

Mission Mag

> inside the European Union Police Mission
Bosnia & Herzegovina

In Focus



122 - Your Police In Service of Citizens

On 13 February, in the impressive new premises of Canton Sarajevo Police Special Support Unit, BiH law enforcement agencies in cooperation with the European Union Police Mission launched a joint campaign to raise awareness about police accountability.

The campaign, dubbed 122-Your Police, will focus on continued strengthening of communication between the police and the citizens, as well as the promotion of 122 as the unique emergency police number available across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"The communication between the citizens and the police is much better today than it was 10 years ago, when people were afraid and distrustful towards law enforcement," said Himzo Selimović, Canton Sarajevo Police Commissioner and the host of the event. "The communication is still not at the level of European Union standards, but I am convinced we will get much closer to that objective with this campaign."

Shared goals

Together with Selimović, Republika Srpska Police Director Uroš Pena and Federal Police Administration Director Zlatko Miletić addressed the media, reiterating that improved communication between the law enforcement and the public is necessary for increasing the security in the country.

"The task of all police agencies in the world is identical, performed in different ways but with the same ultimate goal - getting closer to the end user," said Pena. "A citizen wants his police on the spot within three seconds, he needs that his children have no contact with drugs, that his car is not stolen, and this is our goal."

"And we expect significant assistance from the media in achieving this goal," he added, stressing to the present journalists the importance of cooperation between the two institutions in creating a safer environment.

Both Pena and Selimović also brought

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Editorial

By Srećko Bošnjak
Chairman of the Forum
of Law Enforcement Agencies Spokespersons
Spokesperson of the
Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Police
Independent Police Inspector

Following the process of certification of the Ministries of Interior and other security agencies by the United Nations, we have faced a rather new practice of opening up of the police towards the citizens. This has been an unknown and unseen practice with the police in the previous system. All of a sudden, we had established Press and Public Information Offices, whose main objective was to keep the public informed about the police activities in terms of upholding public peace and order, as well as providing security to the citizens and property.



The thorough turning point in the essential transformation of the police public relations was made upon the establishment of the EU Police Mission. Its Press and Public Information Department immediately organised a number of thematic workshops and professional seminars, thus offering us a chance to meet other colleagues from BiH police agencies for the first time and, more importantly, start the learning process. Additionally, the EU Police Mission provided us with the possibility to attend the London School of Public Relations, which enabled all chief press and public information officers to go through an excellent public relations skills training. Since then, we have managed to develop new relationships and views on police public relations, both externally and internally.

During the workshops and seminars, we got to know each other and to meet other policing PR professionals, which has contributed to the development of better relations, higher quality work and exchange of creative ideas and application of the best EU practices, which has been selflessly shared by the colleagues from the EU Police Mission's contributing countries. The great role in the development and improvement of the police public relations was also played by the police commissioners, who have enabled undisturbed, professional and creative work.

The next step was the establishment of the Forum of the Law Enforcement Agencies Spokespersons. The idea was unanimously endorsed. This expert association has so far implemented a number of public information campaigns, leaving a significant mark on the public of Bosnia and Herzegovina and contributing to a better and more transparent relationship between the police and the entire community. Our campaigns Choose life not drugs, Dare!, Your Security Our Obligation - 122,

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up the difficulties the police in BiH face in everyday work and cannot influence in any way, as they should be resolved by the various levels of government. Selimović talked about the penal system and lack of penitentiary facilities due to which many convicted criminals walk the streets. Pena raised the issue of technical and financial capabilities, highlighting that the police in BiH is one of the most impoverished in Europe.

Raising awareness about these issues and lobbying the government to tackle and resolve them is also one of the internal goals of the 122-Your Police campaign.

Healthiest segment of society

Zlatko Miletić said that this campaign is currently probably even more important than police reform.

"Our goal is to show to the citizens that they can have confidence in their police, and to ensure they have a possibility to actively participate in improving the security situation in the country. At the same time, this project should increase the level of responsibility of police officers," added Miletić, explaining that BiH citizens have to understand that all are equal before the law. "I think they need to realise that the police is the healthiest segment of our society."

