



21 Recommendations

For Uniformed Police In 21st Century



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The text was published with the support of the Open Society Fund Prague.

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INTRODUCTION

The Open Society, p. b. c., first applied a systematic approach towards the work of uniformed police – or public order police, as it is sometimes referred to – in 2003 when it launched a project called Implementing the Concept of Community Policing Into the Czech Police System. It sought for an optimal model of how local police units should operate, a model responding to the “demands of the time” such as the lack of public confidence in the police, people’s feeling that the police is useless, while responding to the current trends in Police Sciences, trends brought about by similar conditions in other countries.

The trend involves the notion that the police should adopt a more flexible approach towards the public – in the long run, the police does not manage to define on its own its objectives and instruments to fulfil these objectives. The notion involves both idealistic and pragmatic aspects: not only is it fair to discuss with the public whatever concerns the public. By publicly discussing the issues the police are faced with or by declaring the clear goals the police intends to fulfil it is possible to raise public

demand for such changes. When knowing that the public supports them, the police managers will find it easier to promote the changes.

It is unacceptable to let the public know about the deficiencies in the work and organization of the Czech Police only through arguments between the media and police spokespersons, which is what still happens. The discussion has to have a clear structure and objectives. This text has the ambition to initiate such discussion. The following pages will not give you any reform plan for the uniformed police; in fact, the Open Society, p.b.c. has no sufficient organization and financial sources to promote such a complex issue. Also, such reforms need to be implemented in connection to other parts of the Czech Police as well as legal amendments. The text will give you some of the experience and details that we have gathered since the project was launched three years ago, since the specific issues of some of the specific localities were first dealt with, and since discussions started with the Czech police – especially the primary levels.

Let us give you some ideas of how the uniformed police should work in the future.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE PAST YEARS

All over the world, police forces have been subject to profound change. There are new trends in how crime and its sources are perceived, in its instruments as well as in the ways of combating crime. In the past, police – like other institutions – had to do with a lot of administration that monitored activities which were as small as possible, thus easily calculable and assessable. What this approach resulted in was a well-working organization of crime fighters which, however, had very little contact with people's everyday troubles.

It is impossible to say the crime fighters have lost – far from it, they do win in most battles anyway – although they can hardly win the whole war. Crime has always been an inevitable part of society, and this is how it has to be approached. Police theoreticians have come to realize this, and have come up with approaches based on monitoring the environment that brings crime rather than on monitoring crime itself. Instead of catching as many offenders as possible, the police should, first and foremost, create such conditions that will make it virtually impossible to violate laws. The police has adopted a new role in relation to the public – the general public

used to be approached as a source of information whenever a crime was committed, whereas nowadays it is considered a central point of police work. What is crucial is the feeling of security on the part of people and their participation in designing as well as implementing safe conditions. The police – particularly the public order units which are discussed here¹ – is changing from a file able to respond quickly and effectively into a file able to foresee troubles and to prevent them.

The Czech Police has responded to the new trends as well. It no doubt had a rather more difficult starting position than the police forces in the neighbouring countries, in particular those west of the Czech Republic. A member of the police put it very simply – “for forty years police offices were built as secure fortresses”, which had a

¹ There is no doubt that the police has to go on fighting various crimes which are becoming more and more sophisticated. The general public does not feel directly that such crimes occur; similarly, people should not feel directly the presence of files dealing with such crimes. On the other hand, whenever a crime has direct impact on people, the visible part of the police – the uniformed, or public order police – has to step in.

huge effect on how the police perceived the general public and vice versa. Nevertheless, the police has by now gone a long way towards measuring up to other police forces.

Since 2000 the police has implemented the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) system which intends to “create products of better quality, provide clients with services of better quality while making business partners, general public, and the police staff more satisfied,”² in 2001 the Police started opinion polls in order to monitor how the public perceives the police, and how satisfied people are with services provided. In September 2005 another project was launched both by the Czech Police and the Ministry of the Interior. The goal is to implement principles called *community policing*³ into the work of the local units of the Czech Police.

