
Editorial

Since the publication of the previous issue of the Bulletin, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to create severe difficulties for societies across the globe, not at least in various degrees in almost all of the European countries. [R.I. Mawby's article on the "Coronavirus, Crime and Policing"](#) has since been downloaded numerous times from the journal's archive, indicating the high actuality of the topic for the audience. Following a webinar delivered in January 2021, CEPOL organised its first online-only research and science conference about the *"Pandemic Effects on Law Enforcement Training & Education"* in cooperation with the Mykolas Romeris University of Lithuania in May. Presentations of the contributions of this event are already available on [the conference website](#).

The impact, the pandemic has had so far on law enforcement, and what had been done and could be done in tackling it, is also the subject of the two opening articles of this issue of the Bulletin.

Focusing attention to the individual level, **Frenkel, Giessing, Jaspaert & Staller** consider *"How to prepare police officers to cope with pandemic specific stressors"* in reference to survey data collected in several European countries. Their findings indicate that, apart from personal factors, the initial lack of personal protection equipment alongside information overload created by quickly changing governmental regulations in the beginning of the pandemic, had indeed increased the stress level of an anyway stressful police officer job. Better preparation by making use of virtual reality-scenario training programs for officers is the proposed solution. This article also exemplifies how cross-national comparative research on police matters can create meaningful and pragmatic results on a European level – something we would like to see more often.

Taking a particular organisational perspective, **Gergely Mogyoródi** describes the effect the pandemic has had on the daily work of the Hungarian SIRENE Bureau, as part of the Schengen-wide cross-border information exchange network. Touching upon the ramifica-

tions of the temporary closure of borders and the travel restrictions on the alerts in the system, the author highlights the unexpected positive impact the otherwise catastrophic pandemic situation had on the bureau's workload, allowing officers to tackle backlog cases and opening space for improving intra-organisational procedures. "Never let a good crisis go to waste"? – Certainly a noteworthy perspective in face of the well-known notorious shortage of resources in law enforcement.

The scientific description and in-depth analysis the pandemic had on law enforcement has just begun; as mentioned, the forthcoming Special Conference Edition of the Bulletin will provide further research on individual, organisational and societal level for all readers.

Support in tackling a crisis, helping to stabilise security and simply providing humanitarian help are the common objectives of International Police Peacekeeping Missions. By example of the German case, the article by **Albrecht, Hof, Stocker & Thielgen** denotes the shift from capacity building to specialist counselling as required focus for those submissions enter subsequent demand for a specialist, not a generalist competence profile, for delegated officers. As an adequate means to find the "competent, motivated specialist" for International Police Peacekeeping Missions, the authors provide a description of their development centre for selecting applicant officers from within their force, hoping to open an international discussion on this certainly less researched topic.

By contrast, predictive policing has certainly received a higher degree of attention by the international research community and the law enforcement community. Defining predictive policing basically as "the computer-assisted, spatially-based, probability calculations of crime", guided by careful methodological considerations about modelling and prediction, **Kai Seidensticker** introduces the reader to the SKALA project, implemented at the largest land of Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia. Unlike occasional promotional reports, the author describes the need to adjust the system's outputs to the needs of frontline staff officers and admits that it is too early to conclude that this predictive policing tool has actually reduced crime in the area of its application. Such deliberative and grounded empirical studies can be very worthwhile readings for decision-makers.

Leading us back to the long-standing, notorious problem of organised crime on the territory of the European Union, **Nelson Macedo da Cruz** informs the reader from the perspective of the recently established European Public Prosecutors' Office on how intensification and diversification has driven the growth of organised criminal business in recent years and how the successful confiscation of criminal proceeds and profits through asset recovery can be an effective countermeasure. With a view to the discrepancy between criminal earnings and legal confiscations by authorities, he suggests a few points of conservation for law- and policy-makers, in order to achieve a more dynamic and effective asset recovery in the EU. For sure, the role and initiatives of public prosecutors deserve higher attention in law enforcement research.

As modern societies constantly “go digital”, experts, practitioners and policy-makers alike are concerned about the proliferation of cybercrime in our societies on various threat levels. It is no secret that these phenomena are posing serious challenges for police and other law enforcement agencies across Europe. In their article, **Wright, Garstka & Kumar** identify and outline some of those key challenges (e.g. shortage of resources, identification of cybercriminals, etc.) and depict, how the current Horizon 2020 funded CG-Driver project, which only started last year, is going to address those challenges.

In continuation of our section of project reports, this issue of the Bulletin is featuring three further article outputs by the European IMPRODOVA research project¹, dealing with the issue of domestic abuse and domestic violence. **Fagerlund & Houtsonen** review how the issue of domestic violence is framed in theoretical and data collection terms and discuss the problems arising from variations and deficiencies they found on the national levels. In turn, they call for further development of policy and practice on collecting fully comparable data on this topic. Complementing this conceptual and methodological perspective, the empirical case study provided by **Machado, Pais, Morgado & Felgueiras** takes the reader to the second biggest city of Portugal, Porto, where a new organisational, problem-based approach for tackling domestic violence seems to have made a notable impact on local crime figures. Differentiating between micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis, the authors believe that the attitudes towards domestic violence has changed over recent years in Portugal, and that the case of Porto can be taken as an example of broad social changes reflected on the local level. The article by **Sondern & Pfliederer**, stressing the role of medical doctors as important institutional partners to law enforcement in reacting to cases of domestic violence, concludes the line of contributions from the IMPRODOVA project².

We hope that the articles of this summer edition of the European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin provides interesting, thought-provoking and inspiring reading for our audience. In this regard, we invite further contributions, particularly presenting cross-national research focusing on the European dimension³.

The next issue for publication is the Special Conference Edition No.5, featuring more than 30 papers delivered to the recent CEPOL online conference on the pandemic effects on law enforcement training and education.

¹ See also the contributions in the previous issue no. 20

² This project is about to end in August 2021.

³ Submission guide- and deadlines are posted on the [Bulletin's homepage](#).

Last but not least, it is a pleasure to announce the next CEPOL Research & Science Conference titled

Preparing Law Enforcement for the Digital Age

1-3 December 2021

Venue: Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania.

Please visit the [CEPOL website](#) for the *Call for Papers* and further organisational information.

From the Editorial Board,

Dr. Detlef Nogala

Managing Editor