



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Factsheet

The OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit

The Strategic Police Matters Unit's – SPMU – mission is to support policing in all OSCE participating States as part of the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles and, through assessment, expert advice and assistance, to develop accountable policing services that protect and aid their citizens.

The rule of law and role of the police in modern democracies

The rule of law and a strong justice sector are fundamental to a well-functioning modern democracy. They are vital to providing a safe and secure environment, especially in countries in transition towards democracy and a free market economy. This basic security and stability is needed for countries to progress socially and economically.

Effective policing helps create an environment where sustainable development can flourish. Good policing, which serves the people rather than just the state, is central to preventing conflicts, preserving social stability during crises and supporting post-conflict rehabilitation. The OSCE and its SPMU help governments in participating States achieve these goals.

The role of the SPMU

The SPMU's primary role is to provide support in policing matters to the OSCE Secretary General, the Chairman-

in-Office and the OSCE field operations and to respond to requests from participating States by providing needs assessments, expert advice and on-site assistance on police-related activities.

The Unit's activities reflect the priorities designated by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and reflected in OSCE decisions. The SPMU's basic tasks include:

- increase and promote co-operation among participating States in countering new security challenges;
- provide advice or arrange for the provision of expert advice on requirements for effective policing;
- encourage the exchange of information among participating States regarding lessons learned and best policing practices.

Activities follow requests from OSCE participating States and include:

- assessing needs;
- building institutions and capacities;
- training police officers;
- developing local ownership of the reform process;
- supporting criminal justice systems;
- promoting international law enforcement co-operation in the fight against organized crime; particularly concerning human trafficking and trafficking of illegal drugs;
- promoting community policing;
- identifying and sharing good practices;
- developing and maintaining the Policing OnLine Information System (POLIS, <http://polis.osce.org>), which covers all aspects of law enforcement activities in the OSCE area and provides a virtual community for policing experts.

The SPMU aims to provide a democratic vision of policing for the whole OSCE region and to put that vision to work. The Unit helps OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation develop police capacity and institutions, and to improve police co-operation as part of its efforts to strengthening national criminal justice systems. This work aims to help create the competence required to tackle new threats to stability and security – such as organized crime and terrorism.



Good policing practices and guidelines

The SPMU has collected good policing practices and guidelines in police agencies in the participating States, resulting in the development of three key publications:

The *Guidebook on Democratic Policing* serves as a reference to good policing practice and internationally adopted standards. It discusses the objectives of democratic police agencies; the importance of their commitment to the rule of law, police ethics and human rights.



The *Good Practices in Building Police-Public Partnerships* further illustrates aspects of community policing touched on in the *Guidebook on Democratic Policing*. The book provides an overview of the basic principles and characteristics of community policing.

The *Good Practices in Basic Police Training – Curricula Aspects* represents the result of the comprehensive analysis of basic police training models in the OSCE participating States. The

book lists good training practices and aims to improve training standards in the OSCE region.

Fields of SPMU services

Police assistance programmes

The Unit helps participating States share good policing practices. It also supports police capacity- and institution-building. Based on in-depth needs assessments in response to requests, the SPMU formulates police assistance programmes and projects. This work supports OSCE field operations.

The support of field operations also includes:

- assistance in the search and selection of new personnel;
- advice on the formulation and implementation of new projects; and
- support in extracting and sharing of lessons-learned.



In 2008, 16 of 19 OSCE field operations undertook police-related activities:

South-Eastern Europe: Presence in Albania¹, Mission in Kosovo², Mission to Montenegro³, Mission to Serbia⁴, Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje⁵;

Eastern Europe: Office in Minsk⁶, Mission to Moldova⁷, Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine⁸;

Southern Caucasus: Office in Baku⁹, Mission to Georgia¹⁰, Office in Yerevan¹¹;

Central Asia: Centre in Ashgabad¹²; Centre in Astana¹³, Centre in Bishkek¹⁴, Office in Tajikistan¹⁵, Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan¹⁶.



Organized crime

Organized crime presents a major threat to security in the OSCE region. Globalization and technology have made criminal activity increasingly international. Organized crime investigations now often have a significant trans-national component. This makes the pursuit of targets, drugs and criminal assets around the globe necessary.