To underline Miletić's words, Sarajevo Canton Police Spokesperson Dragan Mioković narrated a visual presentation of actual police work, showing what happens "behind the curtain". He led the attendees and the media through steps taken from the moment the police receives a call to 122, showing the intervention process and adding to the transparency of the police.

"It's important for the people to know what to expect from the police, what is the procedure. It is also important for them to know, and I am speaking concretely for Sarajevo as it is my area of responsibility, that, for example, the reaction time cannot always be the same as it is not the same coming to the scene of crime at six o'clock in the morning and at four in the afternoon, during rush hour," said Mioković. *"But what's important is that we are on the way. And that we are also available at all times to answer any questions and address any issues the citizens might have."*

And the police will have plenty opportunities for this. The 122-Your Police campaign will last for two months, during which various public relations and community policing events will be organised throughout the country. A *Police Caravan*



■ Dragan Mioković explains the 122 emergency procedure

will visit 12 cities, bringing along experts and addressing the issues pertinent to the specific area. A school arts competition will be organised on a topic "The policeman in my neighbourhood". And a number of local events will have the police inviting the citizens to meet, ask questions, visit police stations, and further build the strong foundation of trust and communication. ■

Not faster than life, and numerous small-scale campaigns implemented at various levels across the country, targeting different groups, have significantly contributed to the change of perception of the police as the service for the citizens, as opposed to the repressive apparatus which personifies the "authority".

We intend to continue working in the same direction. We will continue to employ our creativity, expertise and professionalism in creating a new perception of us, the police that is moving towards the top professional and democratic standards. Our work, activities and efforts are aimed at building the police as a trustworthy institution.

As for the current 122 campaign, which will place a special emphasis on the popularisation and usage of 122 number in case of emergency, we expect that various PR events spread throughout the country will bring the police and the citizens closer, and encourage an increased level of confidence and cooperation between the two. This will be the focus during the next two months.

We also need the support both externally and internally for the upcoming, as well as all other campaigns. Our expectations from the police management, ministries of interior and governments is to allocate money for the purchase of the device for digital speech recording, called Registrofon, which will ensure 24-hour taping of all calls made to 122, as well as all contacts and communication via police radios. This will no doubt contribute to a more professional conduct of police officers, help substantiate investigation with evidence, and improve the level of official communication between the police and the citizens. We hope our recommendations will be accepted. With this, we will be able to make a step forward in terms of applying new technologies, which is the practice in most surrounding countries. ■

122 Campaign Schedule of Events

February

- February 13 - Sarajevo, The launch of the campaign
- February 18 - Velika Kladuša, Police Caravan at the Border Crossing
- February 23 - Banja Luka, Police Caravan- Event TBC
- February 24 - Sarajevo, International Airport Sarajevo, Anti-trafficking
- February 28 - Vitez, Event for children, school traffic safety competition, training of K-9 dogs

March

- March 3 - Trebinje, Police Caravan, High School Students with traffic police
- March 4 - Mostar, Fight against hooliganism
- March 10 - Bijeljina, Police Caravan, Police accountability
- March 11 - Anti-drugs event
- March 12 - Sarajevo, Non violence and civilian disobeying orders
- March 17 - Sarajevo, Workshop with media editors
- March 19 - Sarajevo, Witness protection
- March 24 - Dobo, Police Caravan, Workshop in Youth and vocational education center
- March 25 - Brčko, Police Caravan, Juvenile Delinquency
- March 31 - East Sarajevo, Juvenile Delinquency

April

- April 3 - Gorazde, Police Caravan, "Police officer-my friend", elementary school fine arts competition in mask making
- April 7 - Široki Brijeg, Police Caravan, Family violence, presentation of police intervention in a hypothetical situation
- April 8 - Tomislavgrad, "Police officer-my friend", elementary school fine arts competition in mask making
- April 9 - Žepče, "Police officer-my friend", elementary school fine arts competition in mask making
- April 13 - Sarajevo, Police Accountability
- April 23 - Sarajevo, Event related to UN's Traffic Safety Week
- April 27 - Banja Luka, Regional conference on fight against organised crime and corruption. ■

For more detailed information on each event, please contact EU Police Mission's Press and Public Information Department

122, Link between Citizens and Police

Police number 122, as one of the light motifs of the previous and current public information campaign, has been promoted across BiH, becoming the personification of the police as an institution which serves the public.

