



# ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS AND AUSTERITY: CONSEQUENCES FOR POLICE TRAINING AND EDUCATION — CHALLENGES AND RISKS — (STIMULUS FOR RESEARCH INITIATIVES)



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**Keywords:** Police training, economic constraints, austerity

**Abstract:** As a consequence of programmes for consolidation of state finances you can find dramatic reductions of police training related budget figures in many European countries and in the EU (e.g. CEPOL). This situation can be seen dangerous for police/policing and at the same time challenging.

The paper presents different measures to overcome budget cuts, as well as the potential consequences which are similar in many countries. However with differences in dimension, extent and direction.

It appears to the author that the economic constraints should not be seen only as an obstacle for the further development of police training. It should be a challenge for all stakeholders and decision-makers in this field for a thorough examination of the current system and situation and for an adaptation of training/education according to new and changing conditions. This examination has to respect risks, as they are seen by experts. Only a few aspects of potential challenges and risks are described in the paper.

**Conclusion and motivation:** Austerity programmes and their consequences for police and police training necessitate the need of new research-based knowledge about how police training with high quality can be offered to different actors of policing in spite of dramatic cuts from state budgets.

According to Cordner & Shaine (2011, p. 281), "In the twenty-first century, two of the most powerful contemporary factors affecting police education and training are globalisation and the current economic downturn." The changes of the economic conditions for police training

and education are subject matters for scientific considerations (Neyroud, 2011, pp. 156-173) or police research projects rather rarely up to now.

It is not necessary to have a look only at some EU Member States like Greece, Portugal, Spain or Slovenia with very far-reaching austerity programmes and drastic cuts in fields of civil service – like police and police training. The current situation in Europe is marked by dramatic reductions of police training related budget figures as consequences of necessary programmes for consolidation (restoration/overhauling) of state finances – or austerity programmes – in many (or even all) European countries and in the EU – e.g. CEPOL (European Commission, 2013b). This situation can be seen dangerous for policing and at the same time challenging.

## MEASURES TAKEN TO OVERCOME BUDGET CUTS AND CONSEQUENCES

The following measures to overcome the budget cuts – as well as the potential consequences – are similar in many countries – however there are remarkable differences in size, extent and direction across countries depending on the severity and



duration of the economic crisis (European Social Survey, 2013b, p. 7) and the degree of protection offered by national legal and institutional systems (European Social Survey, 2013a, p. 3):

*organise and pay the training for their job-qualification (further development of skills and quality of work) and career by themselves.*

- **Measures regarding training activities:**

- Reductions or postponements of national and international training activities (e.g. shortening or cancelling residential courses, reducing new distance learning and e-learning offers), in particular in the field of cost-intensive further/advanced training (e.g. training contingent on external experts, interpreters or new technological equipment);
- reduction of the number of participants/trainers/course managers delegated to (national and international) training courses /programme-conferences;
- reduction of budget for training/learning materials and equipment.

*Effects of these cutbacks:*

- *Decline of opportunities for police officers (and police trainers) taking part in police training activities;*
- *decrease of innovation in and adaptations of police/policing according to needs and environmental changes initiated by well-trained experts;*
- *decline of professional job qualifications;*
- *insufficient capacity in specialist resources.*

- **Shift from police in-service training to self-education (human self-development)**

Because of the budget restrictions and the reduction of continuing police education/training more and more police officers have to pay costs for training needed for promotion and their career out of their own pockets and have to organise it beyond their line-duties in free-time.

*Effects of these measures:*

- *Changes of the conditions for the (lifelong) learning process of police officers to increase police officers' vocational qualifications, improve professionalism, productivity and most importantly ensure social security (Kordaczuk-Was & Sosnowski, 2011);*
- *establishment of a two-tier system within police if only few (privileged) officers receive in-service training while others have to*

- **Measures regarding human resources development and structures in training organisations:**

- Salary cuts for trainers/teachers and other staff at police training institutions (shortening of monthly wages, allowances and extra pays for specific tasks e.g. exams, writing scripts or internet-programmes, interpreting) and shortening or ban of over-time (by all-inclusive contracts);
- reduction of the number of police trainers and administrative staff;
- hiring freeze for new trainers and administrative staff;
- rise of work intensity: extension of mandatory teaching assignment and more time pressure;
- increase of retirement age for trainers and teaching staff.

