



Stockholm  
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## **Policing Europe: European Policing? The challenge of coordination in international policing**

*Summary of a Workshop held in  
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute  
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### **Introduction**

On 4-5 May Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) held a workshop on the role of regional organizations in international policing and the challenges of coordinating multiple actors in policing in peace operations. Approximately 25 practitioners/experts took part in frank and informal exchanges of view on this timely subject. This executive summary represents some of the main points raised during the course of discussions.<sup>1</sup>

The workshop is part of an 18 month project, '*International Policing: The New Agenda*' which is being undertaken with the financial support of the Swedish and Norwegian Ministries for Foreign Affairs and the Irish Department of Justice, Equity and Law Reform. A second workshop, co-organized with and hosted by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) will be held in Oslo in November. The subject of this workshop will be executive policing functions in peace operations. Further information on the project, as well as a more comprehensive report of the workshop on regional organizations in international policing, can be found on the SIPRI website: <http://projects.sipri.se/conflictstudy>.

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<sup>1</sup> The summary does not represent the views of individual participants in the workshop and the rapporteur remains solely responsible for its content.

## Executive Summary

### Coordinating the goals of international policing

International policing presents conceptual and practical challenges for its practitioners. Policing is directed at the domestic order of a given society and is shaped by the social, cultural and political context of that environment. This makes it resistant to external forces and to broad-based approaches. Multinational organizations, encompassing a wide variety of policing cultures and styles, encounter particular difficulties in overcoming this resistance. Their diversity further complicates elaboration of the concrete goals and strategies necessary to negotiate obstacles to international policing. Multilevel coordination across the different phases of a peace operation is thus a precondition to successful international policing.

The criteria of success depend on the goals established by external policing actors. Over the past decade international policing has moved from a focus on monitoring and observation to one of management of change. Reform and restructuring and, in some cases, creation of police forces has become the focus of external engagement.

Reform and restructuring are ambitious goals for international actors. Their inherent intrusiveness on the structures and processes of a state make them highly political processes. The extensive and open-ended nature of reform is technically and resource demanding and requires long-term commitment of assistance. Most important, it necessitates a coherent vision of the end to be achieved.

The democratic, efficient rule of law is the articulated goal of the international community. This end state, however, is not easily elaborated into clear tasks and measurable objectives. Strategic thinking is thus required at all levels about the goals of international policing, the specific targets to be set at distinct stages and the priorities to be established in particular contexts. Only in this way can international actors begin exploring possible divisions of labour in policing.

Priority-setting carries practical implications for the design and conduct of an international policing operation. The resources and skills required at different stages of an operation will differ according to the priorities set in each specific case. Planning procedures thus depend on the articulation of international policing goals. Key issues to be addressed are:

- Priority of reforms: should the short/medium-term focus of international policing in peace operations be on the democratic nature of police in the host state (i.e. human rights, transparency, corruption) or, rather, on the efficiency of that police force (i.e. tackling organized crime, technical skills)?
- Priority of targets: should short/medium-term reform address a) the individual police officer b) the institutions of the police force c) relations between policing and other authority institutions of the state?

A realistic appreciation of what can and cannot be achieved by an externally-led reform and restructuring process in the short and medium-term is desirable. The goals and targets of international policing could be better communicated to publics both in the host state and among the states providing international police assistance.

## Coordinating actors: the United Nations and regional organizations

The new spirit of cooperation among international organizations in peace operations is to be welcomed. However, it is still a nascent and largely high-level process. Mid-level contacts between the UN and the regional organizations involved in policing are important, as is the institutionalization of contacts and communication.

The global authority of the UN establishes its leadership in international policing. Regional engagement in policing, participants believed, will take place in almost all cases within the context of a UN-led or UN-sanctioned operation. The participation of a regional contingent within a UN operation is dependent on UN Security Council approval as well as on agreement from the host state. An alternative legitimating basis for regional engagement in policing may be provided by an invitation from the host state and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the regional organization.

Civilian policing is a relatively recent activity for the UN and continues to face organizational, financial and logistical problems. There are a variety of views on the ways in which the UN and regional organizations can best coordinate international policing efforts in a mutually reinforcing way:

- *Regional organizations as long-term peacebuilding actors.* In this perspective, the UN is the lead actor in an international peace operation and gradually hands over responsibility for peacebuilding to the relevant regional organization before withdrawal. The interest of proximate regional organizations in neighbourhood stability provides the political commitment to the sustained assistance required by police reform. A similar cultural background, as well as existing contacts with the host state in question may facilitate this engagement.
- *Regional organizations as rapid deployers of police personnel.* For some, the advantage of regional organizations is the speed at which they may deploy police relative to the UN system. This number of deployable police, however, depends on the regional organization having resources beyond those already committed by member states to UN operations.
- *Regional organizations as trainers of police personnel.* The potential of regional organizations to assist in overcoming the persistent problem of poorly trained civilian police in UN operations has been repeatedly raised. Regional organizations could engage in training within and beyond their neighbourhood and membership.
- *Regional organizations as specialized resource providers.* The potential ability of regional actors to provide specific skills in peace operations (linguistic expertise, diverse types of police, specialized technical skills) is seen as a potential benefit of regional engagement.

These potential roles are predicated on two assumptions: 1) the regional organization acts in support of, rather than in lieu of, UN leadership 2) the regional organization has the capacity and resources (equal if not greater than the UN) to carry out such tasks.

## The European Union and international policing

EU efforts to develop capacity for policing in peace operations are to be welcomed. They have brought international attention to the issue and are encouraging increased overall capacity in policing. A number of specific issues were raised:

*Increased police personnel:* The commitment of EU member states to ambitious police personnel targets is a positive step. Nevertheless, some fears remain that this is not a realistic number of available deployable personnel, as many will be already in the field at any one time.

*Police training:* Increased emphasis on and coordination of basic international police training within the EU is also welcomed. There was broad support for coordinated national procedures rather than centralized training centres. Although training for senior police officers is crucial, training targeting mid-level personnel in international policing operations should be developed within the EU. The potential contribution of the EU to provide training for non-EU states is important, not least as an international transparency and confidence-building measure.

*Codification of standards:* UN guidelines for police in peace operations have been developed relatively late and remain very broad. Coordination between EU member states could help facilitate the elaboration and codification of standards for international policing.

*Specialization:* The capacity of the EU to deploy different types of police is generally regarded as a potential benefit for international policing. The complexity lies in coordinating formed police units and civilian policing along the different phases of a peace operation and managing the transition of command of such units from the military to the police commissioner. This underscores the need for joint training and exercises between gendarmes and civilian police.

Formed units and specialized skills teams raise the potential of divisions of labour along national lines within a policing operation. The importance of impartiality, consistency and interoperability in international policing should caution against a division of responsibility along national lines.

*Financing:* The provision of equipment, technical and logistical assistance to host police forces is difficult for the UN. The EU has significant potential to assist fund police reform both in the crisis-management and longer peace building phases.

*Planning:* Pre-mission planning for policing operations has not been carried out by the UN and capacity for planning remains limited. An EU planning capacity could play a valuable role in assisting planning for international policing operations, whether EU or non-EU led.

Planning processes for all varieties of scenarios need to be put in place if EU member states are to be able to consider a range of options and respond to dynamic policing environments. The establishment of EU police planning structures parallel to military planning structures is thus recommended. The structures for police coordination currently being developed must establish clear communication and decision-making channels within the EU's crisis-management structures. Intra-EU coordination in policing remains a crucial challenge for the realization of capacity in policing in peace operations.

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