

## *EDITORIAL:*

# RESEARCH AND SCIENCE IN CEPOL – A PERSONAL RETROSPECT

By

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### Looking Back

Over the last ten years I have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of CEPOL and, in particular, to the research and science activities of this young organisation. It was pioneering work starting from scratch. This article gives some information and personal impressions of this challenging period.

Thirty years ago, in the 1980s, when I started my police career after several years of being a research fellow at an international research institute, I published empirical police research findings from two European countries in a police journal of my home country. I was formally disciplined for this by the police director because it was perceived as troublemaking and spreading rebellious ideas against authority. This awkward reaction from a leading police officer, demonstrating a considerable lack of aplomb, had a significant effect on me and it influenced my successive efforts towards the professional acknowledgement of sound police research.

After major changes in the 1990s, particularly in Europe, international police cooperation has become more and more important. Not only did cooperation in operational policing gain a new dimension, but also cooperation in police training and research became increasingly important. This development gave me the ideal opportunity to use my international research background and my practical police experience to realise my vision of making police science and research accepted and respected within the police throughout Europe.

When CEPOL started its activities in 2001 as a network of national training institutes in EU Member States, its remit included the training of senior police officers, but police-related research was conducted only at some of these institutes. There was little regional cooperation between some of the training institutes in the field of police research. Police-related research has, however, been conducted at different universities, independent research institutes and research units of ministries or police forces in a couple of European countries or by individual researchers. Police science and research followed different approaches and was connected with different academic disciplines. The research topics were fairly diverse and often it was not clear which methods were actually used.

In some European countries the results of research with importance for police and policing were available. These were mainly from academic projects or programmes which

were completed outside the police training institutes and even outside the police organisations. They were pretty much scattered across different journals, brochures, reports and other papers, usually in the native language of the author(s). For researchers and trainers at police training institutes, who were not linked up to universities, it was not easy to make contact with colleagues in other countries and to receive relevant research findings or materials from abroad.

In several countries you could find – open or hidden – reservations or reluctance about empirical police research – only legal or historical research was acknowledged and accepted.

I could identify three main reasons for this reluctance:

- 1) A lack of awareness of the need and added value of research for modern police training;
- 2) the fear of severe criticism on police traditions, habits, culture or structures;
- 3) it was an expression of uncertainty to new ideas and resistance to change.

This was the situation when CEPOL appeared on scene – was created in 2001 and a small Research and Science Committee was established for dealing with matters of science and research. This group started from scratch: without a defined remit, without a predetermined programme and without a budget, but it did have a lot of good ideas and the goodwill of a handful of committed experts. This committee started its first research and science activities immediately (e.g. police research conferences, research and science information courses, surveys on the situation of police research

in the EU, preparations for a police research database).

In 2004 an important and supportive step was the appointment of a Research and Knowledge Management Officer at the CEPOL Secretariat. He took over not only administrative and secretarial tasks for research activities, but also served as an institutionalised guarantor of quality and an important link between training and research institutions and researchers in CEPOL's network and the Secretariat.

In 2005 after the enlargement of the European Union by ten new Member States, the Research Committee and the Committee on Learning were merged into the Training and Research Committee. After a short period, the members of this committee found that they could not fulfil the very specific and different tasks required in the field of police research and science with the necessary time, energy and engagement. As a result, in 2007 the Research and Science Working Group (RSWG) consisting of ten research experts and with a clear defined remit was established<sup>1</sup>.

Now, ten years after the foundation of the European Police College, the first systematic and promising steps for future development have been completed (with very limited budgetary and human resources) to:

- bring research units/departments and researchers at police training institutions closer together and to strengthen their cooperation;
- disseminate research findings and transfer them to police training and policing;
- develop a European approach to police science as a basis for a common basic understanding (convergence of differences) and good cooperation.

During CEPOL's first ten years, diverse activities have been undertaken to create more awareness and openness for empirical research and acceptance of research findings by directors of police training institutions, programme managers, teachers, trainers, course managers, senior police officers and police experts. Some of these activities are mentioned in summary below.