*Effects of these cutbacks:*

- *Problems in recruiting the most qualified experts/trainers for police training;*
- *demotivation, frustration, burn-out, doing the job without passion;*
- *reduction of innovation and creativity;*
- *possible decline of training-quality unless there are compensating measures.*

- **Reforms of national police training system/organisation:**

- Centralisation and concentration on the one side:
  - closing or merging of police training units/schools/academies/...;
  - reduction of contracts with external providers;
- decentralisation on the other side: shift of training from police schools/academies to police forces;
- establishment of models with ability groups (in particular in basic police training) respecting pre-qualifications or expert qualifications;
- shift of police relevant training from the police service to public or private colleges, universities and private providers close to police and cooperating with police (e.g. foundations, unions, associations).





*Effects of these measures:*

- *Shifting police training responsibilities and the associated costs away from police training organisations – because of their diminished resources – to others (e.g. police forces, universities, colleges and individuals). This might change the quality of vocational training.*

- **Outsourcing of special and costly training (e.g. expert- or management- or language-training) – without keeping police influence on curricula:**

*Effects of these measures:*

- *Inclusion of the subject “police training” into the sensitive and controversial political discussion about denationalisation and partial privatisation of police tasks and the state monopoly on the use of force. This discussion will deal with questions like:*
  - *Is police training/education part of governmental tasks and has it to stay as a governmental obligation or under governmental supervision?*
  - *Will the inclusion of private actors undermine the state monopoly on police?*

- **Savings in infrastructure:**

- Search for (more) cost effective training locations;
- minimising operating/running costs (costs for maintenance);
- postponement/rejection of financing urgent renovations, new furnisher or equipment at police schools/academies.

*Effects of these measures:*

- *Much of the energy needed for content and modernisation of training/education are used for questions of infrastructure – real training matters take a back seat.*

- **Efforts for new/alternative/additional/variety of funds – means of generating revenue:**

- Personal attendance or enrolment fees (for specific training courses) [with possibility to ask the tax authority for respecting these fees as allowable expenses] and leadership arrangements;
- refund of training costs from forces to colleges or academies (in particular when there is an increase of the general force funding);

- training for and paid by external bodies and private partners (e.g. providers for security services, local communities without state police authority, local neighbourhood watch groups);
- training for and paid by international institutions, organisations or funding programmes.

*Effects of these measures:*

- *Traditional national standards can no longer be kept. General (legal and finance-related) changes regarding the general system of financing education and training seem to be necessary in many European countries. Political feasibility and willingness in many places (like in Austria or Germany) can be doubted.*

- **Claiming sovereignty for police training organisations in budgetary matters (so that they can make profit which can be used for overcoming budgetary cuts):**

*Effects of these measures:*

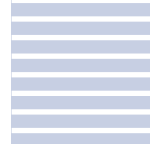
- *Internal conflicts or distrust with external effects and potential public image damage for police training: petty jealousy, lack of understanding and enviousness in other parts of police organisation and other public authorities without budgetary sovereignty.*

In the majority of cases these different measures are taken on the basis of overall fiscal decisions without thorough and systematic analyses of the police training situation and efficiency, as well as without examination of the specific needs of police and the expected effects of savings on police and policing.

Because of dramatic reduction of the state budget in several countries police in these countries have to deal with an increase of mass-demonstrations and more and more violent protesters. This means additional work and challenges for police. However, because of strict budgetary restrictions necessary adaptation of police training (and special equipment) – according to the new challenges for police – is almost not possible, unless it is cost-neutral. Efforts of police unions which fight for the police labour rights do not help to improve this situation.

This situation implies for senior police officers and managers – in charge of planning, organisation and administration of police training – that politicians and community (public) expect from them actions





and decisions to maximise the benefit of reduced resources to widen the market and to increase the funding sources – if possible without reducing quality of training and in line with rules, training needs, political and public expectations towards police training. Often this seems to be a mission impossible.

## CHALLENGES AND RISKS

The economic constraints should not only be seen as an obstacle for the further development of police training. It should be taken as a challenge and a chance for all stakeholders and decision-makers in this field for a thorough examination of the current system and situation and for an adaptation of training/education according to the new and changing conditions. This examination has to respect risks, as they are seen by experts.

Here only a few aspects of potential challenges and risks will be presented for considerations which could be relevant for dealing with budgetary restrictions.

### INTERNATIONALISATION/ EUROPEANISATION OF POLICING

Quick solutions for solving budgetary problems in individual countries and in CEPOL without respecting European standards of police training and the achievements in the last two decades – particularly regarding training of senior officers and police experts – could have long-term consequences not only for the quality of training/education but particularly for the international police cooperation.

Effective police cooperation in Europe is not only based on contracts, agreements and joint institutions and instruments. Just as important are police officers with common attitudes, a common understanding of and knowledge about police and policing. European training standards, training programmes (e.g. joint training activities, common curricula, and exchange programmes) as well as funding programmes can be seen as important pillars for international cooperation.

