

Introduction by the Executive Director

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Dear Reader,



Since the 16th of February 2018 I have the great privilege of serving as the Executive Director of CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training. After more than eight years in the function of Deputy Director of the Agency, I feel honoured that our Management Board appointed me for this top position in law enforcement training in Europe.

During many years in my professional career, serving as a police officer and doing academic research as well, I have lived a kind of 'hybrid' existence in police and academic worlds alike: since 1998 I have been engaged in numerous national and international research projects on various topics in the area of criminology and police science.

Currently, I am completing my PhD-research at Portsmouth University in the UK.

This affiliation to the academic world explains my full commitment in bringing together academics and law enforcement practitioners so that both sides can benefit in the best possible way and enable law enforcement communities to deliver high quality services to EU citizens in an efficient way, while fully respecting fundamental rights.

On the occasion of the relaunch of the Bulletin under its new title, I would like to take the opportunity to present my perspective and vision on CEPOL's way ahead for research and science.

Since the establishment of the Agency in 2005, CEPOL has made continuous efforts to best integrate current research results into its planning and implementation of training activities and to play a modest role as bridge or facilitator between research projects / academics and police practitioners. As CEPOL matured as an agency over the years, we have aimed to play an increasingly more prominent role.

CEPOL's engagement with research and science can be described by the following main elements:

- The Research and Science Conferences;
- CEPOL's publications on research and science;
- Support of police and law enforcement research projects;
- Continuous transfer of topical academic knowledge into training activities.

The CEPOL Research and Science Conferences have developed in an excellent way over the last years. The conferences organised until 2015 in close cooperation with our national partners in Lyon, Münster and Lisbon were of high quality and attracted a wide range of participants from academia and law enforcement practice.

In 2016 and 2017 we implemented the Research and Science Conferences in Budapest with the support of the Hungarian National University for Public Service. On both occasions we achieved a participation of more than 200 academics and practitioners - not only from Europe, but from all continents. The variety of topics covered, and the excellent quality of the contributions from key academics and top law enforcement leaders brought these events to a remarkable level. As I have actively participated in these conferences, I have the first-hand experience of the importance of such events, enabling rewarding discussions among the different professions and academic orientations. Witnessing the success of this dialogue has proven for me that further investment in such event would be mutually beneficial.

For future CEPOL Research and Science Conferences I am fully committed not only to maintain this excellent level but also to develop it even further by seeking synergies and practical cooperation with other key partners.

Unfortunately, due to restrictions in the budget of CEPOL, the agency had to move from an annual to a bi-annual planning cycle, therefore we are not in the position to organize the conference in 2018. Our aim is to deliver another excellent conference event to our target audiences again in 2019.

Several very good book projects have been published over the last years on law enforcement topics, but from my perspective there is space for more dedicated volumes in the future, especially in the area of law enforcement training.

The books have been complemented by our continuous publication of the Bulletin, which has seen a remarkable development over the last decade. You may take this issue just as an example as evidence that we are now in the position to bring to you articles of excellent quality reviewed by outstanding academics in the area. It is not our intention to compete with the numerous other publications in this field, but we are confident that we have been successful in defining our position on this market for our target audience.

I am very optimistic that we will continue to strive for an even better quality of this publication in the future. I do count on the commitment of our editorial team and the readiness of our community to produce top quality articles for this fora.

When it comes to the active engagement in funded scientific research projects and activities, CEPOL has been less successful over the last years. Until 2016, the legal mandate did not allow the agency to engage in such projects. However, with the current mandate CEPOL is now in the position to play a more active role and can even (budget allowing) launch its own research projects. As an EU Agency, CEPOL has only very limited options to participate in research consortia. The legal frame of funding on EU level for research projects prevents CEPOL from benefiting as a partner in such activities. The Management Board of the Agency, in line with this perspective, decided in 2017 on a Research Agenda to be implemented in the next years with key priorities but the current budget situation does not allow this implementation. I strongly hope that we can find a solution in the near future so that we will be able to realise our Research Agenda.

I do see a strong need for such projects especially in the field of law enforcement training on a comparative level for Europe and regarding digital education and learning.

CEPOL has made strong efforts for the timely and constant transfer of current knowledge into education and training. For the planning and implementation of our own training services and products we are very keen to fully utilise current research results and academic competence. For instance, we have established an electronic library for our target groups with a broad range of specialised e-journals and large collection of electronic books.

In sum, CEPOL has strengthened its profile on research and science over the last years. But there is still a long way to go and relevant challenges to be tackled before we can really say that all CEPOL services and products are based on, or linked with top quality academic research.

I am fully committed to ensure that CEPOL takes on a key role in providing top class services to our law enforcement communities in Europe. We have seen over the last years a dramatic change in the landscape for the internal security of Europe and in order to enable law enforcement communities to be capable of dealing with all these challenges requires dynamic, fast, tailor made and very efficient support through excellent models of education and training. And it goes without saying, that to achieve these goals will require a stronger, deeper and sustainable engagement into research and science in the next years to which the agency is fully committed.