## CEPOL's Police Science and Research Activities

### *Activities for strengthening cooperation between research units and researchers at police training institutions*

#### *Survey on Police Science and Research in the European Union*

In the beginning, it was necessary to get an overview of the police research situation in the Member States and in particular in their training institutes. In 2005 CEPOL published a report entitled *Police Science and Research in the European Union*.<sup>2</sup>

#### *CEPOL Research and Science Conferences*

Since 2003, CEPOL has organised the annual CEPOL European Police Research and Science Conference in cooperation with a national police training institution for senior police officers. Each conference follows a main theme.

Contributions and presentations from the 2003–2005 conferences are published in the CEPOL brochure *Theory and Practice of Police Research in Europe*.<sup>3</sup> A volume with the most relevant contributions from the conferences 2006–2010 is being prepared and will be published during 2011.

#### *Research and Science Information Courses*

Police trainers and practitioners were invited in order to demonstrate to them the possibilities of using research findings in police training and policing. These courses were not very successful because of the wide range of different expectations of the participants to police-related research.

<i>Venues and themes of CEPOL Annual European Police Research and Science Conferences</i>	
2003 in Solna:	<i>Interplay between Research – Education – Practice</i>
2004 in Prague:	<i>Development of Police Sciences and Transfer of Knowledge into Police Education, Training and Practice – Interconnections: Science – Training – Practice</i>
2005 in Lisbon:	<i>Scientific Research and Assessment of Police Recruiting, Training, Learning and Evaluation Methodologies and Techniques</i>
2006 in Bramshill:	<i>Policing Public Order</i>
2007 in Münster:	<i>A European Approach to Police Science</i>
2008 in Vienna:	<i>Comparative Policing Research from a European Perspective: with a focus on Organised Crime</i>
2009 in Badhoevedorp:	<i>Future Policing in Europe: A Shared Agenda for Research</i>
2010 in Oslo:	<i>Practical Research and Research Practice – Police Science into a new decade</i>

*Symposia and Workshops Dedicated to Police Research and Science*

In 2009 CEPOL started organising research symposia with the aim of:

- strengthening the CEPOL network of scientific experts;
- exchanging and enhancing expert knowledge in a specific field of policing;
- encouraging and facilitating the exchange of research-related information;
- increasing understanding among participants of relevant issues of project planning and realisation;
- improving advice about implementing research results into police practice;
- identifying opportunities for future cooperation and mutual support.

*A Navigable Map of Institutions Conducting Police Research on a Regular Level in Europe*

As policing and the knowledge about police matters is increasingly subject to cross-border exchanges, CEPOL has developed a list of institutions and departments engaged in police-related (scientific) research on a regular basis.

The results have been put on a map of Europe, to foster the further development of networks of researchers and police science. The map is published on CEPOL's homepage.<sup>4</sup>

*Discussion Forums for Police Professionals and Experts*

In the CEPOL e-Net the establishment of Discussion Forums is possible. These have the option of having specific topics closed and only visible to groups of police researchers or experts with special access rights (special users).

*Activities for Dissemination of Research Findings and Good Practice**E-Library*

The e-Library<sup>5</sup> is a knowledge repository and database used for police learning as well as police research purposes and police practice. In the e-Library material is collected as a reference or, in certain parts, with the full text attached. This is linked to the course topics covered by the CEPOL Annual Work Programmes or to those topics which are relevant to police education and training for senior police officers on a European level.

*National Research and Science Correspondents*

The network of National Research and Science Correspondents (RSCs)<sup>6</sup> develops channels of communication exchange and establishes closer cooperation between scientists and researchers on one side and trainers, lecturers and course organisers on the other.

*CEPOL Science and Research Bulletin<sup>7</sup>*

The electronic Bulletin is prepared and developed by alternating editorial teams formed by three members of the RSWG and supported by CEPOL's Research and Knowledge Management Officer. After a trial period of four issues, the Governing Board decided in December 2010 to publish the CEPOL Science and Research Bulletin as a permanent electronic periodical.<sup>8</sup>

*Efforts for Developing a European Approach to Police Science**Project Group on a European Approach to Police Science (PGEAPS)*

In 2007, after two years of intensive discussion and work, an interdisciplinary, international expert group presented the report *Perspectives of Police Science in Europe*.<sup>9</sup>

