



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
High Commissioner on National Minorities

Opening statement by
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to the
15th Anniversary Conference of
The Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies

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Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to welcome you all here today at our conference dedicated to celebrating the 15th anniversary of *The Recommendations on Policing in Multi-Ethnic Societies*. I am pleased to welcome a diverse and wide range of participants to this event.

I would like to especially welcome our high-level guests the Minister of the Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic His Excellency Nurlan Niiyazbekov, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Republic of Kazakhstan Her Excellency Elvira Azimova. I would also like to acknowledge and thank her Excellency Ambassador Alena Kupcyna, OSCE Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational threats for her participation in today's event.

Our speakers and participants today bring their experience as practitioners and State authorities, including law enforcement; from independent institutions, such as offices of human rights and other entities, which can provide objective assessments of policing efforts in their own communities; and several international and regional bodies, who can share invaluable expertise.

The objective of our event today is to review the efforts of the past 15 years, take stock of lessons learned, share good practices in the OSCE region, and identify opportunities to improve policing and to recognize the role of law enforcement in this effort.

The Policing Recommendations, similar to other HCNM thematic Recommendations and Guidelines, speak of an area of crucial importance in our lives – that of detecting and preventing crimes and ensuring our safety and security. In line with the focus of my mandate on national minorities, the Policing Recommendations highlight five main areas that are critical to implementing effective policing reforms in multi-ethnic societies.

Effective policing starts with improving the role of police in diverse societies, which is crucial to promoting relations and cohesion across diverse communities. In this regard, police should

pay special attention to how they are perceived in the communities they serve. They must be respected and trusted in order to fulfil their task to reduce tensions and prevent conflict.

A factor that is important to the effective implementation of policing reforms is recruitment and representation. Police forces should be diverse and mirror the diversity of the society or community they serve. Diversity in gender, ethnicity and other markers relevant to the community in question creates a better police force and law enforcement tool.

Ensuring the training and continuous education of police forces helps to improve the effectiveness of policing. All police ranks need ongoing training and professional support so they can better understand and respond to the evolving needs of diverse communities. Police codes of conduct should include standards for policing in diverse societies and their operational practices should include practical reflections for these standards. The codes of conduct and operational practices need to be analysed regularly from a gender perspective and adjusted accordingly as necessary.

Engaging with communities is another important approach to improve policing in multi-ethnic societies. The police need to proactively develop relationships and co-operate with communities, and build trust and confidence at the local, regional and national levels.

Police accountability in operational practices is also an important factor. This includes developing effective systems for lodging complaints and following up on them. Ensuring transparency and access to information for all parties is key.

Another significant consideration is the use of force and its regulation, which can be effectively addressed through regular training. The main aim of the police should be to mitigate conflicts using as little force as possible. The use of force alone, as we have seen in history time and again, is not conducive to deescalating conflicts.

Mediation skills, conflict prevention and resolution efforts are crucial elements of effective policing in diverse societies. Overall, a holistic approach to policing has shown the best results.

Today, many participants will share their stories of success and the challenges they have faced in implementing our Recommendations. Taking this opportunity, I would like to share some of my institution's experience in this area.

Over many years, my institution has been engaged in policy dialogue and practical co-operation with OSCE participating States on multi-ethnic policing. In particular, my institution has promoted police reform through a non-discrimination and multi-ethnic lens.

For instance, in the past, my office provided assistance to drafting the law on police in Georgia, with a focus on community policing. This is still reflected in the Police Academy curricula. More recently, my advisers presented the Policing Recommendations, as well as the more recent *Graz Recommendations on Access to Justice and National Minorities* (2017) as part of a training course at the Police Academy in Tbilisi, Georgia, in the framework of ODIHR's Training against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement programme, in April 2019.

In Kyrgyzstan, between 2005 and 2009, my office supported a project promoting multi-ethnic policing, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior. The institution later co-ordinated with the OSCE's Community Security Initiative, established in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010, which included efforts to enhance co-operation and trust between law enforcement personnel and minority populations.

In Kazakhstan, the institution launched a capacity-building project on policing in multi-ethnic societies in 2012, in co-operation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, and the OSCE field office. Over the years we have conducted series of trainings on the Policing Recommendations for senior and mid-level police officers in Kazakhstan. More recently, in September 2019, my predecessor Lamberto Zannier and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan opened a joint workshop, organized with TNTD/SPMU and the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, to present the OSCE's "Community Policing Approach in Multi-Ethnic Societies".

My office presented the Policing Recommendations and SPMU's Denise Mazzolani — who will moderate one of the panels later today — presented the OSCE community policing approach and experiences in participating States. Participants further discussed the importance of promoting trust-based relations between the police and the communities they serve, and the

need to engage all stakeholders. Particularly highlighted was the importance of encouraging members of national minorities to access police assistance.

In more recent past, my institution hosted roundtables in Central Asian countries to present the Graz Recommendations, which provides guidance on policy approach to the issue of access to justice for national minorities.

Last year, my institution held and participated in various online events on policing, including an online webinar jointly organized with the US Helsinki Commission on 6 October 2020, to exchange views on “Principles and Good Practices of Policing in Diverse Societies”.

Dear participants,

It is clear that for policing and the maintenance of public safety in diverse societies, authorities should adopt a holistic approach. At the same time, this means that there is no one size fits all. What worked in one situation, might not necessarily work in another. Each situation is unique and approaches should be tailored and contextualized.

In this regard, I hope that today’s event will serve as a platform to hear expert opinions and reflections on the Policing Recommendations, and highlight emerging practices in light of evolving trends. As part of our common effort towards ensuring social cohesion in diverse societies, I am very much looking forward to hearing the reflections of our participants today. Before we move on to our interesting presentations, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hungarian Delegation for their generous support that has made this conference possible today.

Finally, I would like to invite His Excellency Håkan Jevrell, Ambassador and Special Envoy on Organized Crime, representing Swedish 2021 OSCE Chairpersonship-in-Office.

Excellency, the floor is yours.