System 122 is one of the blood-lines of police communication with the citizens, and it has, as such, contributed a lot to solving crime cases. When citizens want to report a burglary, a robbery or a car theft in their neighbourhood, they could easily pick up the phone, dial 122 and call the police. And patrol would be on spot in no time. Simple as that.

But someone might wonder what is it like on the other side of the line. Who is the person who answers the phone? How do they react when they receive a call? What is the procedure? How fast could they arrive to a crime scene?

And the call goes to...

When you dial 122, you will talk to a police officer who is on duty - this is one of the advantages in the BiH police system - you talk to a person, not to a machine. After each phone call, the police react immediately by promptly arriving at the scene. The usual procedure is to react instantly to citizens' calls and police officers are doing their best to get to the location as soon as possible.

And, according to information provided by the police, they react in 50% to 80% of all received calls. So what about the rest of calls (20% to 50%) left without interventions? These are calls made by children, ill people, and citizens who require various information such as traffic conditions, information about obtaining personal documents, working hours and the like - since it is a free line, they use it to obtain service information and advice from the police. And the number

of such calls is overwhelming. So, to make the system fully functional, the police will need the commitment and understanding from the public.

"It takes time for everybody in this country to learn that 122 is the 24-hour, seven days a week emergency number for the police," says Jorg Winter, Chief of EUPM's Inspection Department. *"They need to know that this is not be a place where you call to ask for social contributions, or you have problem in your flat and need a craftsman. It is an emergency number reserved for emergency calls only."*

Technical (in)capabilities

System 122 succeeded the previous one, based on the 92 emergency number used in former Yugoslavia. And little has changed since then. In most police stations, calls are registered manually and recorded on paper. There is no systematic analysis, nor computer system to support data collection and processing. It is still far away from the best European standards and practices.

"The biggest obstacle, as we keep reiterating, is the lack of devices which would enable the police to record each call to 122," said Srećko Bošnjak, Spokesperson of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Police and explained: *"The practice of recording calls to the police and other emergency public service numbers is a normal procedure in the contemporary high-tech world. However, BiH is still far from it."*

The recording devices are an important tool for police accountability. They are multifunctional and they could be used for many different purposes: to record calls, to provide material for further investigations, to detect fake calls, to monitor behaviour of the police officer on duty and to measure efficiency of police service to the public. Recording devices are an especially efficient tool when it comes to measuring the speed of police reaction after they receive the citizen's call.

However, the technical equipment is just one side of the story. In order to make it a useful tool, police will have to train its officers as professional 122 dispatchers.

"The 122 system should be improved by professional operators, that's the critical issue," stresses Winter. *"The EUPM could provide the police in BiH with professional guidance, give suggestions, organise trainings for the dispatchers and promote the 122 number to the public."*

And this is exactly what BiH law enforcement agencies and the EUPM will focus on during the next few months and the 122 public information campaign, and all in order to improve not only police work, but also the relationship and the communication with the citizens. ■



Six years ago, emergency police number 122 replaced the old one 92. However, it seems this change will be temporary, because the numbering plan for telephone services in BiH will have to be additionally harmonised with the European Union standards. The common European emergency number is 112, and in BiH this number is reserved as such, but its implementation depends on the Communications Regulatory Agency. It is most likely that the citizens of BiH and visitors will be able to reach 122 by dialling 112 as well. ■



The Thin Red Line

One of the main foci of the 122 campaign is the growing feeling of insecurity amongst the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina - the public's fears remain unrelated to actual crime rates and potential for victimisation, as perceptions of criminal activity and violence are not in tune with reality. At the same time, people of BiH do not have a lot of confidence in the criminal justice system.

