

Managing the crisis of law enforcement organisations interpreting on a wider (society) platform

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In my study I examine and make my conclusion from the problems of the European – emphasized upon the West-Central Europe – law enforcement institutions through examining the situation of the Hungarian Police Department.

In the near past the Hungarian press reported on the moral crisis the Police of the Hungarian Republic failed. There were written mainly about the moral crisis within the organisation, but besides that they reported on lack profession, human resources and financial problems of the Police, which had to work for months in constant political crossfire.

József Petrétai head of the Ministry of Justice on 20th May 2007 Sunday put in his expection request, which was accepted by Primeminister Ferenc Gyurcsány, and came into effect on 31st May 2007. Three leader of the police had left their position: László Bene (head of the Hungarian Police), Péter Gergényi head of the Police in Budapest and József Dobozi, head of REBISZ. The resignations were interpreted by Ferenc Gyurcsány in a press conference: he had the opinion, that resignations of the leaders are not connected to concrete events, but the affairs, which shocked the public opinion, were suitable for shaking the confidence in Police generally.

Questions came out: Are the european law enforcement organisations in crisis? To answer the question, one need to examine the meaning of the word „crisis”

After the definition of general dictionary (1) the word crisis came from greek language, and means difficult situation which can take a turn for better.

The explanatory dictionary (2) gives the following as definition: Severe situation, crucial turn; Economical and politcal failure. After some authors (3) the feature of crisis are the following: Decisive, most of the cases an dramatical, radical turn, a global failure of function, low performance, where the quality markers can fall (it can has positive and negativ outcome); A big doubt, unmanagable risk; Stagnation, pilling up the unsolved acut problems

The common feature of these concepts and definitions are, that accopmlishing the main function of certain institution got disturbed, that the normal „peace” as a circumstance has an effect, and influence to the functioning system, and relizes with extreme intensity or after latency.

Consequently the crisis is not a temporary occurence, but a larger period from normal state, beginning of the conflict to restoration of the normal state.

In the field of law enforcement in our opinion (shared with others opinion, and standpoint) we can talk about functional crisis, and moral-political crisis.

The features of functional crisis – after the defintion made by Dr. Finszter Géza (4) – are the increase of crimes, rising the chance to avoid a punishment after a crime. The increased assigment of the Police stands opposite the decreased estimation from the society. These facts are true in the police nowadays as well: depreciated condition of the buildings,

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obsolete, and insufficient equipment, used up motor-vehicle park. (5) The moral-political crisis is tightly connected to political groups changing in every cycle.

The corruption (6) as phenomenon appeared every era, and social area. Other question is what they meant under that definition.

In countries/societies with significant social, political, economical changes the phenomenon of corruption increases, so in Hungary happens/happened as expected from 1989/90. The Police cannot be an exception in these processes as well!

To understand the processes led to this situation, one can not examine the crime among policemen in itself, better as a part of the processes of the social function. Examination should not disregard the structural setting up of the police.

Let's examine shortly what is characteristic of the Police Department of Hungarian Republic, the features are similar with other Police Organisation in West-Central European countries.

In general we can consider that the Police got involved with politics. The higher leadership completely depends on the current political power, their mandate hold in a good case from beginning to end of a political cycle. (From the political change in 1989-90 8 head of the Hungarian Police worked). After the political change the old system was changed as a political decision: the professional leadership got the national headquarters, the political leadership got the Ministry of the Interior. Every single head of police, and government tried to reorganize the police, but up to this day the Police was not organised to well-functioning, suitable for challenges, and European Unions expectation organisation.

Abstention, and mistrust are the typical features of the Hungarian Police. The policemen don't think that – knowing their authoritarian leadership - asserting their opinion can lead to changes in the organisation.

There isn't planned recruitment, in the leadership there wasn't change with the political turn, so the leaders still represent the old attitude.

Among the staff the upcoming orders of the government made full uncertainty, these orders will reduce the already shortened rights and benefits of policemen, and so can be understandable the high numbers of pension requests, and disarmaments. Among the staff further factors are the low salaries, the constant mortal danger (physical danger eg. an attack), the heavy working conditions, but also as a subjective feeling, the lack of protection by the law. So the general view is pessimistic among them.

Besides the scandals written in the press the unpopularity is caused mainly by the *suspected* expansion of crime among policemen.

Future, Possible alternatives

Among the task of the Police in a democratic society there has to mention the following:

- keep the public peace and public security
- prevention of crimes and fight against criminals
- clearing up the crimes
- defend and respect the rights and freedom of the citizens
- help and serve the citizens

The behavior of the policeman has to represent honour, and be law abiding. The citizens, the public opinion identify the uniform to that factors. The policeman has to identify to this, showing outwardly, because if it doesn't realized, the policeman got disbelieving and so do the organization as well.

In the era of globalization there is a necessity for continuous renewal, and fitting in with changing circumstances in the Police.

