

Community policing practice and research in Slovenia

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After 1991 the Slovenian police began laying new foundations for preventive measures and community-oriented policing. The old mechanisms of social control were abandoned to be followed by several attempts at reforming the Slovenian police force, thereby bringing it closer to the Western concepts of policing. Since 1998 several surveys based on various respondent types (police officers and residents) have been commissioned, focusing in particular on officer and citizen perception of preventive work, the willingness of citizens to cooperate with the police, the levels of satisfaction with the service of community policing officers (CPOs) and other officers, the functioning of local security panels, the level of trust in the police, crime-related anxiety and the partnership between the police and local communities. The findings reveal that residents are moderately satisfied with the cooperation of local police. Residents also believe that they are generally more willing to assist the police than the officers are prepared to allow. Both sides favour community policing over a more traditional approach, and citizens support a greater police field presence. On the other hand, police commanders feel that local communities should play a more active role in local consultation bodies. The police say they are aware of the need to create partnerships. They are working closer with residents in order to increase their awareness that they are there to serve the people.

Although there have been attempts made to boost local partnerships in the framework of local security councils, the lion's share of responsibility for resolving local security issues still rests with the police. The major challenges that remain unanswered concern how to encourage local residents to participate in efforts to enhance safety, how to consolidate the deployment and implementation of the philosophy of community policing, and how the high-level of integrity of both partners can be maintained.

Keywords: community policing, community policing officer (CPO), local security panel, providing security at the local level, Slovenia.

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