



Pursuing the principles of community-based policing

Kevin Carty: “No one-size-fits-all prescriptions”

The time has come for the OSCE to start sharing its storehouse of policing-related knowledge and experience with practitioners and policymakers, says Kevin Carty, Senior Police Adviser to the Secretary General. In an interview with Patricia N. Sutter, Editor of the *OSCE Magazine*, the former Commissioner of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina describes the renewed push of the Vienna-based Strategic Police Matters Unit to address the broad spectrum of law-enforcement concerns of participating States as efficiently and effectively as possible.

What were your priorities when you took the helm of the Strategic Police Matters Unit a year ago?

I felt we needed to focus our activities by responding more strategically to various Ministerial Council and Permanent Council decisions and OSCE action plans — with their emphasis on getting the basic ingredients of democratic policing right in relation to today’s new security threats. We’re of course also taking into account the special priority areas of successive OSCE Chairmanships. Our work programme for this year reflects this approach [see box, page 20]. A major emphasis is on identifying and disseminating effective policing practices in all the different areas.

At the same time, despite the self-sufficiency of policing programmes in the field, the SPMU continues to provide heads of mission with policing-related support,

advice and assistance. On behalf of the Secretariat, I am expected to deliver a very clear message to ministers of the interior in the host governments about the importance of policing and reforms in creating a safe and secure environment for their citizens.

What are some of the new initiatives you have embarked on?

We’re commencing a lessons-learned project in Skopje and Bishkek, initially focusing on our experience in community policing. This will be the first of a series, and we’ll be making it available on POLIS, our new on-line information system, so that people involved in designing programmes, including our own field experts, can find answers to basic questions such as: Is there something that has been done before so we don’t have to reinvent the wheel? What’s the best practice in this area?

We are going about this exercise by talking to people, communities, NGOs and police and officials at the local level to find out what they think about our activities. Are they relevant, effective, sustainable and well received by the police? We need to have a broader opinion base and not just by internal feedback, which might be biased.

We’re putting greater emphasis on regional co-ordination, again to identify les-

The OSCE’s assistance to police reform in Georgia is contributing towards the country’s goal of transforming its culture of policing.

Photo: OSCE Mission to Georgia/Cliff Volpe



The Republic of Korea, an OSCE Partner for Co-operation, is sharing its experience in law enforcement through the OSCE's Policing OnLine Information System (POLIS).

sons learned and best practices. From the Secretariat, we have to take a broader “helicopter view” of the policing elements in our field operations and try to identify how we can enhance co-operation within each of the regions, particularly concerning various facets of organized crime.

We have to bear in mind that there are several other international organizations and bilateral arrangements out there, and that the EU is heavily involved in most of the places where we've traditionally been present. And since duplication is a waste of taxpayers' money, we have to ensure that what we're doing is co-ordinated and that we in the OSCE are addressing areas where we can bring in added value.

This year, we're holding a number of first-time events, such as a seminar on the role of women as senior managers in police forces and a workshop on police co-operation in preventing terrorist activities.

What are the OSCE's advantages over other organizations?

In responding to the needs and requests of participating States, we have the ability

to act more quickly. We're more flexible, more fluid, more mobile than many other organizations. We have the ability to get qualified, short-term experts on the ground at short notice to determine what is wrong and come up with possible solutions, especially in situations calling for conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

This is a key advantage of the OSCE, especially when you consider that finding exactly the right expert for a specific task in a host country is a major challenge for any international policing mission. There is quantity all right, but it is quality that you want to put on the ground. If you don't have that, you're on the losing end from the start. That is why we have to convince “sender-States” of the importance of the selection process for experts.

Policing has an impact on many other thematic activities of the OSCE. How do you ensure that all concerns are taken into account?

We liaise with the various units dealing with themes in which policing has a key role to play. The Secretary General also holds “cluster” meetings, in which all the relevant units in the Secretariat are represented. We also have extrabudgetary funding for a task force on organized crime in which all the thematic units of the Secretariat and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) are represented. The purpose is to examine how the Organization can assist more effectively in its efforts to address organized crime.

In addition, as can be seen in our action plan, we carry out joint activities with OSCE institutions. This year, with the High Commissioner for National Minorities, we will be developing guidelines on best practices in community-based policing. We are also co-operating with the ODIHR on policing matters dealing with Roma and Sinti communities and hate crimes.