² According to www.mvcr.cz/policie/phare/historie_policie.html

³ Community policing is more like philosophy rather than a working method, and it has different forms in different police forces. The Czech version has been outlined by the Open Society in its project called *Implementing the Concept of Community Policing into the Czech Police System*.

Every effort in this respect deserves praise and is more than welcome since every positive example reflects great credit on the police, and makes it more likely that the hard work done by the police will be useful. Yet, there has unfortunately been more resentment rather than support on the part of the police, although the reforms have been repeatedly declared as a crucial task for years now. We are the wrong entity to analyse why this is so; the police is a huge body and it is perfectly understandable that adopting changes of any kind necessarily brings results at a later point. Instead, let us build upon the positive response and efforts from within the police, and support their force while pointing out some of the notorious issues that the police is faced with and that still need to be solved. In order to fulfil its goals, the police needs complex change that will solve such issues as systematic barriers on its way to success instead of dealing with them separately. It is only upon the changes to its work that we can build a police force able to fulfil the role it has adopted. And this is why we have come up with these recommendations.

COMMUNITY POLICING

In order to be an active part of a democratic society, the police has to respond to a number of needs, has to be able to enforce law, be impartial, universal, and just... Legally, it is obliged to do so by the Constitution and the Police Act. By pursuing this philosophy, the police often forgets to respond to minor, though no less important, needs. First and foremost, every modern society must make sure that the public is given due support not only when suffering from crime but also when feeling endangered by crime. In reality, the uniformed police work more like mechanical crime monitors rather than like an active force protecting the public from the consequences of crime. The only solution to this is a closer link between the local units of the uniformed police on the one hand and the communities they are responsible for on the other. This is something we have recently been calling *community policing*. Its characteristics are outlined elsewhere; let us only give you the four principles it is based on:

First, there is the principle of **cooperation**. In other words, the police builds a close cooperation with the community⁴ – or the public – when carrying out its work. Cooperation is diverse – from helping each other in particular cases to systematically abolishing the issues that the community is faced with and that deepen the feeling of being endangered.

The second principle is the **responsibility** towards the members of the community. This includes a number of aspects – first, concrete police staff are responsible for concrete territory; second, the responsibility for the power given to the police by the nation (public); thirdly, the authority of police resulting from the power. If the goals of the institution cannot be clearly defined as those of the public, then the priorities of the institution must be changed.

By assuming the responsibility for the security in the community, the police has to follow a third principle, which is the **strategy** of fulfilling such responsibility. In-

⁴ Community means a community of citizens who share the same life conditions and worries related to the conditions – broadly speaking, community is a group of citizens belonging to an area controlled by one Czech police department (or local unit).

stead of focusing solely on investigating crime, the police has to lay a new emphasis on responsibly working on criminal factors and indicators. Thus prevention has to play a more important role in police work than it has done so far – it has to become an everyday part of the activities of each and every member of the police staff.

Fourthly, and no less importantly, there is the **initiative** of the police. The staff have to seek new ways of restricting and preventing crime and always remember the fact that very often things that may look minor from the general perspective can have decisive effect on crime. The police has to perceive crime as a genuinely social phenomenon and has to ensure that all parts of society are involved in an active fight against crime. The police has to bear in mind that crime is not anything that only the police may worry about, but is a threat to all its potential victims.

The move towards these principles has to run in three levels – legislation, organization and management, and working conditions in local units. They may not necessarily run at the same time, but the clear movement towards fulfilling these principles and the support by the police top management are absolutely crucial for the future of the uniformed police.



