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LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES ACTIVITIES IN FRANCE

In French, the term *police* not only refers to the forces, but also to the general concept of «maintenance of law and order» (policing). There are two types of police in this general sense: administrative police (police administrative), upholding public order, safety checks and traffic controls, assistance to people in imminent danger, protection duties, etc. judicial police (police judiciaire), handling penal law enforcement and investigation of crimes and felonies under the authority of a Magistrate (Procureur de la République) in every case.

The police administrative comprises a variety of actions undertaken under the direction and supervision of the executive branch, police and gendarmerie forces conduct a variety of actions ensuring public order. They include: directing road traffic, channelling street demonstrations, positioning riot control forces (CRS or mobile gendarmerie).

There are three main police forces in France: the police nationale, the gendarmerie nationale and the Compagnie Républicaine de la Sécurité (CRS). French policemen are addressed formally as monsieur/madame l'agent and colloquially called flics (cops), although there are many less polite names.

The police are under the control of the Ministry of the Interior and are called agents de police. They deal with all crime within the jurisdiction of their police station. The role of the National Police is generally to ensure that the laws are observed and enforced. Efforts are also directed at the prevention of delinquency. In that context, the National Police: conducts security operations (e.g. patrols, traffic control, identity checks); and under the supervision of the judiciary, conducts criminal enquiries, serves search warrants, etc., as well as maintaining specific “judiciary police” services for criminal enquiries.

The gendarmerie nationale/gardes-mobiles is part of the army and under the control of the Ministry of Defense, although it's at the service of the Ministry of the Interior. They deal with serious crime on a national scale and general law and order in rural areas and are responsible for highway patrols, air safety, mountain rescue, and air and coastal patrols. Gendarmes include police motorcyclists (motards), who patrol in pairs. The 3,600 brigades of gendarmes are to be linked into groups of three or four to improve law enforcement in rural areas.

The CRS is often referred to as the riot police, as it is responsible for crowd control and public disturbances, although it also has other duties, including life-saving on beaches in summer. Over the years the CRS has acquired a notorious reputation for its violent response to demonstrations

(manifestations) and public disturbances, although often under extreme provocation.

In addition to the three kinds of police mentioned above, most cities and medium-sized towns have a municipal police (police municipale/corps urbain), which deals mainly with petty crime, traffic offenses and road accidents, and there's a general movement in favor of 'neighborhood policing' (îlotage) throughout France. While officers of the gendarmerie nationale, the police nationale and the CRS are armed, police municipale aren't, unless the local préfet and maire decide that they should be. There are also various special police forces, including the Groupement d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN), a sort of SAS unit; the Police de l'Air et des Frontières (PAF), border guards; the Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux (DCRG or RG), the 'intelligence' squad; the Police Judiciary (PJ), the criminal investigation department; Surveillance du Territoire (SDT), a counter-espionage division; an anti-terrorist unit called Recherche, Assistance, Intervention et Discussion (RAID); and the CSP, anti-terrorist police who guard embassies and government buildings in Paris, who wear blue windcheaters, carry machine guns and aren't the best people to ask directions to the Eiffel Tower.

The French legal system abides by the principle of unity of the civil and criminal justice systems. The French Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) outlines police public order powers, as well as the powers of investigation. Criminal courts of first instance handle violations of the law listed in the Penal Code and are divided into three categories, depending on the nature and severity of the crime: first instance tribunals (petty offences and civil disputes), criminal tribunals (offences with possible punishment of up to 5 years of imprisonment and heavy civil disputes) and Assize courts.

The Public Prosecutor's Office initiates criminal proceedings and then transfers cases to an examining magistrate. However, they supervise and control all police and gendarmerie investigations before such transfers. Once a case has been transferred and a judicial investigation begun, the police and gendarmerie officers act under the direct authority and supervision of the examining magistrate.

Список використаних джерел

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