A preview of policing 2007

“Everything we do in policing — whether it's strengthening capacity or building institutions — is in response to requests from participating States”, says Senior Police Adviser Kevin Carty. “And they want the assistance to be sustainable so that they can take it forward through their own efforts and their own resources.”

In 2007, the Strategic Police Matters Unit will focus on:

- Supporting initiatives against organized crime, giving priority to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime;
- Exchanging good practices on basic police training;
- Designing a framework of community-based policing;

- Analyzing and disseminating the lessons learned in police assistance activities;
- Enhancing co-operation in the fight against drug trafficking;
- Improving police co-operation in the prevention of terrorist activities;
- Promoting the role of women as senior managers in police forces;
- Exploring ways of investigating the sexual exploitation of children more effectively; and
- Assisting participating States to reach out to ethnic minorities through community-based policing programmes.

Community-based policing would seem to be an easy concept to introduce everywhere but the reality is different. What are some of the major challenges you face in advocating it?

The major challenges that we face are ensuring that there is legislation to underpin community policing, senior management commits itself to the process, police are correctly trained to implement this specialized job, an effective oversight mechanism is set up, the needs of minority communities are assured and catered for, and international standards in human rights are observed.

We go back to the words of Sir Robert Peale (1788-1850), who said more than a century ago: “The police are the public, the public are the police.” Policing is a partnership and if that relationship is not working properly, then policing will not be effective.

We will hold a number of workshops this year in the OSCE region as part of our drafting of guidelines for basic police training that I mentioned earlier. I am in favour of ensuring that people can walk before they try to run.

What is the one aspect that you would like to clarify about community-based policing as promoted by the OSCE?

When we first talked about community-based policing, people thought, “Oh, you’re trying to develop a one-size-fits-all prescription.” No, such an approach is not logical because of the cultural and ethnic diversity in OSCE countries. Our programmes will have to be country-specific, even city-specific and conflict-specific.

What we *are* trying to promote is recognition of the key ingredients for success: training, legislation, “buy-in” from senior authorities, and most importantly, the ability to communicate with the public — areas that have not received enough attention.



OSCE CENTRE IN BISHKEK/ERIC GOURLAN

Are you seeing any tangible results at all yet in community policing?

The development of community-based policing is a process, not an event. Several years may be needed before its full impact becomes evident. Again, I’d like to emphasize the importance of the host State’s continued commitment to the process and to its sustainability. The SPMU is closely monitoring community policing programmes, and we are confident that if the present level of commitment is maintained, then we will have concrete, favourable results in the next few years, which will lead to enhanced policing.

The partnership between the police and the public is being strongly promoted in Kyrgyzstan.

“It gives me great satisfaction to be able to contribute to policing reform and development in the OSCE region,” says Senior Police Adviser Kevin Carty. “In the end, it’s all about improving people’s safety and quality of life.”

From 2004 to 2005, Mr. Carty served as Commissioner of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, overseeing some 900 international police officers and civilian personnel. Prior to that, he served as special adviser to the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq in the aftermath of the bomb attack on UN offices in Baghdad in August 2003.

Mr. Carty holds the rank of Assistant Commissioner in the National Police of Ireland (*An Garda Siochana*) and at one time served as Police Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Region. He has held key leadership positions in Ireland’s fight against crime and drug trafficking and in intelligence security matters.



OSCE/MIKHAIL ENSTAFIEV

POLIS: Sharing a vast wealth of expertise

By Alina Josan

Something had to be done. There simply had to be a quicker, more efficient and cost-effective way to respond to participating States' urgent policing requests in the field.

This was the consensus reached by heads of policing and law enforcement operations in the OSCE's missions in south-eastern Europe after realizing that they were encountering the same stumbling blocks to policing work.

Now, after an intensive development phase of two years, the OSCE's "one-stop-shop" solution — the Policing OnLine Information System (POLIS) — is up and running. Since this comprehensive and practical tool was unveiled at the first OSCE meeting of police chiefs in Brussels late last year, more than 400 policing practitioners and policy-makers have registered as users.

What is in it for them?

Rapid access to information through a digital library.

"Our institutional knowledge is as spread out as our staff, and it is essential that they are able to access information when they need it regardless of where they might be," said Belgian Ambassador Bernard de Crombrughe at a briefing for participating States in Vienna on 18 December 2006.

