devote increased attention to the fight against trafficking in human beings.¹²

This task was further detailed in the *OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings* (2003), which requested the SPMU to further promote the concept of community policing and facilitate the exchange of information between participating States on best practices to be used by relevant investigating units to check the potentially criminal- and trafficking-related origin of suspicious assets. The SPMU was also tasked with continuing to develop training materials targeted at law enforcement authorities on trafficking and sex crimes investigation, to identify law enforcement trainers who could conduct training, and to facilitate the funding of training sessions for law enforcement authorities in OSCE participating States.¹³

One aspect essential to the policing of ethnic minorities was addressed by the *OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area* (2003). The SPMU was tasked with assisting participating States in developing programmes and confidence-building measures – such as community policing – to improve relations between Roma and Sinti people and the police, particularly at the local level, and producing a compilation of best practices in the OSCE region with respect to policing and the Roma and Sinti communities. Another established task was to assist the participating States in developing codes of conduct to prevent racial profiling and improve interethnic relations.¹⁴

The *2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality* adopted by the Twelfth Ministerial Council at Sofia in 2004 urged the participating States, the Secretariat, institutions, and field operations to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into OSCE activities, programmes, and projects. The aim shall be to promote the practice of gender equality in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security. In this context, the SPMU was specifically tasked to enhance its project development to assist participating States in reacting to sexual violence offences and in including in the police training curriculum such elements as special investigation techniques and interview skills designed for use with victims of sexual assault, including children, and information on referral mechanisms for victim assistance.¹⁵

12 Cf. Declaration on Trafficking in Human Beings, in: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Tenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 6 and 7 December 2002, Porto 2002, MC.DOC/1/02, 7 December 2002, pp. 15-17, here: p. 17.

13 Cf. OSCE, Permanent Council, Decision No. 557 on the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, PC.DEC/557, 24 July 2003, Annex: OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

14 Cf. OSCE Permanent Council, Decision No. 566, *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area*, PC.DEC/566, 27 November 2003; *Eleventh Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 1 and 2 December 2003, Maastricht 2003, MC.DOC/1/03, 2 December 2003, Decision No. 3/03, *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*, MC.DEC/3/03, pp. 61-77, here: p. 65.

15 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, Sofia, 6 and 7 December 2004, MC.DOC/1/04, 7 December 2004, Deci-

The fight against organized crime came to the forefront of OSCE priorities during 2005 and was recognized in a decision on *Combating Transnational Organized Crime*, which was adopted by the Thirteenth Ministerial Council of the OSCE at Ljubljana in 2005. It tasked the OSCE Secretary General with providing participating States who request it with support for the mobilization of technical assistance, including the necessary expertise and resources, from relevant competent international organizations for the implementation of the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* and its protocols. The decision also tasked the OSCE Permanent Council with working on designing, with the support of the Secretary General and the relevant OSCE institutions, possible measures and forms of assistance that could be available to requesting participating States with a view to improving and promoting the functioning of criminal justice systems.¹⁶

Permanent Council Decision No. 758 on *Enhancing International Anti-Drug Co-operation* (2006) tasked the Secretary General and relevant OSCE institutions with providing to participating States, upon their request and in close consultation and co-ordination with the UNODC, with assistance and advice on anti-drug issues, including by means of awareness-raising activities, the organization of regional workshops, and facilitation of training.¹⁷

The Decision on *Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children* adopted by the Fourteenth Ministerial Council of the OSCE (Brussels 2006) encouraged relevant OSCE executive structures, within their existing mandates, to devote attention to the issue of sexual exploitation of children, including links to trafficking in persons, and emphasized the need for them and the participating States to co-operate with other international organizations, NGOs, and civil society in combating the sexual exploitation of children.¹⁸

The Fourteenth Ministerial Council also adopted the follow-up decision on *Organized Crime*, reaffirming the importance that the OSCE was giving to this subject. The tasks assigned by the decision to the OSCE Secretary General and the relevant OSCE executive structures, within their respective mandates, included giving enhanced attention to the key role of criminal justice systems in institution-building and in the promotion of the rule of law, as well as co-operating and co-ordinating more closely in order to take better into account the interaction between the components of those systems. A

sion No. 14/04, 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, MC.DEC/14/04 of 7 December 2004, pp. 38-53, here: p. 50.