Working conditions in local units

WORKING CONDITIONS IN LOCAL UNITS

Currently, police officers at the local level spend too much time by doing administrative work and traffic monitoring. There is hardly any time left for other types of contact with the public living in the particular area – who should be their most important target – such as preventative work and monitoring law and order in places where people tend to feel endangered. The uniformed police investigate crimes (which is what the Crime and Investigation Department is primarily in charge of) or monitor the safety and fluency of traffic (which is what the Traffic Police Department is primarily in charge of). This does not imply that the uniformed police should avoid these activities – it only needs to be pointed out that local police units often fail to do what they were primarily established for. Therefore, the link to the place the unit is responsible for, is often an abstract one. In order to be a genuinely modern force, the police has to put every effort into making the relationships with the communities as active as possible. But how to achieve this?

All police staff who have been employed for ten and more years have been calling for a careful distribution of work based on the areas they are responsible for. The reason is that they still recall how the good knowledge of people and places on the part of the police helped make the public more confident in the police and more willing to help during investigation as well as to conform to law and order.

Currently, the distribution of work based on districts is only formal. The police do investigate cases falling into their districts and do keep the records about what happens in the districts, but have no regular contact with the public, such that would be natural and preventative. Thus the police are no longer the people's police – they only collect information in order to fulfil **their own** goals. With the area becoming more anonymous, the police necessarily lose control, investigation is more difficult and brings worse results. The police feel no support from the public, which makes the mutual confidence even lower. The solution is to design a new way of work distribution so that the police staff spend as much time as possible in the area, even when not doing any investigation.

1.

RECOMMENDATION

Carefully distribute work according to districts

Particularly in smaller towns and areas which are easily controllable, it is undoubtedly advantageous to send individual police officers to do their patrols. When spending more time in their districts, when not going there in order to carry out administrative duties, the police have much more room for comfortable communication with the people, for building contacts, building confidence and broadening the knowledge of people and places. Only when not talking to his/her colleague during the patrols, when paying more attention to the places, the police officers become more open to the general public. It then becomes easy and comfortable for the people to address their officers. The same is with the police – the officer will simply sooner or later be bored when walking on his/her own and will easily start talking to people.

2.

RECOMMENDATION

Send police officers on one-man patrols

Supporting non-crime related contacts between the police and the public is an integral part of the current trends in police work. Officers have to take people for their partners or clients instead of seeing them as sources of potential trouble, which is what still happens these days. We may say this new trend has caught on although the police need to be made aware of such changes through very specific changes to their training programmes as well as through new requirements and evaluation methods. Some of these changes will be outlined later in the text.

3.

RECOMMENDATION

Make police officers see the public as clients

The police staff see their work as very risky, feeling constant danger – be it the risk of losing their jobs or threats to their health or lives. But it is important to know that they do have the means to avoid conflicts that may occur – it is only necessary to figure out how to use them...

The primary police training places huge emphasis on teaching the police staff to investigate crimes and do all the related administrative tasks, to deal with aggressive offenders, and to use shotguns on a regular basis. There are, in fact, very few situations that would really call for such skills. The risks that are so typical of the approach the police staff adopt in their everyday work, tend to be exaggerated (ordinary police officers come to use some of “crisis” skills once in many months or even years). We do appreciate that the primary training programme has to teach these skills, but we think it unacceptable to keep placing the biggest emphasis on them.

4.

RECOMMENDATION

Hugely restrict the focus on conflicts in the primary training programme

It is very advisable that the police staff learn how to communicate in non-conflict situations and to build non-authoritative and informal contact with the public. This part of the police work must, however, be based on expertise and cannot be driven by intuition and by the fact that the police “behave well”. The police must be able to communicate in situations which are not based on any conflict, and must behave in a way that does not lead to or aggravate conflicts. This is no difficult philosophy as it might seem. Keeping in touch with the general public is absolutely crucial for the police. It helps broaden the knowledge of people and places and strengthen the links with the community that the police unit is responsible for. The benefit is twofold: the public will be willing to give more information in investigation processes, and it will adopt a more positive attitude towards the police. What matters more for the public’s perception of the police is the day-to-day personal experience rather than cases being shown in the media.

5.

