



# Scottish Police Federation

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Attachments:

EuroCOP Spring Committee Meeting 2016 - Report

Dear Colleague

### **European Confederation of Police – Spring 2016 Meeting – Information**

The European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) held its Spring Meeting on the 26 and 27 April 2016 in Spain.

I have previously circulated a copy of the position papers adopted at that meeting and am now able to attach for your information a more fulsome report from the meeting.

I would encourage you to read this report as it provides an insight in to the activities of EuroCOP.

Yours sincerely

**Calum Steele**  
General Secretary



# European Confederation of Police Spring 2016 Meeting Members Update Report

## Introduction

The Spring meeting of EuroCOP took place on the 26th and 27th April in Torremolinos, Spain.

This was the first meeting of the Committee since Congress 2015 and we were delighted to formally welcome representatives from the Police Federation of Northern Ireland and the Malta Police Association as new members.

The meeting has also saw EuroCOP and ICPRA came together for a joint conference session on the 26th April for the first time in their respective histories. This was the largest gathering of international police unions ever seen.

ICPRA is the International Council Of Police Representative Associations. This international network of police unions was established following an initiative by the Canadian Police Association (CPA) in 1996 and now has approximately 1.5 million members affiliated through national police associations and federations.

## EuroCOP / ICPRA Joint Conference

The joint EuroCOP / ICPRA conference heard from:

Mr Oldrich Martinu, Deputy Director Europol on the challenges facing European police and security services in the fight against extremism and terrorism. Mr Martinu explained that a tiny proportion of the European budget (1%) is allocated to policing and security and that there was arrested need for information sharing and cooperation than ever before.

Mr Martinu identified that the resistance to the sharing of intelligence was increasingly unacceptable in light of the unprecedented threats being faced.



EuroCOP's Vice-President, Roger Mercatoris also provided the meeting with his personal and emotional account of the attacks on Brussels Airport and Metro system on 22 March as he was in the city on that date.



He was due at a meeting in the ETUC building in the European quarter at 0900 and had he not been delayed watching the events at the airport on the television, he would have been on the metro line at the time of the second attack. He shared with the meeting the sense of shock, devastation and fear that struck Brussels.

Mr Mercatoris highlighted that Belgian police unions had been warning about the risk of extremism and lack of preparedness since 2012.

The meeting noted with astonishment the particular challenges created when commercial interests were considered of greater importance than security.

Mr Mercatoris highlighted the terrible working conditions and pressures for police officers in Molenbeek where 15-24 hour working was common in addition to lengthy commuting. He advised the meeting that significantly more police resources were required in the area.

In the subsequent discussions it was noted that terrorism had visited attacks in almost all jurisdictions across the world in recent years. Police forces were not strangers to terrorism albeit the intensity and frequency of attacks had increased significantly. Northern Ireland for example had decades of terror attacks to deal with and groups like ETA and Golden Dawn had also been prevalent in terror attacks in the recent past.

The meeting noted a rise in far right groups and these also presented significant policing challenges from the management of legitimate political demonstrations to the inevitable conflict this created with counter groups. The meeting was also reminded that whilst the attention tended to focus on Islamist extremists, that one of the worst terrorist attacks in recent years was carried out by a far right extremist in Norway in 2011 and saw 77 murdered.

In all of these areas it was important to remember the role and welfare of police officers who need to be properly protected and trained to be able to respond. In addition to the risks of physical violence, the impact on the long term mental health of police officers was also something that required to be considered.

## Taser

The meeting also heard from Mr Rick Smith the CEO of Taser International. Mr Smith presented to the meeting on the speed with which technology was developing and that police services were being left behind. He identified that Facebook for example was as much as 5 years ahead of the FBI with its facial recognition technology.

Mr Smith identified that police departments were routinely using technologies from the last millennia (some even from the 1990s).



He compared this to Facebook - able to provide instant security and feature updates on a daily basis to hundreds of millions of users, in multiple languages, whilst continuing to make the user experience simple.

He further compared this to police systems which usually require shut down and years of planning to deliver security critical updates for operating systems.

He suggested it was not surprising police officers were being hindered and not helped by technology. He also cited that the NYPD had previously allocated \$11Million US for the replacement of typewriters (which it has now banned). Mr Smith suggested that it was a critical police forces embraced technology to make it work for police officers, rather than against them.