16 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Thirteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 5 and 6 December 2005, Ljubljana 2005, MC13EW66, 6 December 2005, Decision No. 3/05, *Combating Transnational Organized Crime*, MC.DEC/3/05 of 6 December 2005, pp. 22-23.

17 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, Decision No. 758, *Enhancing International Anti-Drug Co-operation*, PC.DEC/758, 5 December 2006.

18 Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Fourteenth Meeting of the Ministerial Council*, 4 and 5 December 2006, Brussels 2006, MC14EW79, 5 December 2006, Decision No. 15/06, *Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children*, MC.DEC/15/06 of 5 December 2005, pp. 47-48.

further major task was to build on and consolidate existing knowledge and experience of criminal justice and organized crime and to continue cooperating with the UNODC in matters including combating organized crime and illicit drugs.¹⁹

Main Areas of SPMU Activity

The long-term goals of the SPMU aim to provide a democratic vision of policing for the whole OSCE region and to put that vision to work. Assistance to OSCE participating States in police capacity- and institution-building and improving police co-operation is placed in the broader perspective of strengthening national criminal justice systems. Implementation of this vision will help to create the competencies required to tackle new threats to stability and security, which include organized crime and terrorism.

The SPMU medium-term plan of action involves the provision of support in the development of baseline police capacities across the OSCE region. The aim is to help participating States to develop an institutional capacity that will improve their ability to comply with the requirements and obligations that they have accepted by ratifying fundamental international legal instruments. Collecting and disseminating good practices and guidelines to police agencies in the OSCE participating States is complemented by provision of direct support to capacity- and institution-building in the core elements of police organizations.

Community Policing

The police in general, and uniformed police in particular, have the responsibility not only to detect crime, but also to prevent it. Successful crime prevention greatly contributes to reducing fear of crime and can thus significantly improve quality of life in a community. Far more lives are impacted by the fear of crime than by actual crime.

Crime prevention can only be realized if the police and the public share commitment and ownership, but achieving it invariably requires an arduous and sustained effort. All across the OSCE region, without distinction between the “East” and the “West” and in particular in multi-ethnic communities – which are rapidly becoming the rule rather than an exception – the police are often regarded as enforcers of the dominating authority. This kind of attitude can lead to the population becoming alienated from the police and dramatically reduces the latter’s capacity to prevent and detect crime. Re-establishing a relationship of trust with the citizens becomes the first priority in the transition to democratic policing. Building mutual trust and reciprocal support

19 Cf. *ibid.*, Decision No. 5/06, Organized Crime, MC.DEC/5/06 of 5 December 2006, pp. 20-23.

represent the first step towards introduction of a policing toolkit aimed at the prevention of volume crime that has become known as community or community-based policing.

The introduction of community policing methods has been a core element of the OSCE's strategy since the start of its involvement in police development. Large projects were implemented in Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Croatia. Following the creation of the SPMU, during 2003-2007 the concept of community policing was introduced in Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan and presented in Kazakhstan.

A commitment to community policing is equivalent to a sweeping police reform that involves some very far-reaching changes. For one thing, it brings about a dramatic change in the structure and culture of the police: the service mentality. Beyond that, it includes setting up a human resource management system based on transparent recruitment, promotion on merit, and a career path protected from arbitrary re-assignment or dismissal. Last but not least, community policing includes the introduction of a system of public oversight of the police, starting from the local level.

Community policing is a complex, multi-faceted concept, and its implementation is inevitably a slow and contradictory process that should not be expected to show instant results. One has to be pragmatic and accept that people who have had reason to distrust the police for decades will not be converted overnight, and neither will the police immediately embrace the notion of the public as an equal partner in the fight against crime. In most cases, the OSCE has had to limit itself to the implementation of one or another component of community policing, rather than the whole concept.

In early 2007, this complexity has led to the beginning of a policy debate within the OSCE regarding whether the OSCE should not limit its advocacy to the creation of police-public partnership, rather than the complete community policing "toolkit". The debate is still in its very early stages; the SPMU supports and encourages it as one of the first forays of the participating States into the formulation of OSCE doctrine on a policing-related subject.

Organized Crime

Organized crime presents a major non-military threat to security in the OSCE region that affects all of the OSCE participating States. It includes offences prominently recognized by the OSCE such as trafficking in human beings, sexual exploitation of children, drug trafficking, and others such as the smuggling of stolen vehicles or high-tariff goods, that enjoy less notoriety but are nevertheless tremendously damaging to societies and economies.