That same day, several national staff who had been designated as POLIS focal points in field offices and staff from OSCE institutions were introduced to the system. Their role is crucial: They will be responsible for actively ensuring the continuous flow of current and relevant information into the virtual police library.

One of the participants recalled: "How often has someone in, say, Skopje struggled to develop a policing training module, only to discover that a similar approach had already been tried and tested successfully in next-door Kosovo? This online information system should put an end to these frustrations."

Based on the concept of knowledge management, POLIS is a veritable gold mine of material on policing programmes and projects, course curricula, research papers, legal documents, recommended practices and lessons drawn from OSCE police activities. OSCE staff, delegations and national police officials have full access while the general public and other registered users have access to non-confidential information and abstracts of restricted documents.

A section on country policing profiles is proving particularly popular. So far there are detailed presentations from 30 participating States describing the way their law enforcement and criminal justice systems are organized. The Republic of Korea is the first Asian Partner for Co-operation to make its profile available.

Faster, more transparent and better-targeted recruitment of experienced police experts for short-term assignments through a police experts database.

Before the introduction of POLIS, the hiring of consultants for even the shortest assignments had to be routed to various ministries, through OSCE delegations, resulting in some delays. The fact that policing is highly specialized lengthened the procedure even more. For example, finding the right experts for forensic work and fingerprint analysis requires considerable effort. And once they are identified, they are often not readily released from their regular jobs in their home countries.

POLIS has reversed the process. Experts can now literally find us instead of the other way around. By drawing up a professional profile online and keeping it updated, police officers and experts make it simpler for themselves and for the OSCE to come up with a perfect match. Once chosen, candidates are responsible for making their own work-related arrangements with their respective authorities.

So far, more than 100 police officers with expertise in every area of law enforcement have made known their availability for assignments lasting up to six months. The mechanism got off to a promising start when our missions in Armenia and Georgia chose experts for their police assistance programmes by tapping into the police profiles.

Maximum results from international assistance achieved by avoiding duplication, overlapping and waste of resources through a donors co-ordination mechanism.

Just about everybody advocates closer

international co-operation, but finds that it is easier said than done. With the advent of POLIS, a mechanism is finally available to work towards this goal.

Setting an ideal example of resource-sharing, POLIS has teamed up with the Automated Donors Assistance Mechanism (ADAM), a powerful tool created by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The joint system will be extremely secure and will feature a current list of policing activities implemented by the UN, EC, OSCE and bilateral donors. It will connect donors, implementing agencies and beneficiaries, and will automatically alert donors, via e-mail, to potential duplications.

"POLIS is an excellent example of the coherent linking of an identified need with a specific task and resources placed at its disposal," OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut told participating States.

Alina Josan, Project Manager of POLIS, is an Information Management Officer in the Strategic Police Matters Unit.



POLIS, currently available in English and Russian, can be expanded to include other languages. <http://polis.osce.org>



Transnational crime-busters agree to strengthen joint action

Police chiefs' summits off to an encouraging start

What happens when police chiefs, police inspectors and police commissioners from more than 50 OSCE participating States and their partner countries come together under one roof to explore ways of co-operating more closely in the fight against transnational organized crime? The first event of its kind, organized by the OSCE's 2006 Belgian Chairmanship, the Belgian Federal Police and the OSCE's Strategic Police Matters Unit, revealed the benefits of well-planned encounters between senior law enforcers, using the OSCE as a platform for dialogue and a catalyst for action.

BY PATRICIA N. SUTTER

No time was wasted. The discussions were no-nonsense, practical and packed with substance. Everyone was eager to absorb every morsel of shared information, strategy and new methodology. A high calibre of professionalism and expertise was much in evidence.

This was the spirit that filled the grand halls of the Egmont Palace in Brussels on 24 November last year, at the tail-end of the OSCE's Belgian Chairmanship.

Pierre Chevalier, Special Envoy of Belgian Chairman-in-Office Karel De Gucht, explained the rationale behind the gathering, which now looks set to take place every three years:

"We can talk about organized crime as much as we want, but at the end of the day it is the professionals — you — who need to be given the support and the means to work together across our national borders. It is you who need to exchange information, push investigations, extradite suspects, bring them to justice. And it is you who need to be able to rely on the full co-operation and readiness of colleagues and judicial structures in every country concerned."

