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FEATURES OF BASIC POLICE TRAINING IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine. All these european countries have a variety of systems of police education and training. In 10 countries it is possible to obtain a high-school level police education. Five countries also have police education that leads to an associate degree (2 years of college). In 12 countries it is possible to obtain a 3-year higher professional education degree within the system of police education. Bachelor's degrees can be obtained in 8 out of the 17 surveyed countries, master's degree in five, and a doctoral degree in four countries. Basic training for police officers in the surveyed countries takes between 4 months and 4 years, followed over the years by various forms of specialized training and management training.

Duration of basic police training varies from four months to four years. While the majority of countries does not accept candidates with less than a high school degree, there are six countries that admit candidates without a completed high school degree (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, and the Czech Republic).

Three countries (Greece, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia) exclusively recruit candidates with a high school diploma, while twelve countries recruit candidates with higher degrees, too. It has to be noted that in Slovenia this only holds for candidates for entry level positions in the uniformed police, while the recruits for the criminal investigation division typically have an associate or even bachelor's degree.

In Austria, Belgium-police, Turkey, Greece, and the Czech Republic, all the basic police training is performed in the police training centers, while in other countries they have a combination of training in the police training centers and on-the-job training. In some countries (the Netherlands, Poland, and Hungary) the training is shortened for candidates with higher levels of education. In Austria, Turkey, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Slovenia, the police training centers are organized within the ministries of the interior, state, or local police. In the Netherlands, the center for basic police training has a status of a public institution. In almost all of these centers, they use both full-time and part-time instructors, the latter being those who still work as police officers in their units. The staff typically includes non-police personnel and teachers from police educational institutions as well.

Typical subjects and police tasks taught in the basic training are: law (traffic, penal, civil, penal procedure, criminal, criminal procedure), general legal and administrative knowledge, psychology, crime prevention, youth problems, drug related problems, informatics, criminalistics, crime scene investigation, patrolling, stopping vehicles, crime-related information gathering, witness interviewing, intervening in public disorders, and history of law enforcement.

Typical skills taught in the basic training are: criminal evidence handling, traffic regulation, self-defense, swimming, shooting, report writing, first aid, communication, using computers, public relations, crowd control, using baton, handcuffs, gathering information, using right police procedure, documenting, using technical equipment, cooperation in group, decision-making, communication, administrative skills, foreign languages, and physical training.

Another area within police training is specialized police training, i.e., an additional training in various areas of police work (traffic, criminal investigation, juvenile, hostage negotiations, dog handling, etc.). As many police forces are getting to realize that police work is far to complex to be able to teach everything that police officers need to know during the basic police training, specialized police training is getting increasingly important.

In five countries (Belgium, Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Slovenia) specialized training is performed exclusively in the training centers. In five countries (Norway, Belgium, Greece, Switzerland, and Finland) specialized training is always a combination of training in the police training centers and on-the- job training, while in other countries (Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, and Macedonia) some forms of specialized training take place only in a training center, some only on the job, and some are a combination of both.

In Germany, the most common subjects of specialized police training are connected with day to day police work. These include language courses, seminars on law issues and other issues such as traffic, criminalistics and criminology, data maintaining, conflict resolution, etc. Similar issues are dealt with in specialized police training in Austria, including shooting and training in various arrest procedures. In the Netherlands, the most common subjects of specialized police training are: basic and advanced training in crowd control, observation training, surveillance training, traffic accident investigation, driving skills training, basic training for arrest units and basic training for middle management of arrest units. In Belgium, the specialized training is organized for motorcycle police, dog handler, shooting instructor, and self-defense instructors, as well as in the areas of traffic, horses, dogs and criminal investigation. In Turkey, the most common subjects of specialized police training are intelligence, anti-smuggling, traffic, communication, computer networking system, crime scene investigation, interrogation, as well as training for shooting instructors and bomb technicians.

In Greece, the most common subjects of specialized police training are traffic and drug issues, police operations, self-defense and self-protection, car, motor and bike driving skills, relations between the Police and the community, and criminological methods and tactics.

In Finland, specialized training covers issues of public order and safety, community policing, narcotics, issues of foreigners and immigrants, asylum, data analysis, conducting interviews and interrogations, issues of economic crime, technical issues, administration and management, and special laws and decrees. In Poland, specialized police training includes issues of crime prevention, traffic, forensic science, criminal investigation, crime intelligence, juvenile crimes, antiterrorist activities and management skills.

In Hungary, the most common subjects of specialized police training are issues of criminal investigation, community policing, training for trainers, specialized dog training, specialized horse training, informatics, specialized driving training, public relations, traffic accidents investigation, and behavioral training.

In the Slovak Republic, specialized training covers all tasks of the uniformed police, traffic police, criminal investigation, border and immigration police, canine service, mounted police, and mobile police. The most common subjects of specialized police training in Croatia are issues related to the work of traffic police, border police, criminal investigation, forensics, explosive handling and security, and management skills.

Although the amount of this specialized police training varies from country to country (from one day to four weeks), we can see that the content is not that much different. The most common themes in specialized police training are traffic issues, crime- and criminal investigation-related issues, public relation and community issues, informatics and data-related issues, etc.

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