



PRESS RELEASE

European police staff organisations and unions urge Europe's policymakers to recognize and support the critical role of police officers in the current migration crisis

PRAGUE, 3 September 2015 – In the light of the tragic events in the Mediterranean, and the thousands of migrants who are risking their lives to reach European shores, the European Commission's priority to address the migration challenge has come into even sharper focus. In May 2015, the European Commission adopted a European Agenda on Migration which sets out concrete measures to better manage migration. Representing more than 500,000 police officers from staff organisations and unions, the European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) welcomes these first initiatives proposed by the Commission and urges Europe's policymakers to recognize the vital role of European police officers in this crisis, and to take action to ensure that they have the resources, skills and capacity to manage the extreme challenges currently being faced.

At its Committee meeting on 2-3 September in Prague, EuroCOP dealt intensively with the migration topic and discussed the specific challenges that police officers are currently facing. EuroCOP adopted a declaration which calls on European policymakers to step up efforts and to take immediate action to better manage migration and to take into account the role of police officers. More specifically, EuroCOP calls on policymakers to ensure that Europe's policemen and women are provided with the appropriate support, training and resources needed to carry out their duties. Recent tragic events in Calais, Budapest and Turkey are examples of police officers being increasingly exposed to physically and mentally extreme situations. It is therefore crucial to ensure that police officers have access to adequate support and are well-trained to manage the necessary additional roles and requirements that this situation demands.

Mediterranean and eastern EU Member States are increasingly becoming transit countries for migrants before heading to western and northern EU Member States. This puts significant pressure on police officers all over Europe. Faced with significant cuts in police budgets over the past several years, the capacity of national police forces is being seriously compromised. EuroCOP therefore calls on policymakers to provide adequate funding to better manage the migration challenges.

Moreover, EuroCOP calls on Europe's political leaders to enhance cross-border police cooperation. It is essential that the specific border management responsibilities and the related challenges of certain Member States are 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, it is of utmost importance that any obstacles that hamper enhanced police cooperation in the EU are removed.

EuroCOP believes that migration management is a shared responsibility that requires increased efforts as well as mutual trust and solidarity among all relevant stakeholders involved. Europe's police officers understand their role and are willing to play their part. However, it is important to ensure that Europe's police officers can carry out their duties cooperatively, successfully and safely.

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