RECOMMENDATION

Hugely strengthen the focus on communication skills in non-conflict situations in the primary training programme

Another innovation we suggest in the contact with the public is that information can be given by more people instead of police spokespersons only. The traditional way is justifiable in serious, long cases or in strategic issues related to the management of police sections but may be abandoned when information is needed without delay (at the scene of a crime or a car accident etc.). Not only does the spokesperson have less information than the police doing the investigation but it is also unadvisable to let him/her comment on what the “ordinary” staff do since his/her role is to defend strategic decisions of his section that may sometimes be controversial for the public. A member of police staff who likes to answer an ordinary question with “No comment” will often have a stronger impact on the public confidence than serious misdemeanour committed by his/her colleagues in a different place of the country. As said above, it is the everyday contact with the police that has the strongest effect on how the public perceives the police.

6.

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate part of the responsibility for media communication onto members of the local units

We have talked about the need to include into the basic skills that every member of the police should have the ability to communicate in non-conflict situations. The communication with the media is one of the specific points that should be given due support in the primary training programme.

7.

RECOMMENDATION

Include media training into the primary training programme

In order to be an effective tool of crime prevention in society, the police cannot be satisfied with prevention experts since these will only be able to give lectures in the schools in the area and hold a “police day” once in a year. Crime prevention is a much more complicated issue and its best tool is a non-anonymous environment. This can only be built and maintained when the individual staff of local police units have enough room for regular non-crime related contact and communication with the people living in the area. The police have to be able to play its preventative role in each and every contact with the people whatever the reason for the contact.

8.

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate preventive tasks onto individual police staff and define them as a functional part of their everyday activities

Currently, the police put most efforts into such activities of a short-lasting value that can only be evaluated according to the amount of them (e.g. revealing five traffic offences is better than revealing one). They fail to solve the issues typical of the locality, and focus on general priorities the fulfilment of which is difficult to evaluate. This needs to be changed – the police must be able to set specific strategic goals for their area and work towards these goals through such means that they think adequate (and which are, naturally, compatible with law). There must be enough time for such activities in their working schedule.

9.

RECOMMENDATION

Give the police staff enough room to plan long-term solutions to issues typical of their location

10.

RECOMMENDATION

Engage partners in solving the issues typical of the community

Naturally, the police staff are unable to pursue these tasks by themselves. On the contrary, it is much better to seek solutions where the issue appeared with those who suffer from it. Therefore, the police should adopt an active role in building and strengthening the partnership among police units, groups of people, or between members of the public and the police in the fight for safety. Though the beginnings may be far from easy and it may be necessary to start again and again in the face of a particular issue, the police must admit that it needs external support for efficient fight against crime. Thus each of the potential partners may hold the key to abolishing one of the factors creating a particular trouble that keeps occurring again and again. Also, closer relationships facilitate the day-to-day communication between the police and state authorities, saving time for both parties.

In order to fulfil this role responsibly and to build efficient and long-lasting relationships in the community, the police must have the right means. The local units are seen as a “basis” for other specialist police activities but the focus on the equipment is often inadequate. Apart from the web pages of each local unit and business cards that all the staff should have and give out to people living in the area, the police must have mobile telephones or a direct line with an answering machine, Internet access and e-mail address. Currently, mass communication means other than e-mail are unsustainable in the long run.

11.

RECOMMENDATION

Give the police the right means to support their role in the community

Lastly, and no less importantly, the police must be trained to face the issues resulting from the type of work discussed above. One of them is how to operate the modern means of communication that the police will be given, but what is more important are the basic team skills. The police must be trained to organize work, to set goals and be able to make themselves and their partners achieve the goals without delay, to know how to evaluate their activities. These skills can be taught in the primary training programme.

12.