"My country has strong ties with Europol, but the geographical coverage at this meeting is wider," said Police Lt.-Gen. Chatree Soonthornsorn from Thailand, looking over the ambitious day-long agenda. "I'm responsible for cybercrime issues, and it's important for me to learn as much as I can in an area that involves big money, terrorism, and even child pornography, but leaves no traces, no fingerprints, no weapons."

Another participant who flew in from Bangkok was John Allaert, Chief Police Commissioner at Belgium's Liaison Office in Thailand. "These gatherings are all about the personal touch and complementarity," he said. "Sometimes traditional channels simply aren't enough."

Egmont Palace, Brussels, 24 November 2006: More than 50 participating States and Partners for Co-operation took part in the first OSCE meeting of police chiefs and commissioners.

Photo: Belgian Interior Ministry



BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY/ARDELEAN DIMITRI

Professor Changwon Pyo from the Republic of Korea's National Police University and the Asian Association of Police Studies (right) and Mongolian police officials exchange thoughts on a possible Organization for Security and Co-operation in Asia.

Aside from Thailand, other OSCE Partners for Co-operation that sent representatives were Afghanistan, Israel, Mongolia, Morocco and Tunisia.

Makhmadsaid Djurakulov, Head of Tajikistan's Department for Combating Organized Crime, said that, in the recent past, his country had ranked third in the volume of drugs seized, including heroin. "It's about time that all countries came up with a legal mechanism that strengthens our efforts in this area," he said, unwittingly making a pitch for the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime.

"I thought it was great, and not only because it was a 'police summit' but also because it included academic research as well as field experiences," said Professor Changwon Pyo from Korea's National Police University and the Asian Association of Police Studies, who briefed participants on the South Korean policing model.

"I had an interesting discussion with the Mongolian police chief who wanted to know more about criminal intelligence systems and international co-operation," Professor Pyo said. "We also talked about the possibilities for — and barriers to — the establishment of an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Asia."

Coffee breaks and lunch in the Hall of Mirrors were opportunities for one-on-one exchanges of statistics and anecdotes concerning drug busts, smuggling of cigarettes and weapons, stolen vehicles, human casualties in containers, fraud and counterfeit rings, fraudulent papers and travel documents, DNA profiling and fingerprint collections.

ANALYZING THREATS

The latest tools and methods for analyzing security risks and threats came under intense scrutiny, leading participants to examine a major challenge: how information

can be transformed into knowledge, and most importantly, how to use this as a basis for policy-making.

"As a law enforcement officer and the Director of Europol, I was very much interested in hearing different points of view regarding the approach to threat assessment," said Max-Peter Ratzel. He found a ready audience for his presentation of Europol's freshly packaged "Organised Crime Threat Assessment" (OCTA), which uses up-to-date intelligence analysis for proactive policing.

"The situation in our close vicinity can have a direct impact on security in Europe and the safety of EU citizens," said Mr. Ratzel. "One of the advantages of the event was the presence of high-ranking officers from countries that are not EU member States, or even OSCE participating States. This gave Europol an excellent opportunity to approach law enforcement colleagues who are normally outside its contact list."

"The OSCE's greatest asset is its experience in training and spreading best practice examples," said Jaakko Christensen, Senior Detective Superintendent in Finland's National Bureau of Investigation.

In fact, the criminal intelligence cycle — collection, analysis and decision-making — is a prime area for training that the OSCE is well positioned to provide, Mr. Christensen told the *OSCE Magazine*. "Although intelligence-led law enforcement is no longer a novelty, training in developing a structure that will consistently process information using the concept of intelligence-led law enforcement is vital for arriving at correct decisions."

Another area that he believed could benefit greatly from OSCE-led training and development was project-based, target-oriented, multidisciplinary law enforcement co-operation, using the best available examples.

"Increasingly, organized criminality is not bound to certain types of crime, but will engage in anything that brings a profit, so law enforcers should be able to pool expertise, for example, through police, customs and border guard co-operation," he said. "One geographic region in which the OSCE could assist in making contacts is the western Balkans, which have an impact on organized crime in northeastern Europe."