As a result of globalization and technological change, particularly in the area of communications, criminal activity increasingly transcends physical

and political boundaries. Organized crime investigations now commonly have a significant transnational component necessitating pursuit of targets, drugs, and criminal assets around the globe. While each of the OSCE participating States will retain primary responsibility for fighting organized crime at the national level, its very nature demands that these efforts be combined to create a common law enforcement space.

The international community has developed powerful legal instruments to fight transnational organized crime. The first of them is the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. The SPMU is striving to enhance international co-operation under the auspices of this convention, to assist participating States in ratifying it and meeting its reporting requirements. For the past two years, the SPMU has been working very closely on the above with the UNODC. A joint OSCE-UNODC event was hosted in Vienna in 2006, with the participation of representatives from 38 countries. The meeting aimed to assist OSCE participating States in providing timely replies to a series of UN legal assessment questionnaires that had been distributed in order to track the progress of implementation.

To effectively fight organized crime, practical measures to keep offenders from profiting from their crimes are necessary. One of the most important ways this can be done is to ensure that states have strong confiscation regimes that provide for the identification, freezing, seizure, and confiscation of illicitly acquired funds and property. Specific international co-operative mechanisms are also necessary to enable countries to respond to foreign freezing and confiscation orders and to provide for the most appropriate use of confiscated proceeds and property.

In recent years, production, distribution, and downloading of child pornography via the internet has become a growing problem that has been recognized by the OSCE. For several years, the SPMU, in close co-operation with the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, has been conducting activities aimed at increasing police capacity to investigate crimes involving the sexual exploitation of children. As the internet is a relatively new medium, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and judges are faced with two major problems while investigating and prosecuting the production and distribution of child pornography: the lack of an comprehensive international legislative strategy aimed at combating child pornography and the technical complexity of dealing with new technology.

Terrorism

While the police represent a key component of the counter-terrorism platform, they cannot work in isolation from the rest of the law enforcement system – and the rest of society. Vertical co-operation within the police system is a requirement for successful collection and exploitation of operational information. Horizontal co-operation between the police and various gov-

ernment agencies, universities, academics, and non-governmental organizations helps to create a common understanding of the problem of terrorism, and to find a shared solution.

The police must win over every community, particularly those that are more disadvantaged. For that purpose, the police, and, generally speaking, all public and private structures, must use appropriate language to avoid hurting sensitivities. Creating understanding and mutual respect, generating situations that contribute to confidence-building, ensuring continuous two-way flow of information between the police and the public – all will contribute to a better understanding between different cultures. Dialogue and debate between different currents of opinion bring about a reduction in tensions. Facilitating mutual understanding and tolerance: This is exactly the philosophy that the OSCE has been practising since its inception.

Preventing terrorist recruitment is possibly the first priority in efforts to prevent terrorist acts. Spreading information that contributes to the education of young people could help to neutralize messages coming from terrorist organizations aimed at capturing new recruits. A key role in defusing these messages belongs to the family.

In facing the growing threat of terrorism, it becomes increasingly important to take measures to increase mutual trust among police agencies, as well as between the police and intelligence services, and to seek new approaches to transform intelligence into evidence. It is vital to achieve collaboration between all the various agencies involved: police, judges, and prosecutors. International police co-operation must be proactive, not reactive. There is a need to anticipate the levels of co-operation that will be necessary and to ensure that the required capacities are available.

Drug Law Enforcement

The OSCE has been an international partner of the UN Paris Pact Initiative since 2003. The Paris Pact consists of 55 countries, 49 of which are OSCE participating states. These states have committed themselves to increase action and support throughout the Central Asian region in combating the problem of Afghan heroin. The SPMU is the OSCE's Paris Pact "Focal Point". The SPMU co-operates with the Paris Pact Initiative, which facilitates a consultative mechanism among all affected countries at expert and policy levels. One of its more important activities is supporting a field-based computerized system, known as ADAM (the Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism). ADAM will co-ordinate all donor assistance in the region, including detailed inventories of training and equipment provided.

In April 2007, the SPMU hosted a joint UNODC-OSCE regional drug workshop in Central Asia. The workshop involved most of the Central Asian states, Russia, Mongolia, and China. At the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it was mentioned that approximately 23 per cent of

Afghan heroin is being transported via Central Asian routes. There are significant issues regarding transnational co-operation. During the workshop, SPMU and UNODC experts dealt with criminal justice sector difficulties related to co-operation, either transnationally or between domestic agencies. This was the first legal co-operation workshop to include the police. This conformed with the OSCE's objective of dealing with the entire spectrum of the criminal justice system.