RECOMMENDATION


Include team management into the primary training programme



Structure & organization

STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION

The current management and organization structure of the Czech Police is not really efficient, far from open to changes, and what is worse, the police does not seem to have any internal future policies. Instead, the structure looks like a number of unrelated islands that only deal with what they think needs solving without delay. We could even say that the organization structure of the police – which was established as a most efficient tool of safety objectives – has become an objective itself and works only in order to survive.



From the viewpoint of the police, crime is currently something that can be successfully fought by penalizing those who commit it. What is much more efficient (though more difficult at the start) is to see it as an issue which can be solved by identifying and abolishing its causes. The police has ample valuable information in this respect. But as most crime-related issues are very complex there is no doubt that the police is unable to solve such issues on their own. Initiative is there, however, and it should remain on the part of the police, as well. It is only the activity of the police that can launch and support an efficient process of abolishing the germs of crime rather than symptoms.

13.

RECOMMENDATION

Motivate the police to identify the causes of trouble and to work towards abolishing them

In order to play an active role in safety and security, the police must be sure that such efforts will be given due reward, not only financial, but also professional. Therefore, it is no longer possible to put up with an environment where the police is supposed to meet all the plans and deadlines of various administrative tasks – these should be one of the means, rather than the sole objective of police work. Only when the public has some experience with the police other than from situations related to crime or offences (be it in the role of victims or perpetrators), the police will be seen in the positive light. Until the public feel that the police are interested in their troubles and security rather than in ticking off their own administrative duties, there will be no confidence between the police and the public; only such confidence could result in closer cooperation in the long-term process of solving security issues.

14.

RECOMMENDATION

Include non-crime related contact between the police and the public into performance evaluation

If the police are convinced that the measures they want to adopt are right, they must have enough room for evaluation. We have said already that the police must be able to make long-term plans of their activities and to set the goals which they want to achieve in the long-term horizon. Also, there have to be evaluation instruments able to take into consideration and respect the new solution methods.

15.

RECOMMENDATION

Introduce performance evaluation based on how long-term goals are achieved rather than on administrative efficiency; promote planning

16.

RECOMMENDATION

Once and for all abolish the old evaluation system evaluating the quantity of tasks fulfilled in crime investigation

In other words, short-term tasks with no clear link to realistic goals – in each and every institution, including the police – necessarily make those responsible for carrying them out unable to see over their horizons. They will gradually stop thinking independently and will avoid making decisions, and instead adopt only an administrative approach to their goals; thus, their performance will lose its initial sense. Applying too much administration in the police work may lead to widespread apathy. The only way of tackling it is to use different evaluation criteria – ones based on quality rather than on quantity, supporting initiative instead of the *no doing no spoiling* philosophy. Currently, with the new evaluation instructions existing officially for almost four years, though normally the old one is still given preference, it becomes clear that formal changes to evaluation methods will not do: it has to be given active and long-term support by the police top management.

Police work is regulated by a number of internal rules – internal acts of management. Although their first objective is to give the police such instructions the fulfilment of which will protect them from mistakes and penalizations, the result is mostly counter-productive. The police staff sometimes like to act in opposition to their personal feeling in order to avoid disagreements with very detailed requirements laid down in regulations, or to avoid the excessive red tape that would result from the decision they would otherwise prefer. In order to adopt an active approach to issues related to crime, the police must have the relevant support in the internal organization regulations. This can be done by linking and abolishing duplicities or disagreements in various regulations and by establishing the framework of “preferable performance” which the newly adopted regulations will cover. What could serve as the basis for such a framework could be the Code of Ethics of the Czech Police which is currently overlooked.

17.

RECOMMENDATION

Harmonise the tasks of the police and the relevant methods through auditing the internal acts of management

Instead of being a hint to guide the police staff when in doubt, the internal acts of management tend to be a detailed instruction for tackling everyday situations. The technical details of how to carry out a task are useful for analysing and improving the methods used. In order to work in the day-to-day police work, they have to be defined in strategic points rather than technically. The more the staff can learn about tasks from careful strategic training, the less they will need a thorough knowledge of the technical details.

18.

