



ExCOM REPORT MAY 2016 UNTIL OCTOBER 2016

Introduction:

Since the Spring Committee meeting in April in Torremolinos the ExCOM has continued to strengthen the relationship with European Policy makers and to make EuroCOP's voice in Brussels more established and valued by them. The establishing of the office in Brussels and the delivery of the terrorism conference at the end of this month in Barcelona will demonstrate that two more mandates from the 2015 Dublin Congress have been fulfilled.

Lobby work in Brussels:

In the meetings with the MEPs the main topics for discussion were:

- Counter Terrorism
- Refugee / Migration Crisis
- Health and Safety
- Training and Equipment
- Rights for Police officers
- Trade Union rights for Police officers
- Private Security
- Violence against Police officers
- Data retention
- Sharing information

The following meetings with MEPs have taken place from May 2016 to date:

4th May Meeting with the assistant of MEP Marju Lauristin, Estland

Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/124698/MARJU_LAURISTIN_home.html

We discussed the situation in Greece and the lack of training for our colleagues there.

Ms. Lauristin asked about CEPOL and we explained that we considered CEPOL should have a role in coordinating / supervising the training of all police officers and not only of the police elite as is currently the case. We also discussed the capacity of CEPOL to deliver this.

We also highlighted the continued lack of exchange of information between the police forces in the different countries. The lack of equipment was also a topic. We informed her that in Article 2 of the European Health and Safety Directive, the police are not included.

Given the importance of the subject amongst members we also highlighted the problems increased police retirement ages presented.

4th May Meeting with MEP Christine Revault d'Allones Bonnefoy, France, Parti socialiste

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/124287/CHRISTINE_REVAULT+D%27ALLONNES+BONNEFOY_home.html

In the meeting with Mrs. Revault, the main subject of discussions was the refugee crisis and the situation in Greece although we also talked about Health and Safety and the other important points mentioned above.

4th May Meeting with MEP Sylvie Guillaume, France, Parti socialiste

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/96952/SYLVIE_GUILLAUME_home.html

We discussed the training for police officers in Europe and the opportunities for CEPOL to take a greater role in the coordination of police officer training across Europe. Ms. Guillaume was also interested in the problems with police information sharing across Europe

Ms. Guillaume suggested it would be very helpful to bring figures and detailed examples to make the issues we are talking about more clear and transparent.

15th June Meeting with MEP Hilde Vautmans, Belgium, Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/130100/HILDE_VAUTMANS_home.html

With MEP Vautmans we also discussed the lack of exchange of information between the police forces in the different member states. The training of CEPOL was also raised as was the need for the provision of good equipment for police officers. The MEP asked us for position papers that bring out quite clear our point of view as well as proposals to improve the situation.

Mrs. Vautmans offered to organise a seminar on the protection for police officers.

Peter Smets from SLFP, Belgium offered to support the ExCOM in its work with the MEPs in Brussels. At its meeting in Barcelona in September 2016 the ExCOM decided to accept that offer.

18th July Meeting with MEP Gérard Deprez, Belgium, Mouvement Réformateur

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/de/1473/GERARD_DEPREZ_home.html

At this meeting he showed a serious interest on better equipment for European Police officers, better training supervised by CEPOL, a better exchange of information between the European Police departments.

15th June Meeting with Giorgos ROSSIDES

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/avramopoulos/team_en

Member of Cabinet of Dimitris AVRAMOPOULOS, Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs & Citizenship, European Commission

In the meeting with Mr. Rossides we discussed all the topics mentioned above. But he especially interested in the issue of private security and training and equipment for Police officers. We mentioned that there are Health and Safety regulations for specific equipment for other professions but not for police officers. Therefore we demand that Police officers should have the same regulations at the European level. He also was very interested in police training and the role of CEPOL creating a program for acceptable standards for training for the police. Mr. Rossides further asked us for a position paper that shows or point of view and proposal about training and the role of CEPOL and a position paper about equipment related to Health and Safety.

29th September Meeting with Jean Claude Juncker, Luxembourg, President European Commission

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/president_en

On the 29th September 2016 the President and Vice Presidents of the European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) met with the President of the European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker at the offices of the European Commission in Brussels.

Mr Juncker heard from President Angels Bosch, Vice President Roger Mercatoris, and 2nd Vice President Calum Steele about the experiences of police officers and the challenges they faced across Europe on a variety of issues.

Specifically Mr Juncker heard about the realities of policing in the age of the unprecedented threat from terrorism. Despite this and continually increasing demand on police officers, police forces across Europe were reducing their investment in policing and police numbers

were falling. Ms Bosch explained it appeared that the member states' considered that tackling austerity was of greater concern than the safety of citizens.

Mr Juncker was advised that despite the very welcome resolution on information sharing, more action was needed to ensure practical implementation. It was crucial information was readily available to all of Europe's police officers to ensure they were not left vulnerable and exposed as they worked tirelessly to keep the citizens of Europe safe. This was particularly relevant within member states that had autonomous or semi-autonomous regions that included their own police forces.