## Present Situation

The initial stages were the most difficult, but now the new CEPOL Strategy (2010) and the CEPOL five-year external evaluation report (2011) provide clear evidence that the measures for developing CEPOL's research and science activities were in right direction and are accepted as essential elements of CEPOL's core business. CEPOL's recent promotional brochure presents Research and Science as one of the agency's main area of activity.<sup>10</sup>

The ambitious goal for police science in CEPOL's Strategy 2010 is clearly defined: "European Police Science cannot be left homeless; it needs a home and this home shall be the CEPOL house."<sup>11</sup>

The present official role of research and science in CEPOL seems to be inconsistent with Goal 2 of CEPOL's new Strategy and the practical experience in the RSWG because the Council Decision establishing CEPOL<sup>12</sup> allows CEPOL only to disseminate best practice and research findings. It does not allow CEPOL to run its own research projects – even if they might be of common interest for many Member States. It might be possible to encourage research projects or give moral support to them, if CEPOL incurs no costs as a result of the support. However, CEPOL is not allowed to initiate comparative police/policing studies and take over a steering or leading function. This situation is unsatisfactory. The RSWG should try to implement the procedure for an urgent amendment of the Council Decision – otherwise European Police Science will be left homeless.

## Lessons Learnt: Basis for Progress

After ten years' commitment in CEPOL in the field of research and science to:

- strengthen the cooperation between research units and

researchers at police training institutions;

- disseminate research findings and good practice;
- try to develop a European approach to police science;

the following lessons learnt can be presented to all colleagues who will continue this work in and for CEPOL. However, based on our experience, more initiatives and new activities will be necessary to achieve these goals and a permanent and stable interplay between policing, police training and police science/research.

- It will not be possible to put new initiatives and activities into effect with a smaller budget and decreasing resources.<sup>13</sup> According to the different and sometimes quite complicated EU regulations – which CEPOL has to implement – many administrative and bureaucratic steps have to be carried out for all activities and, in particular, for the realisation of new ideas and projects – as was also necessary in the early years of CEPOL. This administration is not only time-consuming, but also costly.
- The available budget for research and science activities clearly indicates the importance and value of research and science within CEPOL. The budget reduction for research and science in relation to previous years (2009: € 253,000; 2010: € 175,000; 2011: € 164,000)<sup>14</sup> might be a warning signal for the continuation of ongoing research and science activities and implementation of new ideas (e.g. research award, cooperation with other agencies). However, the reduced budget figures for research activities in the CEPOL

budget 2011 may mislead the unfamiliar reader about the actual relevance of research and science within CEPOL.

- All members of the RSWG – representing CEPOL's network function – fulfil their tasks for CEPOL in addition to their regular job in their countries. They spend their leisure time, weekends and even holidays for surveys and projects, for preparing publications and papers, for organising conferences and symposia, for supporting other CEPOL activities etc. They do the CEPOL tasks without extra money and without a reduction in their normal workload. Nevertheless, all of them show high motivation, full engagement and commitment within the expert group. More can not be expected of them. The support function of the CEPOL Secretariat must be improved in order to keep continuity for the ongoing activities (e.g. conferences, symposia, e-Library, Bulletin) and to enable the RSWG to concentrate on strategic matters and the development/implementation of new activities. A kind of a formal recognition (such as a financial reward) for the work done by the members of the RSWG should be considered.
- Science is more than ever a long-term process and it will be a long way to acceptance.<sup>15</sup> There has not been one single research and science activity that did not have unexpected problems, difficulties and obstacles, interfering interests and presumptions in the realisation phase. Great patience, continuing flexibility, willingness for improvisation and compromises, persistence, and hardiness are essential qualities or skills for successful initiatives or projects. Further measures to improve acceptance of CEPOL's research initiatives or projects must be considered.
- The coordination between learning/training activities (courses, seminars, common curricula, e-learning modules) and research activities in CEPOL has not been at its best during the last few years. A main reason for this was the need to concentrate on administration and the implementation of EU regulations. This meant that the intellectual capacities for CEPOL's core business were strained or taken elsewhere. An improvement in the coordination between different factors and protagonists in CEPOL will be essential for its success in future.
- A few efforts of the RSWG towards building a practical link between police research and security research – with benefits for both sides – have not been promising up to now. The then leadership of ESRIF for example, was obviously not interested in contacts or cooperation with CEPOL.<sup>16</sup> Several of our attempts on different levels for becoming a partner or a police research consultant in the ESRIF project failed. The futility of our efforts was frustrating. However, frustration should not lead to resignation, passivity or giving up an idea. New considerations and initiatives for a mutual convergence between police research and security research seem to be necessary.