RECOMMENDATION

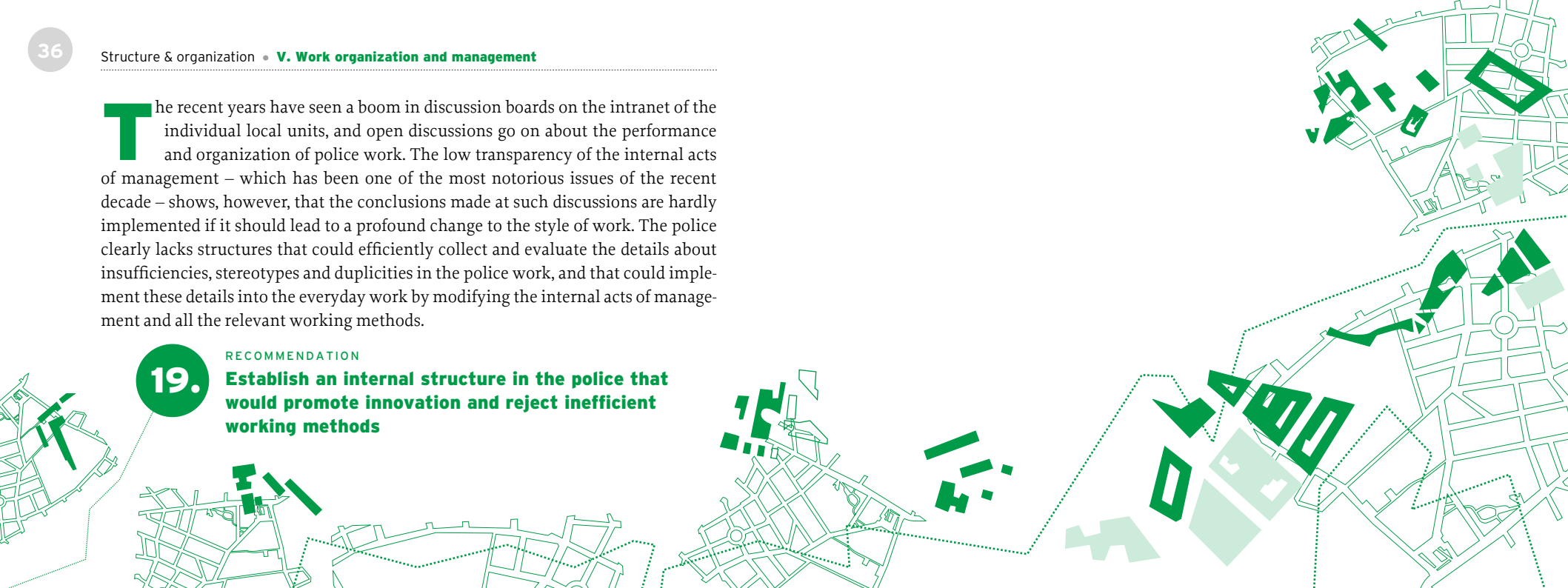
Define police work methods strategically rather than technically

The recent years have seen a boom in discussion boards on the intranet of the individual local units, and open discussions go on about the performance and organization of police work. The low transparency of the internal acts of management – which has been one of the most notorious issues of the recent decade – shows, however, that the conclusions made at such discussions are hardly implemented if it should lead to a profound change to the style of work. The police clearly lacks structures that could efficiently collect and evaluate the details about insufficiencies, stereotypes and duplicities in the police work, and that could implement these details into the everyday work by modifying the internal acts of management and all the relevant working methods.

19.

RECOMMENDATION

Establish an internal structure in the police that would promote innovation and reject inefficient working methods





Legislation

LEGISLATION

Although amended several times, the Czech Police Act has been there for fifteen years. This is not to say it is a wrong law, nor do we think laws should be modified on a regular basis. Yet, it has become clear that the current form of the Act makes it impossible for the police to work as it is supposed to at the start of the 21st century. We are not talking about the technological changes or the new balance of security forces in both Europe and the world in general (though these are no minor issues either) which have occurred in the past fifteen years. In particular, it is the changing democratic societies with a new emphasis placed on information and performance transparency and thus a crisis of legitimacy of the police in today's world that call for law amendments.