We cannot expect that the budget restrictions for police and police training will be eased in most of the European countries soon. On the contrary there will be new and more cuts. Therefore the situation has to be seen as a specific challenge for all decision-

makers in charge of police training in Europe to find solutions that will in the end strengthen cooperation. Such solutions could be

- Common or joint development, running and funding of costly training activities (e.g. master programmes, expert training, train the trainers, exchange programmes, distance learning);
- a clear refusal of competition between police colleges and a turn (back) to cooperation;
- strengthening bilateral and regional training cooperation with splitting the costs.

But the risks have to be taken into account: time factor, bureaucracy, and language barriers.

### COST-BENEFIT ANALYSES

More and more cost-benefit or efficiency analyses are taken or asked - as “alibi” for decisions for eliminating or reducing “unnecessary” or “inefficient” training. In fact the economic situation is an opportunity for healthy examinations of existing police training/education systems, programmes or curricula.

The economic situation can be seen as a challenge for decision-makers to reconsider and modernise the current police national training/education as well as the cooperation in this field. In all national police training systems can be found on the one hand removable duplications, non-updated or useless parts of the curricula, unnecessary elements/ballast, unscreened traditions, (party-) political interests, idle capacities and on the other hand disregarded changes (new threats and technologies, internationalisation) in police environment or not respected findings/recommendations of police research in the curricula.

However, training experts are aware of the weaknesses and risks of cost-benefit and efficiency-analyses in the field of training. They more see the necessity of demand analyses, so that a quick response by training activities to changes of the threat assessment or new police demand will be possible. Decisions or measures only based on cost analyses may have long-term negative consequences for the training system as such. It will take away the important innovative and creative element of training for police and policing. Therefore eliminating or reducing training activities should be based more on demand analyses than on costs reduction strategies.



## REDUCTION OF RELIANCE ON CENTRAL OR STATE BASED FUNDING

In time of budget reduction for police training by the government police training institutions are looking for other sources. They offer their programmes, curricula, trainers and experts as well as infrastructure to international organisations like United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime <sup>(1)</sup> (UNODC, 2014), OSCE (OSCE, 2014) or DCAF <sup>(2)</sup> (DCAF, 2014), to European Commission's Twinning Programmes <sup>(3)</sup> (European Commission, 2014) or to EU-Agencies like CEPOL (European Police College, 2013) or FRONTEX (Frontex, 2014). This way of selling "products, know-how and training conditions" is an excellent opportunity for producing income and gaining international reputation and recognition for an institution by making use of the existing capacities and experience.

However, regular contracts with external financers could cause a certain dependency. Another risk for training institutions could be the bureaucratic difficulties regarding the application and administration of funds. It is very time consuming (and therefore expensive) to fulfil all necessary requirements for applications without advice from external experts.

## INCENTIVE FOR RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Austerity programmes and their consequences for police and police training as outlined above necessitate the need of new research based knowledge about how police training with high quality can be offered to different actors

of policing in spite of dramatic cuts from state budgets. In this situation CEPOL could take over an initiative for

- the development of a European research concept for the specific subject area reconciling national responsibility for police training with European aspects as described rudimentary in the European Training Scheme (European Commission, 2013a) – considering the potential consequences as mentioned above (as basis for an application for funding);
- a comparative research programme for
  - collecting and comparing empirical findings, practical experience and good practice regarding efforts to overcome the financial distress for police training;
  - analysing possibilities for opening police training/education for other stakeholders and partners of policing without creating conflicts, dependencies or other problems (e.g. security for sale, social conflicts, new risks for corruption);
  - sharing good practice and offering recommendations based on scientific and research findings to fiscal policymakers and decision makers in the field of police/policing for the development of strategies in dealing with austerity programmes.

Quoting Cordner & Shaine (2011, p. 282) in the end as in the beginning: "Increased scrutiny of police education and training, driven by tight fiscal conditions, will hopefully lead to a more scientific approach to training and to healthy examination of current systems and courses."

<sup>(1)</sup> UNODC delivers a range of trainings to law enforcement officers on topics of relevance to fighting organized crime in their local contexts. It also employs modern technical training such as computer-based training as well as assistance in improving information exchange between law enforcement agencies, custom and border control authorities in different countries.

<sup>(2)</sup> Training and capacity-building, including the development of training curricula and training courses for police and border security personnel, is a major part of the work of "The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces – DCAF".

<sup>(3)</sup> Twinning is an instrument for the cooperation between Public Administrations of EU Member States (MS) and of beneficiary countries. Beneficiaries include candidate countries and potential candidates to EU membership, as well as countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy.



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