Whilst EuroCOP made clear that the solution to the terror threat did not lie in more and more guns for police officers, it was important to ensure that police officers were properly equipped to defend themselves and citizens. It was also important that police officers were able to work in communities and have access to the most up to date intelligence possible. There cannot be "no-go" areas for police officers.

Mr Juncker was also briefed on the practical experiences of the policing challenges created by the refugee and migration crisis. Police officers have not been trained to deal with the complex issues created by the refugee/migration crisis and some of our police forces are simply overwhelmed by the volume of people coming to European shores.

Mr Juncker was advised that policing services are often called on to deal with problems that lie in other areas like housing, health and education and that there was too much of a willingness amongst some to be intolerant to refugees and migrants because of the fear created by the heightened terror threat. In addition, an increase in political rhetoric of intolerance was itself creating conflicting demand that stretched police services even further.

It was suggested to Mr Juncker that opportunities to enhance the capabilities of police forces were being missed due to inconsistencies in elements of police training and capability across, and indeed within, member states.

EuroCOP suggested the development of a common European police training program (built on existing training schemes and exchange programmes) could offer significant improvements in capability and capacity for all of Europe's police officers. Such a programme, placing European Conventions at its heart, could provide the basis for a European law enforcement curriculum. If such a proposal was supported its success would rely on it being available to all police officers.

Ms Bosch, Mr Mercatoris and Mr Steele also took a few moments to highlight to Mr Juncker a number of geographic issues including;

- The inability of the Garda Civil in Spain and GNR in Portugal to enjoy freedom of association
- The policing considerations as a result of Brexit
- The problems at the Greece / SKOPE border
- The continued state of emergency in France and what it meant for civil rule of law

Office in Brussels:

With effect from 2nd August 2016, EuroCOP has an office in Brussels. Modern telephony has ensured this has not resulted in the need for additional staff.

Up to now we had not the opportunity to use the office for meetings with MEPs because the meetings were arranged in their offices in the European Parliament or in the Commission office buildings. The office can be used for meetings if this is ever required.

Member Organisations may also use the office but due to limited space the maximum number of members able to be accommodated at any time is 5.

If a Member Organisation will like to use the office it is necessary to inform the EuroCOP Office about date and number of participants for the meeting.

Gibraltar and the intervention from EuroCOP

In early July the Gibraltar Police Federation alerted EuroCOP to heightening tensions on the seas surrounding Gibraltar that were leading to the potential for injury to police officers at sea.

EuroCOP liaised with both the Gibraltar Police Association and AUGC and both organisations agreed to the following statement which was then published by EuroCOP. The Chief Minister of Gibraltar subsequently praised the EuroCOP statement for hitting "exactly the right tone."

The European Confederation of Police calls for an immediate de-escalation in the political tensions that are playing out on the seas near Gibraltar.

In recent days vessels belonging to the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Guardia Civil have been facing off against each other and have come perilously close to colliding. The lives of police officers from both Gibraltar and Spain are at risk as a consequence. This is not acceptable. Police officers from both Gibraltar and Spain should be left to get on with their jobs and not be expected to be pawns in a dispute that extends far beyond their areas of responsibility.

Those who use the seas around Gibraltar deserve to have the police services concentrating on ensuring the safety of those who use the waters, as well as the prevention and detection of crime. The current political impasse is diverting police resources on both sides away from what they should be doing and ultimately it is the public who suffer.

Police officers should not be expected to risk their lives for political gain. It is one thing for police officers to risk their lives to help save others but their lives should not be put in danger as a consequence of a political impasse. We call for an immediate de-escalation for the protection of police officers and the public alike.

We believe that irrespective of the long running territorial dispute it should be possible to progress a long term workable policing solution built on cooperation that serves the citizens of Gibraltar and Spain equally well

Relation with ETUC and ICPRA

The International Council for Police Representative Associations held a conference call on the 28th June. The success of the joint meeting with EuroCOP was commented upon and a number of international issues, including the increasing influence of the Black Lives Matter organisation (particularly in the United States and Canada) were discussed.

The meeting also discussed the increased political language in support of police body cameras whilst observing that there was a significant absence of coherent policy on their use as well as many unanswered questions over their funding and sustainability.

The meeting was advised that interest from new member organisations, remained healthy but many of those who made contact were not following up on this after the initial contacts.

Liaison with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva on their Future Work Programme continued and it was hoped ICPRA would be able to contribute as the ILO could deliver benefits for all police officers.

The next ICPRA conference call is due to take place in a few weeks.

ETUC:

The last meeting of the ETUC Executive Committee took place on 6th September

It was an Extraordinary Executive Committee meeting instead of the Steering Committee meeting. The objective of the meeting is to discuss the future of Europe.

As always, several presentations concerning different points such as financial assistance (donations) to the victims of the earthquake in Italy; the delicate position of Northern Ireland in Brexit, but also the general conditions associated with Brexit; problems associated with the CETA/TTIP agreement (protection of investors, labor law, etc.); the Global Deal.