The police of every democratic society must be as open as possible, taking care of people's comfort and security rather than forever catching all the different criminals. The police must define its role in relation to those whom they serve in points which come from everyday work. The Code of Ethics of the Czech Police may help define the role: points such as communication, confidence, prevention, or responsibility must be included in the Police Act, instead of being laid down in supplementary regulations which are hard to adopt.

20.

RECOMMENDATION

Redefine the role of the police in society in the Police Act with formulations that include practical points coming from everyday work

The police must be given by law part of the responsibility for establishing the conditions that produce crime. The passive protection of law and order and the search for and revelation of crimes and offences are still reflected in insensible regulations. By contrast, active attempts at identifying security issues and their potential sources, search for solutions and partners are still subject to contempt (apart from some exceptions, which are fortunately on the increase). Therefore, it is necessary to abolish the excess of formal contacts between the police and other institutions, and focus on highlighting in the primary police regulations the benefits of tackling issues locally.

21.

RECOMMENDATION

Define partnership cooperation in tackling security issues locally as one of the primary working methods of Czech Police local units



List of recommendations



LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Working conditions in local units

RECOMMENDATION 1

Carefully distribute work according to districts

RECOMMENDATION 2

Send police officers on one-man patrols

RECOMMENDATION 3

Make police officers see the public as clients

RECOMMENDATION 4

Hugely restrict the focus on conflicts in the primary training programme

RECOMMENDATION 5

Hugely strengthen the focus on communication skills in non-conflict situations in the primary training programme

RECOMMENDATION 6

Delegate part of the responsibility for media communication onto members of the local units

RECOMMENDATION 7

Include media training into the primary training programme

RECOMMENDATION 8

Delegate preventive tasks onto individual police staff and define them as a functional part of their everyday activities

RECOMMENDATION 9

Give the police staff enough room to plan long-term solutions to issues typical of their location

RECOMMENDATION 10

Engage partners in solving the issues typical of the community

RECOMMENDATION 11

Give the police the right means to support their role in the community

RECOMMENDATION 12

Include team management into the primary training programme

Management and organization structure**RECOMMENDATION 13**

Motivate the police to identify the causes of trouble and to work towards abolishing them

RECOMMENDATION 14

Include non-crime related contact between the police and the public into performance evaluation

RECOMMENDATION 15

Introduce performance evaluation based on how long-term goals are achieved rather than on administrative efficiency; promote planning

RECOMMENDATION 16

Once and for all abolish the old evaluation system evaluating the quantity of tasks fulfilled in crime investigation

RECOMMENDATION 17

Harmonise the tasks of the police and the relevant methods through auditing the internal acts of management

RECOMMENDATION 18

Define police work methods strategically rather than technically

RECOMMENDATION 19

Establish an internal structure in the police that would promote innovation and reject inefficient working methods

Legislation**RECOMMENDATION 20**

Redefine the role of the police in society in the Police Act with formulations that include practical points coming from everyday work

RECOMMENDATION 21

Define partnership cooperation in tackling security issues locally as one of the primary working methods of Czech police local units

At the start we pronounced the idea that these recommendations attempt to show the direction that the Czech Police should take in order to become the kind of force that its representatives intend to establish. What is discussed here is the everyday work of the uniformed police (although some of the recommendations could be actually applied to the whole of the police organization). But the intention of the brief text was to focus on issues directly related to the uniformed police.

By contrast, what the Open Society normally does is more universal. The programme that the foundation is working on, called **ProPolice**, will deal with police issues in general. For more details about the activities and outputs of the programme, including the English version of the recommendations, please visit the program's web pages at www.pro-police.cz.