About this phenomenon and the ways to address it, we spoke to Dr. Jasna Bajraktarević, Professor at the University of Sarajevo and an expert in social psychology, who first recounted on the current situation in the country.

"People in BiH have no rights since they have no one to turn to even if they possess irrefutable evidence that they were a subject of a criminal offence, because the laws are such that they frequently render police powerless," says Bajraktarević. "Today, people need to get their dignity back. When this happens, they will be ready to face the world. Ordinary persons look at the police, at politicians, at the world around them as they faces an objective problem - how to raise their children when their 19-year-old friends drive an expensive car due to the fact that their father is a criminal who is not in jail because he bribes certain people."

Police cannot be responsible for drug abuse or juvenile delinquency. Such responsibility needs to be distributed to all competent institutions.

What exactly are you referring to?

What I am saying is that even when stories about dishonest politicians in power are uncovered and their processing starts, they neither get suspended nor removed from their offices. After several years, we simply see them in a new position in power and there's nothing people can do about it. People also can't criticise the prosecution, because there are not many prosecutors and they are protected. But they can criticise the police. People always see the police on the streets, and it's very easy to simply direct all accusations against them, which is absolutely wrong.

The problem is that one case, on which police officers work for months, doesn't mean much to an ordinary person because nothing in that case affected his life directly. People expect a drastic change of the system in the country, and they simply don't know anymore whom to point their finger to and demand constructivism, so they are left only with the police.

How should, in your opinion, this issue be tackled?

It is important to show that the police, despite all problems within and outside their organisation, do their job very well and that, for an ordinary person, the police is the least of his problems. What those people manage to do during 24 hours,

many people will never even hear about. They leave their families and put their lives at risk every day. And then, when they finish the case and make an arrest, nothing happens behind the so-called 'red line'.

Red line?

Yes, the line where police work ends and the work of other institutions begins. Most people don't make a distinction between these two phases. When police work ends, prosecutor's office, judiciary, social work centres, juvenile delinquency centres, and others should continue the process. Paradoxically enough, when people behind the 'red line' fail to do their job, the boomerang hits back at the police, undermining their authority and dignity, and making them lose what matters most - the trust of the citizens. For example, when the gruesome murder of Denis Mrnjavac happened, most politicians immediately pointed at the police, placing the blame away from themselves. The question, however, is the justification of this claim, especially considering the fact that that very same police found the perpetrator and the murder weapon within 24 hours, thus ending the entire process. The way they did their job should actually be commended.

The police should be given support, and public needs to know that all has been done before the 'red line', but that the police is not responsible for what happens after this point. People must become aware whom they should turn to from that moment on.

Sounds simple enough.

It does, but that is not really the case. When the police raid a posh restaurant or a coffee bar, it is unbelievable how those actions cause positive reactions with the citizens. People start feeling safe just by seeing the police on the streets. Citizens are satisfied to hear that a criminal group has been arrested, because even those with only basic education know what the police had to go through to make that arrest possible. And the perception of people changes the moment something is finalised. The length of the process itself does not really affect the feeling of security to a great extent. However, the problem is that, given their competencies, the police can't point its finger at somebody and ask what will happen next.

Why not? And what is the answer then? How to subtly explain to the public that the police work has been done? How best to present the police and their work?

Well, what we need is the permission within the structure and the hierarchy for

the police itself to direct the citizens to understand, through one simple sentence, who takes over the responsibility for the case. The spokespeople are not allowed to end their statements with such a sentence. But exactly this sentence and the agreement on who is responsible in certain cases is what will justify police work to the citizens. Police cannot be responsible for drug abuse or juvenile delinquency. Such responsibility needs to be distributed to all competent institutions. Police structures, thus, need to be somewhat changed, not because they do not function, but because their job needs to be made easier.

Furthermore, it is not only the spokespeople who communicate with the public - every police officer who talks to the citizen shows what the police is like. This should be taken in consideration even with the employment of police officers - the minimum of refinement level required because this person represents the police. In this case, the greatest responsibility lies on those thousands of policemen and policewomen on the streets who communicate with the citizens every day.