The most important point for EuroCOP was:

Acting to improve the lot of all workers

We are not in the habit of talking about the Police in ETUC discussions. This document is very interesting in more than one regard. Points 10 and 11 of priority 3 are particularly important to us because in certain Police departments in Europe, the right to organize and freedom of expression are merely a crude illusion. In Spain and in Portugal, for example, colleagues have been subject to severe disciplinary sanctions, and others have had to spend several months in a military prison because they are prohibited from joining a trade union. We have intervened with the national governments and with members of the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament. However, it must be noted that this is a very sensitive subject and that it is difficult to change the way people think. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that police officers are workers like everybody else."

Communication / Webpage / Twitter / Press conferences

The Member Organisations are invited to take the offer from the ExCOM to announce interesting matters from their own organisations on the EuroCOP Webpage.

The EuroCOP social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter) have continued to demonstrate that when issues of importance are raised, the response is significant. This can be demonstrated for example with the engagement following terrorist attacks or where police officers are killed or injured.

However it is proving challenging to source relevant information with the majority of contributions being found in the English language publications and websites from across member states. The ExCOM would encourage all organisations to consider EuroCOP Social Media whenever possible.

EuroCOP continues to be reported in the newspapers with increasing regularity. There have simply been too many citations to be able to show the links here. In addition the interest from the broadcast media (particularly in Spain) is significant and demonstrates recognition of EuroCOP's position as a recognised and informed voice.

On 4th May the President Àngels Bosch and 1st Vice President Roger Mercatoris participated in an interview for a Spanish TV sender in Brussels

<http://www.elpuntavui.tv/video/165629922.html>

A press conference took place on 9 September in Barcelona

You can find articles in the newspapers under the following links:

<http://m.europapress.es/catalunya/noticia-eurocop-lamenta-falta-medios-acceso-bases-datos-pese-amenaza-yihadista-20160909132205.html>

http://m.ara.cat/societat/Policies-europees-lamenten-lamenaca-jihadista_0_1647435366.html

http://www.lavanguardia.com/vida/20160909/41202252560/policias-critican-la-incapacidad-de-gobiernos-ue-para-garantizar-la-seguridad.html?utm_campaign=botones_sociales&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

Furthermore the President has also been asked for several interviews.

Meetings with external organisations

The President and the Vice President met on 15th June the French Organisation SCPN, Syndicat de Commissaires de la Police Nationale and with DPoIG, Germany on 23 September 2016. Furthermore the President participated in the annual conference from PFEW 17th / 18th May 2016.

Representation towards Member Organisations

During the last six months the ExCOM participated in different events from Member Organisations.

The Vice President Roger Mercatoris visited the annual conference from NOSP in Prague and participated also in the Congress from VSPB in Luzern on 10th June.

The President participated in the 44th annual conference from PFNI Northern Ireland on 8th June 2016 and in the Congress from Swedish Polisförbundet on 20/21 September 2016. During her stay in Stockholm she was informed that violence against police officers is a big issue in Sweden.

You can find her speech for the Congress attached.

Position papers

The working groups have finished their work and will present at the Autumn Committee meeting their results.

The papers have been sent to you in advance to give you the possibility to make amendments.

The papers will be adopted at the Autumn Committee.

Article 2 Health and Safety

In the past it became clear that some governments were not taking the well-being of police officers very seriously. One of the reasons was that the legislation by the European Union is not very clear about it and makes it possible for misuse.

That's why the EuroCOP ExCom together with EuroCOP delegates asked some Members of Parliament within the EU to clarify Article 2 of Directive 89/391/EEC

MEP Vautmans Hilde, a member of the ALDE Commission, actively helped EuroCOP in its search for clarification.

Article 2 of Directive 89/391/EEC stipulates that the directive is not applicable where characteristics peculiar to certain specific public service activities, such as the armed forces or the police, or to certain specific activities in the civil protection services inevitably conflict with it.

In that event, the safety and health of workers must be ensured as far as possible in the light of the objectives of this directive.

It is clear that this clause has been found to cause confusion for some Member States, which are invoking it in order not to apply the directive within the public sector — a sector to which the directive should apply all the more, given that, in many instances, it involves a high level

of commitment, irregular hours and a host of possible stress factors. Some Member States are raising the alarm about burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder and, in more advanced cases, suicides within police forces.

1. Does the Commission know, in general, which Member States have been invoking Article 2
2. What does the Commission intend to do about this?

This is the answer:

EN E-002416/2016 Answer given by Ms Thyssen (Euro-secretary) on behalf of the Commission (15.6.2016)

The Framework Directive applies to all sectors of activity, both public and private. In light of its wording, and its objective to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, its scope must be broadly construed with the result that the exceptions of Article 2(2) must be interpreted restrictively.

As regards the public sector, the EU Court of Justice has for example held that the activities of the police, public fire services and doctors in primary care teams, insofar as they are carried out under normal circumstances, fall within the scope of the Directive.

This proves that what EuroCOP is doing, works! If you are an ExCom member or a delegate for EuroCOP, if we work together with our local politicians we can and will accomplish great things for our colleagues thriving for security in our own nations!