In our stand point in the main task of the Police has to be part, or entire of the following points:

- **Estabilishing a strong „orderdefender” body** – to fight against terrorism, and against international criminals, there has to be organised a well structured, well prepared Police adaptable to the changing circumstances.
- **Gaining back the public trust, and increase it** – The Police has to organised so, that it could achive the respect of the society as the preserver of law. There has to be improved the opinion of the society about the fights against crime, make them satisfied with the profession of the Policeman, and improve the cooperation with the people.
- **It has to be declared, to solve the problems of profession, and contets doesn't mean primary change in leadership and structure.** Exploration of the real factors can give the opportunity to reorganise the resources, to plan programs for aimed improvements, and control them.
- **Mandates of the leaders separate from political cycles.** – In the leadership should be a right balance of independence, professional honesty and political loyalty: predictable, permanent, professional strenghten leadership.
- **Estabilishing an independent law enforcement ministry** – For the police should given independence for his operation from different state organisations taking responsibility by the Police of.
- **After criterion of the European Union estabilishing an effective, flexible leadership system** – The aim is to ground a transparent leadership system, assuming that in every case there is a clear person, who is responsible for an act, or omission. Every single person of the staff is responsible for his acts, and it can be checked, followed up, and controlled.
 - **A real political change in the highest leadership** – Young, ambitious good qualified, foreign language speaking people should put in higher position, and they still know from every day work the difficulties, and problems which should be solved.
 - **Recruitment, planned human politics, building up the system of selection the leaders**
 - **Predictive carrier, progress, build up and run the degree system**
 - **Reconsidering the task of different duty braches, modernizate them for the present demands** – Public Police, Local Autorithies Police as alternatives
 - **Discontinue parallel functions of different braches** – structure changes within the structure.
 - **A better use the available human resources** – The number of the people in different branches were calculated in the middle of '80. So it need to be reconsidered, but in our opinion there are in some part excess of resources. Main points of the reconsideration: number of the people, professional requirement, fluctuation, capability for action, possibilities for rearrange the people.
 - **Professional data (staff, financial, technical)** – Reconsider, and change int he numbers if needed. Costs of a service, compare to its effectiveness. In can be analized if adequate informations are collected. This information determinate the effect of a police action, shows the condition of the organisation. Against a crime how many people, and level of their knowledge can be used; what kind of eguipment they use... are important questions.
 - **Professional training, keep up the level of knowledge and practice-** continuing educations = basic training should follow meantime working in regular periods professional trainings. (managment, leader, expert)

➤ **Changes in attitude of statistics** – The subjective opinion of the society and local authorities of crimes, and fighting against criminals are different than the statistics. The aim is to bring near these factors. Reform of the attitude in statistics: new methods and equipment is needed to bring new system-

➤ **Stop reducing gained rights and restore them-** The police staff serves the society, so as wide as possible social and financial rights have to be provided. Giving the possibility for the people to organise, and be part of, work for interests protecting organisations. The police members has to got adequate salary, social supply, and special health, and safety protocols should made because the dangerous work condition.

➤ **Using the models of the EU for ground an incentive scheme**

➤ **Change in paradigm of communication** – The Police has to be able to give objective information for the society, without uncover secret information. Both the communication to the society and to the staff should be more significant.

➤ **Reconsidering the selections system, and consistent execution** – The staff of the police has to be recruited in every level based on personal degree and experience, to serve better the aims of the organisation. The recruiting processes should be grounded on objective and clear basis, open for every race, and member of ethnical minority. So the staff can represent the society which serves.

➤ **Change the attitude in training system** – The basic police training should be open as possible to the society. In every level of training has important role the practical education. Using force as an option to bring order should have clear order, and limit. In the training there should be point out the hate againsts different races, and ethnic groups, and fight against it.

➤ **Build up the „police selfconsciousness”** – Knowing and accepting the exact reasons being part of a group. We have to know the reasons what are the feelings, motivations, confidences of people who want to join to police. They have to get know as soon as possible the aims, structure, tasks of the Organisation to support them unconditionally.

➤ **Supervision: self controll & civil control** – The task done by the police in a civil society should have civil supervision system.

➤ **Better connections with the civil, social organisations and common projects** – The Police has to be organised that way, that it should improve the good police-civil connections, and if possible cooperate with local organisations, representatives of the organisations, and ethnical minorities. Strengthen the cooperation realized in local area.

➤ **Imporvement of the cooperation with local authorities** – The connections should be tightened – regular, everyday contact: the main institute of public crime prevention should be the local authorities

Summarize the thoughts listed about we can declare, that there is needed a Police in European Union and west-central European countries that is **neutral**, predictable, openminded, „átlátható”, effective and succesfull. The features of the leaders and staff should be reliability, transparency, workamonship, professional honesty

We have the hope that in this essay we could light on the complexity of the problems of the Police which has to be handled, and we could give sufficient basis to start a reform of true renewal.

We hope that this reform – and with that a grounded new organisation- will be realized in the near future.

- (1) Nyelvművelő Kézikönyv. Főszerkesztő: Grétsy László és Kovalovszky Miklós. Bp. Akadémiai Kiadó. 1985.
- (2) Értelmező szótár +. Főszerkesztő: Eöry Vilma. Bp. Tinta könyvkiadó 2007
- (3) eg. Professor Ádám Angyal
- (4) Dr. Finszter Géza: A magyar rendőrség válsága. Belügyi Szemle, 1990/6. szám, 3-13. old
- (5) Finszter. 1990 (i.m. 4.) 5. o.
- (6) Corruption; word comes from latin corrumpo, and has a meaning: to damage in sg,