Seems like this is one of the issues you were referring to earlier, when you men-

tioned earlier the internal and external problems of the police as an institution?

Yes. What is critical is the fact that the police has no anchorage in the system. We all live and work together, as a team. The moment "I" turns into "we", we will succeed in everything we do. A team of various institutions has to work on solving a problem. In this, it is also imperative to forget personal vanities and the feeling of satisfaction that we've accomplished something by ourselves, because all this is useless if the rest of the team doesn't do their job. How to achieve this, how to train someone to be happy that a person from their team has succeeded, that's another story. Very frequently, people who work the most get pushed back to the background exactly because they do their job well, but someone got scared of their success. This is exactly what we're missing in all organisations, including the police.

The police need to detect the weak points within their own ranks, the police need to decide what bothers them within their organisation.

Ordinary man looks at the police, at politicians, at the world around him as he faces an objective problem - how to raise his child when his or her 19-year-old friend drives an expensive car due to the fact that his father is a criminal who is not in jail because he bribes certain people.

What police is doing now, with this 122 campaign, is looking at the issue of how to be better towards others. However, it is equally important to ask how we as a society can do to help the police. Our mentality is inclined to perceive that, if one police officer in the street begrudged you, that automatically means the entire police force is bad. This is the kind of collective subjectivity our people show in absolutely everything.

Hence, the police need to address the citizens through campaigns like this one, present successful, solved cases. But, like I said before, the competencies need to expand, not just those of the spokespeople, but also those of the ordinary policemen on the street. The communication pyramid starts at the basis and not at the top - an interview with the police director is less available to the people than the hundreds of police officers currently patrolling the streets. In other words, show the people who you are, show them that you care, and they will trust you endlessly. ■

Campaign

Citizens: Eyes and Ears of the Police

The 122 campaign was officially launched by the Police of West Herzegovina and Tuzla Canton on February 13 as well.

"We decided to organize a visit of the eight-graders to the Police Administrations across West Herzegovina Canton and host the event 'Meet Your Police Commissioner' for all students," said Damir Čutura, West Herzegovina Canton Police Spokesperson.

The opportunity was seized to emphasize the importance of 122 and elaborate on all the instances in which one should dial 122.



■ Ljubuški 122 launch

"We also briefed them about the sequence of events following the moment a call to 122 is received until the final result is reached - perpetrator arrested and prosecuted," added Čutura.

Each student received a copy of the brochure *"Citizens and police - together"* to help them become familiar with the basics on how and when to contact the police, as well as what they can expect from the police.

"Meet Your Police Commissioner" project offered both students and journalists an opportunity to interact with the Acting Commissioner Zoran Galić, who spoke about his police career. Using anecdotes from his professional life, he tried to illustrate all the joy and difficulties of being a police officer.

Emphasizing that the police remain at the disposal of citizens 24/7, Galić said: *"The police are not purpose for itself, but exist for the citizens. With this campaign, we wish to demonstrate our openness towards the public and readiness to serve and protect."*

Tuzla Canton Police also decided to target youth at the 122 launch event. *Open Doors Day* at the Tuzla Police Administration attracted students of the Tuzla Primary School Centre.

Emphasizing that the objective of this campaign is to promote a proactive role of community towards police activities and speaking about the importance of the emergency police number 122, the host, Chief of Tuzla Police Administration Ljubomir Divković said: *"Citizens should be police's eyes and ears. Only then we will be able to say that we are jointly working on creating a safer living environment."* ■



■ Tuzla 122 launch

Police Heroes: Beyond the Call

Ibrahim Nikšić and his colleague were patrolling Tuzla's streets on a cold March morning when they noticed two heads bobbing in and out of the overflowing Jala river, gasping for air. Nikšić told his colleague to call for help and ran straight into the rapid, freezing water to pull out a drowning fourteen-year-old boy and a young man who tried to save him but was now drowning himself.

The policeman managed to keep both youngsters on the surface as the river was carrying them further, until the fireman Adnan Bajkić found the spot where he stepped into the water. Nikšić grabbed his arm and together they pulled all three of them out of the river.