Police Training

Police training remains a key element in improving police services and making them more democratic, public-oriented, and professionally effective. The OSCE supports police training mostly through the activities of its field operations. Corresponding components in police assistance projects and programmes focus on the building of the capacities of national police training institutions and include renovation of police training facilities; provision of necessary training equipment, teaching aids, and literature; implementing a modern interactive training methodology; training local instructors; assisting in improving the management of the training process; and developing new training curricula.

One new method of approaching the development of new training curricula, pioneered by the SPMU, is a twinning partnership. In a pilot project, such an arrangement was created between the Police College in Prague and the Centre for Induction Training in Baku, which proved very fruitful.

Finally, the SPMU has started collating information on different approaches to and proven good practices in basic police training. With that in view, the SPMU has established working links with a number of police training associations and police training institutions, including CEPOL, the Association of European Police Colleges (AEPC), the International Training Centre (ITC), the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA), and national police academies and training centres in Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Russia, Romania, Estonia, and Slovenia. The key objective is to collectively try and find out which methods work well and which do not and to inform police training institutions in the OSCE region, thereby helping them to improve the quality of their training and consequently the level of professionalism of uniformed police who have the most contact with the public.

Policing OnLine Information System – POLIS²⁰

In order to ensure harmonious and effective development of policing work in the OSCE region, the 2001 Ministerial Council decision on police-related ac-

20 Cf. <http://polis.osce.org>.

tivities emphasizes the imperative need to preserve, store and share the institutional knowledge resulting from OSCE activities, from local initiatives, and from the development work of other international organizations and agencies. Much of the knowledge acquired in successful policing reform in transition countries, is lost, including that arising from OSCE-led initiatives that ended when funding was completed or the staff moved on. It is currently difficult to draw lessons that may apply to similar situations because no record exists of the action that was taken, of the changes that led to success, or of the reasons why some actions failed.

The creation of a central repository for police-related knowledge has been one of main priorities of the SPMU's activities since 2003. Development of the OSCE Policing OnLine Information System, known as POLIS, a networked system of OSCE police-related information, and a common portal to serve a community of practitioners and policy-makers in storing and accessing the knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned assembled from the field operations of the OSCE and other international organizations, was set up as one of the three main priorities of the SPMU. On 24 November 2006, POLIS was presented to the chiefs of police of the participating States and partners for co-operation at the OSCE Chiefs of Police Meeting.

The main objective of POLIS is to assist police agencies in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of their services through the exchange of information as well as contributing to improving international police co-operation by facilitating the sharing of knowledge, practices, and expertise among the international police community.

The value of the main components of POLIS – the Digital Library, Policing Profiles of the participating States, and the Police Experts database – has already been recognized. Because of its multilingual user interface, currently available in English and Russian, POLIS has attracted a broad spectrum of users.

Conclusion

The SPMU approach to supporting policing development will continue to stress “police serving people”. Its focus will be regional while its actions will be local and pragmatic, emphasizing the development of basic policing skills. It will focus on cultivating a fluid, flexible working style that allows it to foresee and respond rapidly to newly emerging needs and crises. Strategically, over the longer term, the SPMU will continue to emphasize the importance of co-operation and dialogue, both within the Organization and with external partners. Operationally, recalling the premise that the rule of law is crucial to all other facets of national development and that the OSCE is well-positioned to deliver capacity- and institution-building that will make law enforcement more effective, the SPMU looks forward to responding to requests

from participating States and envisages building upon sound OSCE-region foundations in the following areas:

- identification and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned in policing programmes and strategies;
- co-ordination of police-related activities;
- co-operation and co-ordination with national and international partners;
- working with stakeholders to develop regional strategies in the fight against organized crime;
- assisting international organizations and participating States in ratification and implementation of international conventions
- development of OSCE guidelines on various fields of policing; and
- trust-building through organization and facilitation of conferences, seminars and workshops on police-related matters.

The SPMU's support aims to strengthen law enforcement activities within an OSCE participating State or region, or on behalf of all the OSCE participating States. Its growing repository of knowledge and experience will help to contribute to improving criminal justice systems and providing a democratic vision of policing for the whole OSCE region. In co-operation with participating States and international partners, the SPMU vision is ultimately to transform the philosophy of policing throughout the region.