



18 February 2015

Dear European Policymakers,

As the guardians of safe societies, police officers across Europe put themselves at risk on a daily basis in the course of their duties protecting citizens from threats and preventing crime. The recent massacre in France where 17 victims lost their lives, including three police officers, and the recent Danish attack are a tragic reminder of the changing nature of the security threats facing European countries. Other incidents of home-grown terrorism in for instance Belgium also show that police officers are increasingly becoming a target of attacks.

As President of the European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP), I therefore urge Europe's policymakers to recognize the role of European police officers and to take action to ensure that they have the resources, skills and capacity to keep European citizens safe and secure for the long term future.

Current and future threats to society are no longer easy to define and it is only through solidarity and cooperation amongst European citizens, police forces and governments that will allow us to respond effectively to these threats. I take this opportunity to highlight what Europe's law enforcement officers need most to tackle these new challenges effectively and guarantee the safety and security of European citizens and the police officers who protect them. We need to:

PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES, TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

Europe's police officers play a crucial role on the frontline of the fight against terrorism and it is essential that they are provided with the appropriate support, training and resources needed to carry out their duties and to keep European citizens and themselves safe and secure for the long term future.

Reduced police budgets also mean that there is less money available for the equipment police officers need this may result in failure to maintain their current equipment but in the worst cases uniforms, vehicles, even fuel for police fleets can no longer be replaced or supplied.

Training has also been reduced significantly for police officers needing to expand their skills to address the evolving European security environment, or use the equipment necessary to combat contemporary threats. To protect our police officers on the street, it is vital that they have the skill sets to overcome the security challenges we face in Europe today.

ALLOCATE ADEQUATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In addition to the challenges related to the new and varied skillsets needed to protect citizens, police forces are facing serious financial cutbacks, which have a significant impact on security. The capacity of national police forces to counter crime is being seriously



An **OPEN LETTER** from Europe's Police Officers

compromised because of the severity of the cuts to police pay and budgets across the EU. While the extent of these austerity measures varies widely across the EU, the EU's open borders mean that decreases in Member States' internal security budgets have a knock-on effect on the security of the wider region.

The changing nature of the internal security threats facing European countries means that Europe's police officers are playing increasingly diverse roles. Asked to do more, with significantly less, police forces today are finding themselves ill-equipped and demoralised. It is therefore of utmost importance to ensure that police officers have the adequate resources, equipment and training to combat these changing threats.

ENHANCE CROSS-BORDER POLICE COOPERATION

The differences between EU Member States hamper enhanced police cooperation in the EU and its ambition to create a common culture of European policing. In this context, the specific border management responsibilities and the related challenges of certain Member States should also be taken into account.

While recognising the fundamental differences that exist among police forces in Europe, as well as the sovereign right of EU Member States to govern law enforcement within their territories, EuroCOP believes that given today's realities, Europe needs to move closer to a common culture for law enforcement. This should be reflected in the renewed Internal Security Strategy and supported by a number of concrete proposed measures or activities in various areas such as best practices, training, intelligence-sharing, legislative implementation etc.

Unfortunately, I am well aware that we can never preclude situations of extreme violence and police officers undertake the risks of their job knowingly. However, it is important to acknowledge the role of police in tackling the changing European security environment, engage in dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders, and ensure that Europe's police officers can face these new challenges cooperatively, successfully and safely.

EuroCOP therefore welcomes the ongoing discussions that are currently taking place both at the European Union and national level to address these issues.

Anna Nellberg Dennis
President, European Confederation of Police
+ 352 43 49 61 20
contact@eurocop-police.org
www.eurocop.org



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About EuroCOP:

The European Confederation of Police, EuroCOP, is the umbrella organisation for 35 police unions and staff organisations in Europe based in Luxembourg. It represents the interests of over half a million police officers in 27 European countries, dealing with issues which range from police cooperation across borders to a safer working environment for police officers on the street. EuroCOP was established in November 2002. It is an independent, non-profit and secular organisation and has no affiliation with any government or political party. It is self-financed through contributions of its members. EuroCOP is open to any organisation representing police officers in member countries of the European Union or the Council of Europe.