EARLY WARNING

The importance of evidence-led analysis in drawing up strategic action and setting priorities was driven home to the police chiefs when a reputable authority sounded an early warning about an "imminent heroin

tsunami” heading from Afghanistan towards Europe.

The alarm was raised by Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Armed with statistics, he said that Afghanistan’s recent bumper crop of opium — more than 6,000 tons that were being converted into 700 tons of heroin — was “currently one of the greatest threats to the OSCE region”. About 20 per cent of the heroin was expected to enter the OSCE area directly through Central Asia and by way of the Silk Road, while 80 per cent would make its way to Western Europe through Pakistan and Iran.

“Whatever the exit route, this tidal wave will soon reach your policing jurisdictions,” Mr. Costa said. “Drug traffickers seek the paths of least resistance, namely areas where there is instability, corruption and weak law enforcement. That is where your collaborative efforts are most needed.”

He urged the police chiefs to help in carrying out the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. The OSCE’s Strategic Police Matters Unit is assisting in efforts to promote the ratification and implementation of the legal framework.

“The OSCE’s ability to mobilize the political willpower of 56 participating States behind initiatives that have been developed by other expert international organizations brings something unique to our common efforts,” said OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut.

The day’s agenda was not confined to technical topics, but also encouraged some soul-searching on democratic policing practices, corruption, criminal justice systems

and major impediments to effective policing, such as varying standards set by data protection laws across the OSCE area.

Patrick Zanders, Director of the Belgian Federal Police, spoke about the “distrustful police culture” and the “ego culture” that often proved to be the biggest barrier to data sharing and co-operation with customs and border guards.

Promoting trust was also at the core of the eloquent message of the Council of Europe representative, Margaret Killerby, Head of its Department of Crime Problems. Welcoming the launching of the *Guidebook on Democratic Policing*, published by the OSCE’s Senior Police Adviser, she urged the law enforcers to be mindful of maintaining the difficult balance between the “strengthening of police powers and the need to safeguard the interests of the individual”, especially when it came to serious crime.

“There is no better way of promoting long-lasting understanding and friendship between police chiefs than the holding of meetings such as this,” she said.

At the end of a long day, the police chiefs endorsed a declaration setting out specific ways and means for them to co-operate better to fight the scourge of organized crime.

“What the declaration reflects is the awareness, at the highest level, of the fact that organized crime does not flourish only as a result of instability, but also contributes and leads to instability,” Pierre Chevalier said.

Patricia N. Sutter is Editor of the OSCE Magazine.

Special Envoy of the Belgian Chairman-in-Office, Pierre Chevalier, with the Commissioner-General of the Belgian Federal Police, Herman Fransen, who moderated the event.



BELGIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY



Deciphering messages of bias and hostility

Law enforcers face up to phenomenon of hate crimes

There was extensive talk about deciphering graffiti, hooliganism at sports events, evidence-gathering, and the traumatized and terrified victims that crimes of hate leave in their wake. The occasion: 25 senior police officers, from 13 countries as far apart as Kazakhstan and Canada gathered in Paris from 11 to 13 December last year to learn how to respond to some of the most insidious manifestations of intolerance and discrimination.

BY URDUR GUNNARSDOTTIR

Hate crimes are often meant to send a message to their targets that they are not welcome and that they are not safe. But lack of accurate data about the nature and extent of the problem means law enforcers cannot undertake effective response and preventive measures. Furthermore, the absence of legislation specifically addressing these offences means that perpetrators cannot be brought to justice.

One way to fill these gaps is to help police officers enhance their understanding of the crime's many complex facets. The OSCE's Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has

been doing just that since 2005 through a training programme designed, developed and delivered by police officers for police officers.

The training in France followed on the heels of workshops in Croatia, Spain and Hungary. The focus is on identifying hate crimes, responding effectively, investigating and gathering intelligence, sharing information, working with prosecutors, and dealing with victims, witnesses and affected communities.

Among those who took part in the training in Paris was Krystyna Gesik, the Human Rights Co-ordinator from Poland's National Police. "Understanding the signs and symbols involved and realizing the true scale of hate crimes have been an eye-opener," she said. "In many cases, we've tended to assume that acts of vandalism and attacks were just isolated incidents."

