



## POSITION PAPER

### Refugee & Migration Crisis

European Confederation of Police

The European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) recognises that Europe is regarded as a safe place to live and work. Our nations are welcoming of others and are intolerant to injustice and inhumanity. We also recognise that as a consequence of this, others have always sought to better their way of life whether purely on economic grounds or simply seeking refuge from persecution, danger or war by wanting to live and work in our countries.



EuroCOP considers that regardless of the reason for so many seeking to come and live in Europe that the impact and pressures on our nations and in particular our police forces, is the same.



Police officers are on the front line of seeking to manage a crisis that risks overwhelming many of our nations. No nation should be expected to deal single handedly with this problem simply because they happen to have a border on the periphery of Europe. The borders of the nations of Europe are European borders and should be regarded as such.

EuroCOP considers that in addition to the potential humanitarian problems presented by in excess of one million refugees/migrants entering Europe in 2015 alone, many policing challenges that are yet to be fully understood. We have no indications to expect numbers will be any less in 2016.

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 our shores.

Many of those arriving are traumatised and have lost loved ones (including children), many have been victims of crime. We have no doubt that many (including children) are being exploited and trafficked into slavery or prostitution and consider it likely that amongst those who are already here will be violent criminals whose identities may never be uncovered. We cannot imagine the horror that so many have witnessed and the psychological impact this has had.

Police officers are faced with duties that include shepherding fellow human beings behind fences and into camps or driving them to other places away from their own internal borders.



Police officers are dealing with fellow human beings who lack adequate clothing, food or shelter to be able to survive. It is and remains a key humanitarian challenge to all European countries to grant refugees a safe and decent shelter, even if only on a temporary basis.

management of refugees.

**EuroCOP calls** upon the European Council to put in place funding and the mechanisms to enable the development of specific police training for the

**EuroCOP calls** for the immediate creation of a pan European research initiative to measure the long term psychological impact on police officers who are dealing with fellow human beings in extreme circumstances.

**EuroCOP calls** for police forces to cooperate in the sharing of current best practice and that proper mechanisms are out in place to manage the health, safety and welfare of those dealing with this crisis.

EuroCOP believes it is incumbent on all European governments to find workable solutions to managing this challenge. It is not for EuroCOP to determine how many are accommodated and in which nation but we do not consider that at this time the European burden is being borne equally by the nations of Europe.

**EuroCOP calls** for the European Commission and the European nation states to implement existing contractual obligations and rules to ensure that the influx of refugees is better organised all over Europe. This will allow for a reduction of the tremendous daily strain for police officers and other public services.

EuroCOP continues to observe that the reduction in police officers throughout Europe is a policy driven by finance and not one driven by need or demand. It is impossible to believe that the new demands created by over 1,000,000 new people entering Europe in little over a year can properly be managed by police forces who were already struggling to cope with falling numbers and existing demand.

**EuroCOP calls** for an increase in police officers across Europe. At this time those that are left are heavily overloaded and there are simply far too few police officers to deal with the current challenges and effectively tackle illegal migration, human trafficking and international crime.

## About EuroCOP

The European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) is the umbrella organisation for 35 police unions and staff organisations in Europe. Based in Luxembourg, we represent the interests of over half a million police officers in 27 European countries. Today, EuroCOP is tackling issues from police cooperation across borders to a safer working environment for police officers on the street. We are determined to contribute to European policy debates and provide added value by giving a practitioners perspective. EuroCOP was established in November 2002, and is an independent, non-profit and secular organisation and has no affiliation with any government or political party. Financed through member contributions, EuroCOP is open to any organisation representing police officers in member countries of the European Union or the Council of Europe.