Police work is tough. Can you imagine getting out of your car to talk to someone who didn't use a blinker? Sounds simple, just a leisurely stroll up to tell the man to slow down and use his turn signals. Not for a police officer. They must continually be on guard that someone will pull a gun on them, try to run them over or try to steal their weapon.

These men and women who take the oath to protect and serve, are asked to put their personal safety aside for a greater good on a daily basis. But sometimes the call of duty is above and beyond even their expectations. You're about to meet just some of the remarkably courageous individuals, all of whom acted bravely in the trying, life-threatening situations.

Fire did not stop them

In May last year, Ferid Salkanović and Dragan Stjepanović, traffic police officers from Doboj, were first to arrive at the scene of a collision between a truck and a bus carrying mainly women and children, pilgrims from Croatia.

"The scene was horrific," recalls Salkanović. "It was a direct collision and the bus had flipped over on its roof. I entered the bus and smelled gas. Children's cries and women's screams were coming from everywhere. I was pulling them out one by one and handing to my colleague Stjepanović who then carried them outside."

During the extraction of the injured passengers, the electrical installations in the bus started a fire.

"We did not pay any attention to it, but continued with the rescue," says Salkanović.



Stjepanović adds that one image will remain embedded in his memory.

"I was extracting a child with serious head injuries," he says. "Suddenly a woman whose arm was literally clamped by the bus grabbed my hand. Luckily, they were both saved."

In the end, Salkanović and Stjepanović saved 50 people from the burning bus.

The Mountain Man

After finishing his shift, Haris Mizdrak was resting at his home when the phone rang. It was the Chief of Police station in Trnovo who explained that there is a group of five people stuck in Javorik on Igman. They have celebrated the New Year 2009 on Igman and were surprised by heavy snow on January 2. They were unable to leave the mountain.

"Since that I am familiar with that area, I said that I will go. You don't think too much once you get this kind of call," explains Mizdrak. From the police premises in Grkavica to Javorik, there is 15 kilometers of extremely difficult mountain ter-

rain. "I took the official vehicle - motor ski - and reached Mrazište. I located them around seven kilometers further towards Javorik, and drove them to Mrazište one by one, so the motor ski wouldn't sink under the snow. At the end, I took two so none would stay alone. I went 250 kilometers back and forth."

All five of them were wet and cold but, thanks to Mizdrak, none sustained any serious injuries.

This was not the first rescue operation for Mizdrak. Many people still recall a couple from Slovenia that got lost on Jahorina last year. In cooperation with Rescuers Association, Mizdrak located them quickly. In the same year, he participated in the rescue of 18 children from Medical High School which separated into three groups and all got lost.

Down the ravine

On a warm June evening, a police patrol near Trebinje observed a vehicle skid off the road and plunge into a 150-metre-deep

of Duty

canyon. Police officer Sulejman Beriša immediately jumped into action, ascending down the steep ravine towards the two passengers who had both been thrown from the vehicle. Following their cries for help, Beriša finally reached them in time to stop the bleeding and begin administering first aid.

When asked about his choice to immediately start search and rescue, Beriša said it was "the duty of every police officer".

"When the accident happened, I didn't have time to stop and think," he says. "It was simply my duty as a human being to help them. And it is my duty as a police officer as well."

Upon the arrival of his colleagues, officer Beriša and the Trebinje police were able to safely retrieve the two injured men out of the ravine and into emergency vehicles where they were rushed to a nearby hospital and treated.

Miracle on Banja Luka street

Everything took place at a party on a June night in Banja Luka. Dalibor Radukić and Budimir Popović were called to arrest a shooter who opened fire on a group of youngsters because they were making too much noise while celebrating their friend's birthday.

While trying to escape into the dark, the shooter did not spare bullets on the two policemen. Fortunately, it was their lucky night and the bullets missed. Radukić and Popović fired back, not to kill the perpetrator but to prevent him from fleeing the scene.