### **Policing our people – looking after those looking after the public.**



The meeting also heard from Dr. Bo Wennström - Uppsala University, Faculty of Law, Sweden and from Dr. Linda Duxbury – Ottawa University Canada on the subject of Policing our people – looking after those looking after the public.

Dr Wennström identified on the importance of self-fulfilment and how important the sense of self-worth was to general wellbeing.

Dr Duxbury highlighted the impact of demographic changes in society and the impact that has had on worker expectations. Generational expectations have changed significantly over the decades and this has a manifest impact on how workers perceive and value work and their wellbeing.

### **Police Federation for Northern Ireland – We Are You**

On the second day of the meeting delegates received a presentation from Mark Lindsay, the Chairman of the Police Federation for Northern Ireland. Mr. Lindsay provided an insight into the policing environment in Northern Ireland and discussions within the Federation about raising the profile of police officers.

He explained that his Federation had invested heavily and commissioned a series of short films to highlight that police officers were ordinary men and women who wore a uniform.

He thereafter presented the #WeAreYou films to the meeting. The films can be viewed on the PFNI YouTube channel.



After the films were played Mr. Lindsay explained that the reaction from the community in Northern Ireland and from across the world had been remarkable.

### Position Papers & Working Groups

The meeting held further discussions on the subjects of Terrorism and the Refugee Crisis after the ICPRA delegates returned to their own meeting.

During these further discussions the meeting adopted two position papers on the subjects of Counter Terrorism and Refugee Crisis. Both papers are available at the EuroCOP website <http://goo.gl/Sil7Cr> and <http://goo.gl/Ajxk69> . In addition the meeting agreed to establish working groups and membership as follows;

#### Working Group: Terrorism

- Mark Lindsay, PFNI, Northern Ireland
- Anna Nellberg-Dennis, Polisförbundet, Sweden

#### Working Group: Acceptable Standards

- Martin Hosken, GDPF, Gibraltar
- Juan José Llaguno, E.rnE., Spain
- Vladimir Banel, NPPSS, Lithuania

#### Working Group : Refugee Crisis

- Peter Smets, SLFP, Belgium
- Georgios Stamatakis, PFP, Greece
- Reto Hauser, VSPB, Suisse

### EuroCOP Pre Meeting Questionnaire

Delegates were updated on the findings of the three question questionnaire that was circulated in advance of the meeting. Calum Steele, 2nd Vice President highlighted that the response rate was incredible with almost full responses from all member organisations. He suggested that the simplicity of the questions was something the ExCom will need to bear in mind for future questions of member organisations.

On the three questions it was encouraging that almost all member organisations expressed similar views as to why they were in EuroCOP. A sense of friendship and organisational benefits from being part of a much bigger representative group was very strongly commented on as was the importance of seeking to maximise influence policy makers at a European level.

There was also a strong desire amongst the relatively young police unions to learn from the more advanced police unions. There was also a strong belief that continuing to fight for significant improvements for members was an important reason for being in EuroCOP.

Understandably there were more varied responses to this question what organisations were expecting from EuroCOP. In the main however members want EuroCOP to be united; they wanted it to be relevant and to influence and help formulate European policy; they wanted it to work for minimum standards and rights for police officers and pursue collective complaints if necessary and they wanted improved communications and a heightened profile.

The response of members to what they could contribute to EuroCOP was very encouraging and demonstrated the sheer breadth of skills and experience in the organisation. All members clearly felt they had a lot more to offer and the enthusiasm shown is to everyone's credit.

Uniquely the Police Federation of Northern Ireland has a lot to offer in terms of counter terrorist policing. Other organisations offered to use their bi-lingual (or multi-lingual skills) to encourage greater social integration amongst members. Individual members expressed their own desires to assist with specific areas of work through working groups if necessary.

The ExCom had already taken this enthusiasm on board and the working groups were now established.

### **Police Retirement Ages**

Finally the meeting commenced a discussion on the subject of police retirement ages. The meeting noted a number of significant differences in police working ages across member organisations and agreed it was important to give the subject proper consideration. Delegates agreed the subject metered the development of a position paper for presentation to the Autumn Meeting.