Ms. Gesik found it particularly valuable to hear about how other countries were handling these crimes. "This means that we will not have to start from scratch; we have the experience of others as a good starting point," she said.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

"The trainers have made us more aware of the impact of hate crimes on whole com-

Members of the *gendarmerie nationale* took part in the training programme on how to deal with hate crimes.
Photo: ODIHR/Urdur Gunnarsdottir



Expert Paul Goldenberg says awareness of the impact of hate crimes is increasing.

munities and the threat they pose to society,” said Col. Vladimir Rybnikov from the Russian Ministry of the Interior, adding that the training was consistent with his ministry’s priority goals.

“Hate crimes are on the rise in many countries, including in Russia, where we are seeing a rise in extremism and increased attacks on immigrants. The sessions helped us decipher connections — between a symbol and the crime, for example.”

Trainer Gyorgy Makula probably knows better than most how crucial it is for the police to proceed with the utmost sensitivity in their interaction with vulnerable communities. He is a Roma police officer in his native Hungary.

“I exist between two worlds, which can often be very hard for me,” he says. “I have to tread carefully when I’m dealing with my community and with my police colleagues at the same time.”

Mr. Makula’s Roma neighbours and friends often turn to him for help when problems arise. He says he is not always able to come up with solutions, but when he does, it means a lot to him.

“Even if I’ve never been a victim of a hate crime myself, I have dealt with many of these cases, and I certainly have first-hand knowledge of prejudice,” he said.

SIMILARITIES

The police officers agreed that, although circumstances differed from country to country, the incidents and the underlying motivations of perpetrators had many elements in common.

“We now have a cadre of experts who can respond to requests for training and assessments,” said Paul Goldenberg, who led the group of trainers. “The most important thing is to build on the expertise gained in this sort of training, and to make sure there is follow-up.”

Participants in the training are also given an opportunity to join a regional network that supports efforts to address hate crime as a transborder phenomenon. Recently, the programme was expanded to include training for prosecutors and investigating magistrates.

“Awareness of the impact of hate crimes is increasing,” said Mr. Goldenberg, who has had 20 years of experience in addressing hate crimes in the United States. “This was brought home to me one day when I was called quickly to attend to my father’s grave, which had been desecrated. It made me realize the consequences of these acts and how important it is for police officers to understand what they are and what lies behind them.”

Urdur Gunnarsdottir is Spokesperson of the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

What is a hate crime?

The ODIHR’s working definition is:

- Any criminal offence, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection or attachment to, affiliation with, support of, or membership in a group (as defined below).
- A group may be based upon its members’ real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or other similar factor.

This definition takes into account national differences, such as differences in approach, resources, legislation and needs, and allows each State to amend the definition as it sees fit.

Two reports represent an important step towards the implementation of the commitment to fight intolerance and discrimination, undertaken by the OSCE participating States, namely: *Combating Hate Crimes in the OSCE Region: An Overview of Statistics, Legislation and National Initiatives*, issued in June 2005, and *Challenges and Responses to Hate-Motivated Incidents in the OSCE Region*, issued in October 2006.

www.osce.org/odihr



Tipping the gender scale at the highest levels

Swedish county police prove it can be done

Increasing the number of women in the upper echelons of management and policy-making is an elusive goal — and not just in the OSCE. The Swedish delegation seized an ideal opportunity to “walk the talk” on 10 January, on the eve of the annual gathering of OSCE heads of missions and institutions in Vienna. Brigadier General Karl Engelbrektson and Police Commissioner Krister Jacobsson, special guests from Sweden, described for the mostly-male audience how they were translating “gender mainstreaming” into action in their own operations. The *OSCE Magazine* invited Police Commissioner Krister Jacobsson to share his list of seven myths about women and leadership and his first-hand experience in making women more visible in the managerial ranks of the police force in Sweden’s second largest county.

Police Commissioners Boel Petersson, Maria Oswaldson and Lena Matthijs with Chief Police Commissioner Krister Jacobsson.
Photo: Nina Lindhe Tell

BY KRISTER JACOBSSON

In January 2004, I started my new assignment as Police Commissioner in Västra Götaland, Sweden’s most populous county after Stockholm. With 3,700 employees,

2,770 of whom are police officers, the police force represents one of the largest service providers in the county.

To my surprise, I found out that there was not a single woman in my management team of 13. Among the 35 most senior managers in the county police, only one was a woman. And within the county’s seven senior management teams, there were only five women — versus 70 men.