There is strong agreement in the Member States that:

- police education or training of senior police officers relies not only on experience;
- police learning, training and education in a modern society have to be based on scientific knowledge and research findings wherever possible;
- police experience, legal rules and political programmes are not enough for good police practice and policing;
- police science and research findings have to be respected in training programmes and curricula.

The CEPOL five-year external evaluation report says<sup>17</sup>: *“Looking at the activity’s relevance to Member State needs, GB survey feedback indicates strong support for ‘Research and Science’ with 64% of respondents (16 out of 25) noting high or very high relevance to Member State needs. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Member State survey feedback in the context of CEPOL’s programming for 2011 clearly suggests that this activity remains very ‘popular’ (respondents propose intensifying or maintaining the activity).”*

The realisation of the need and benefit of Research and Science in CEPOL raises reasonable expectations that the RSWG and the Member States will be able to convince the EU Commission that it is necessary, and that this will have an impact on the annual CEPOL budget for research activities in future. The lessons learnt in the RSWG should be the basis for progress in the future of CEPOL and in particular the conditions for research and science. CEPOL needs further pioneering work to be carried out by researchers, and CEPOL should be enabled to afford the use of more scientific knowledge and research findings.

## Conclusion

The purpose of my contribution is to raise awareness, as I have done in previous years again and again with my firm conviction, about the need and benefit of science and research in CEPOL and the necessity of continuation and broadening of activities in this field.

I hope that I have been able to contribute to a movement for tolerance and acceptance of police science and research in my country and in Europe over the last decades. I also hope that I have played a modest part in bridging the gap between empirical (scientific) research and police training and practice in Europe.

It has been a great honour for me to be allowed to serve CEPOL in the field of police research since its inception and to promote and encourage the use of more knowledge and research findings in police training and policing. Working for CEPOL in this area and during this period gave me the opportunity to introduce initiatives for improving awareness of empirical research in police training institutions and for cooperation between such institutions throughout Europe. All my initiatives were based on my comparative research experience and knowledge on the one hand, and my long-term practical police experience as a senior officer on the other.

After leaving the RSWG, I will not just observe the further pioneering work of the RSWG from my armchair, but will continue to support its activities and to pass on my knowledge and experience to my younger colleagues.

## References

- 1 CEPOL Governing Board Decision 1/2007/GB from 22 May 2007, Annex A4.B4 (Amendment: 2/2010/GB from 23 February 2010)
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- 4 Published on CEPOL's homepage under the chapter "Knowledge & Research / European Police Research Institutions"
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- 6 CEPOL Governing Board Decision 28/2008/GB "Establishing a Network of National Research and Science Correspondents" from 26 September 2008
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- 9 Project Group on a European Approach to Police Science (F. del Barrio Romero, T. Bjørgo, H.-G. Jaschke, C. Kwanten, R. I. Mawby, M. Pagon): Police Science Perspectives: Towards a European Approach, Extended Expert Report. Frankfurt/M. 2008
- 10 CEPOL, Contributing to European police cooperation through learning 2010, page 12
- 11 CEPOL Governing Board Decision 43/2010/GB "CEPOL Strategy and Balanced Scorecard" from 30 September 2010, Page 10, Goal 2.
- 12 Council Decision 2005/681/JHA of 20 September 2005.
- 13 In 2011 the budget for research and science activities will be reduced remarkably as a consequence of the reduction of the overall CEPOL Budget 2011.
- 14 CEPOL Budget 2011 presented to the Governing Board on 23 February 2011.
- 15 H.-G. Jaschke: Police Science – A European Approach. PGEAPS Summaries. Published on CEPOL's homepage under the chapter "Publications / Research & Science / PGEAPS Summaries".
- 16 The European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF) published its final report with 324 pages in December 2009. Only WG 9 "Innovation Issues" recommends in its conclusions to build on existing experience and to establish links with existing networks for professional training like CEPOL on police training and education.
- 17 CEPOL Five-year external evaluation, final report: January 2011, page 54.