To address this threat, the SPMU supports the OSCE field operations, participating States and specialized partner organizations that are engaging in anti-organized crime activities. The Unit provides expertise, creates networks, shares information and promotes co-operation among OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

The Unit also encourages participating States to implement the international legal conventions which they have ratified, in particular the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. The SPMU regularly organizes international conferences and regional training courses to provide technical assistance to the participating States in this task. In addition to supporting the establishment of the necessary legal frameworks, the SPMU helps build the capacity of law enforcement agencies to co-operate on combating organized crime.

In this field, the SPMU co-operates closely with a number of international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the business sector.

The Unit serves as the OSCE's central contact point on organized crime in the Secretariat and assists the Secretary General in co-ordinating the Organization's activities related to the fight against organized crime.

Trafficking in illicit drugs

The SPMU addresses the threat posed by drug trafficking by working closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to assist participating States in implementing the UN international anti-drug conventions. The SPMU also helps with information sharing and technical capacity-building.

The SPMU provides expertise to the OSCE field operations and thematic units within the OSCE Secretariat to develop and evaluate project proposals and activities related to illicit drugs and the illicit manufacturing of drugs. In this regard, the SPMU has devoted special attention to the problem of opiates being smuggled

out of Afghanistan and chemical precursors being smuggled into Afghanistan. The Unit has facilitated drug enforcement training in certain participating States for Afghan police officers. The SPMU is also a strong supporter of international and regional organizations in their activities to combat illicit drug supply. In addition, the SPMU assists participating States in developing drug-demand reduction programmes and strategies.

Human trafficking

The Unit, through the field operations and in co-operation with the OSCE's Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, and international partner organizations, provides training assistance and expert advice to law enforcement agencies, other authorities and civil society organizations. The co-operation of different stakeholders is viewed as a key strategy in combating human trafficking.

While having a focus on the duties and challenges for law enforcement authorities, there is a victim-oriented approach as well. In this field, the SPMU particularly focuses on children - as victims of exploitation on the Internet. The Unit also takes part in needs assessments in participating States and in developing and delivering training on investigating human trafficking.

Community policing

The police have the responsibility not only to detect crime, but also to prevent it. Successful crime prevention greatly contributes to the reduction of the fear of crime and can improve the quality of life in a community. Crime prevention requires shared commitment and ownership of the police and the public as well as sustained effort.

Establishing trusting relationships with all members of society is a top priority in democratic policing. With its focus on establishing police-public partnerships, where the entire police organization, all government agencies and all segments of the community (including minority and vulnerable groups) are actively co-operating in problem-solving, the concept of community policing has emerged as a major strategic pillar of policing practices.

Introducing community policing has been an important element of the OSCE strategy since the beginning of its involvement in police development. Large projects, including projects with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti communities and other minority groups have been implemented in South-Eastern Europe. The concept of community policing has also been introduced in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus.



Police training courses

Promoting professional police training is a core activity of the SPMU. Up-to-date and effective police training courses are the foundation of a good culture of policing in the OSCE region. The Unit facilitates this objective by providing forums in which experts share their experiences and ideas about best practices.

Basic police training is particularly critical because it creates the platforms for an effective police function and operation. Therefore, the SPMU focuses on enhancing training curriculums for new police recruits, which stress the need for providing basic police knowledge and skills. Human rights, democratic policing, police-public partnerships and modern interactive teaching techniques are emphasized.

The SPMU provides police training experts to participating States that request support in their efforts to enhance their police training activities. The Unit also provides technical expertise related to evaluating project proposals that are developed by the OSCE field operations.

To maintain consistency throughout the police educational process, the SPMU facilitates the harmonization of training programmes targeting different categories of police staff.

Policing OnLine Information System

The SPMU facilitates the sharing of knowledge and good practices through the Policing OnLine Information System (POLIS) as a main collection point and central repository for OSCE policing-related institutional knowledge, providing the platform for sharing information and lessons learned resulting from OSCE activities. POLIS has three main components:

- Digital library/knowledge management repository;
- Policing profiles of the participating States and Partners for Co-operation;
- Policing experts database.

To better facilitate the sharing and exchanging of views and experiences on police-related matters among POLIS users, the SPMU has also begun developing new interactive features in POLIS, including online thematic portals and online forums and conferences.

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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for **stability, prosperity and democracy** in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.