Something had to change. My experience is that, when men and women are offered an equal chance to participate in decision-making, the results are much better. And besides, I find the working environment more interesting when men and women work alongside each other.

We launched a project to address the situation, step by step. After studying and discussing the issue, we thought a good start could be made by posing the question: What are we missing out on by not identifying women’s skills and capabilities and putting them to good use?

We came up with the following answers: Access to the whole talent pool. An organiza-

tion's performance improves when it recruits from the population's full pool of talent and not from just half of it.

Sufficient awareness of customers' perspectives. Women play an important role as consumers and financial decision-makers, so mixed teams at all staff and managerial levels are likely to result in goods and services that satisfy customers' needs and expectations. The more a company mirrors its markets demographically, the better positioned it is to get a sense of, and respond to, consumers' evolving needs.

A more attractive employer profile. Studies reveal that young male and female managers are seeking a better balance between their personal and professional lives and take a critical look at the image of a potential employer and the working conditions it offers. Companies that are not paying enough attention to flexible work options, family-friendly policies and other modern management practices miss the opportunity to hire the best-qualified people for the job.

Better "branding". The organization's stakeholders are expressing more interest in diversity issues. Discrimination in all its forms is a factor in risk assessment. Requests for the inclusion of further information in annual reports about issues of equality in the workplace are becoming more frequent. Creative and productive teams. Mixed staff structures offer a wider spectrum of experience, backgrounds and networks. Research shows that teams with a diverse composition perform more effectively than homogeneous ones.

Next, under our project, we discussed seven myths about women and leadership and challenged each one:

Women do not want to become managers.

Yes they do, but they are not allowed to. Managers are often hand-picked or are promoted within the organization. There are other times when a candidate — often within a tight network — is urged to apply. These procedures mainly benefit men. Most executives are men. Men in power select people they know — other men.

Women do not have the same managerial skills as men.

They do, although they may have a different management style. However, in a recent four-year study on how 2,500 male and female managers in Sweden dealt with various situations, there were no marked gender differences in the way leadership was exercised.

Women have the wrong training.

No. In fact, since the late 1970s, in many countries, women have comprised more than half of total university graduates. In business administration, law and medicine, women have accounted for the majority for several years. If large numbers of women are graduating from business school, surely there should be more of them in top management than is currently the case? If training and

education are not an issue, is it lack of experience?

Women do not have enough professional experience.

They do. A study of the 500 largest companies in Sweden found that female mid-level managers are likely to work in personnel and in financial and information services, not in operations. And senior managers are often recruited from middle management in the operational area, which is dominated by men.

Senior executives work an 80-hour week.

Yes and no. Senior managers put in long hours, it is true, but the stereotype is vastly exaggerated. According to a survey in Denmark, executives put in an average of 50 work hours a week. A majority of the female executives surveyed said they had sufficient time for professional and personal matters and were generally able to organize their day in such a way that they could attend to their needs.

Senior-management jobs and parenthood are irreconcilable — for women.

No, they are not — that is, if parental responsibilities are properly shared. Most senior managers — both men and women — have children. International comparisons reveal that female executives in Nordic countries tend to have more children than their counterparts in countries without highly developed public child-care systems. The way societies are structured, therefore, is an important factor for women wishing to pursue a career.

It's just a matter of time before a gender balance is achieved at the top.

No, unfortunately there is still quite a long way to go. The legislative approach is one way. But active, goal-oriented efforts at all levels in an organization, with the participation of all concerned, is probably the most effective way of bringing about equality in the work place.

The results of our own project, three years on? It is clear that major changes are under way:

- The Västra Götaland County Police have established special contacts at various levels with companies and organizations for an exchange of experiences and practices on the gender front.
- For the first time, a gender-equality plan and an action plan are linked to a business plan.
- We have been able to raise awareness of gender matters in our organization. We know now that women want to lead, and *can* lead, even in "tough" organizations such as ours. It's only a matter of giving them the right opportunities. This calls for a decisiveness, a well-designed plan and a willingness to reverse traditionally held attitudes.
- Most importantly, in a span of three years, we have increased the number of women in the county police steering group from 7 to 24 per cent. We have agreed that there should always be at least two women in each working group. And in October 2006, women were in the majority in my leadership team for the first time.