Analysis of the current development of private security in Slovenia between practice, theory and empirical experience

Andrej Sotlar, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Security Systems, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Kotnikova 8, 1000 Ljubljana Andrej, Slovenia.

Tomaž Čas, Ph. D., Assistant Professor in Private Security and Police Powers, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Kotnikova 8, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The process of privatisation and commercialization of the former "social" private security started at the end of the 1980s, but a decisive turning point was marked by the adoption of the first systemic act on private security in 1994. Although further development has been relatively fast and has consisted of either transferring good practices from foreign countries or taking into account some Slovene national specifics, it has almost never been explicitly based on any theoretical concepts of private security. These are not unknown, though, because they were already introduced to Slovenia by academics at the beginning of the 1990s. Various theoretical approaches have been used more by experts for academic and research purposes than by decision-makers (government). They have also sometimes served the owners of private security companies, especially when they have tried to reinforce the legitimacy of private security in society and/or strengthen their position in relation to the state.

Under legislative changes in 2003, 2007 and 2011, the government has gradually assumed more and more tasks, duties and responsibilities in the field of private security. It thus now has competence over key areas, from issuing licences and official identity cards to the training of private security personnel and their control, which does not seem to be the best solution either from theoretical or a practical point of view. It is therefore still impossible to answer in a simple and unambiguous way the question of what the role of private security in Slovene society actually is, because it is difficult to isolate one single, predominant (even if only theoretical) concept of private security. It is, rather, a combination of private security practices, which are rooted in a widespread conviction that private security is primarily an important instrument of crime prevention in any contemporary society. This, of course, is only one side of the coin, since it is also possible to see less altruistic practices in the area of private security, whether in Slovenia or elsewhere in the world.

Key words: private security, development, practice, theoretical concepts, research studies

UDC: 351.746 (497.4)