The drama culminated when Radukić, who had ran after the gunman through the streets, found himself in front of the gun. The fugitive was standing right in front of him. Radukić heard the sound of a trigger being squeezed. He heard it again, but - what a miracle - nothing happened.

By that time, his colleague had arrived at the scene and they managed to overpower the gunman.

All of these police officers - and many more whose stories simply could not fit in the limited space of our publication - have received the praise and awards for courage from their superiors. But for them, the biggest satisfaction is that they have succeeded. Because, they say, this is why they joined the police force. This is simply - their duty. ■

Campaigns

122 Campaign: The Beginnings

The 122 campaign is a continuance of the Your Security-Our Obligation public information campaign implemented by the EU Police Mission and BiH law enforcement agencies April-June 2007. Your Security-Our Obligation gathered great success and in this issue of the Mission Mag we wanted to remember just some of the many moments of wonderful communication and interaction between the citizens and the police during the 2007 campaign.



Clloser look: RS Mol Special Police Unit

Within the scope of the *Your Security, Our Responsibility* campaign, the Special Police Unit of the RS Ministry of Interior invited citizens to their premises, where they presented the equipment and weapons. They eagerly answered citizens' questions and explained all aspects of their work. ■



"I want to be a policeman when I grow up"

In the scope of the campaign, Public Security Centres in Banja Luka, Doboj, Trebinje, East Sarajevo and Bijeljina invited children from local schools to discover the way they work.

"What I liked most were the police dogs running around, and also the policemen attacking and seizing some objects," said 11-year-old Dragan. "I also liked the karate demonstration. I want to be a policeman when I grow up." ■



Police take part in sports matches

More than 2,000 people participated in basketball and volleyball tournaments in Sarajevo under the patronage of EUPM, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Culture and Education. The police took an active role in these tournaments, not only through matches, but also by distributing promotional material and establishing contact with the citizens. ■

Senior police officials inaugurate 'Your Police - 122' tram

Senior police officials and spokespersons from across Bosnia and Herzegovina all gathered in Sarajevo on 20 July to inaugurate the 'Your Police - 122' tram as part of their joint activities to promote police accountability. Sead Lisak, (then) Acting Director of SIPA, Vahid Alagić, Deputy Director of Border Police BiH, Zlatko Miletić, Director of Federal Police Administration, Uroš Pena, RS Police Director, and Brigadier General Vincenzo Coppola, (then) Head of EUPM, as well as all commissioners and heads of public and security centres across BiH, took the morning out of their hectic offices for a city tram ride in a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere. ■



Saturday with the police

Police and children had an entertaining time at *Pionirska Dolina*, the Sarajevo Zoo. Besides the presentations of the Support Unit of Canton Sarajevo Police, the Traffic Unit and the Counter-sabotage Unit, police officers organised several quizzes and treasure hunts in the park, rewarding each winner with a special gift. They also showed their high-tech equipment and trained kids in martial arts. ■



BiH Citizen: What is my Police to Me?

The murder of Denis Mrnjavac in Sarajevo last year and the fierce reaction of the public are perhaps the best illustration of the complexity of the relationship between the police and the citizens. Logically, the police were also on the list of those accused for the violence in the BiH's capital. They were criticised for being inefficient, not doing enough to protect the citizens and having sloppy reactions which are only favouring criminals.

The citizens were looking for a decisive police officer who will not act only when the crime has been committed, but will use his authority to be the first flood-gate in the fight against crime.

Luckily, the swift investigation followed by the arrest of the murderer and his accomplice calmed down the public. However, the question remains - when will the passions rise again and is there a beneficial formula which will allow the citizens to feel content and safe without demanding the police to apply the most brutal measures.

This dilemma will be difficult to resolve due to a simple reason - in most minds, the uniform is a symbol of repression and imposition of regulations, which we all, on a subconscious level, like breaking. When we hit the road and press the pedal to the metal, wishing to feel the speed, the power of the engine, and then end up having to pay a fine for breaking traffic regulations, it is not our adrenaline to blame but the police officer

who pulled us over. In that case, we don't like the uniform. But when criminals arrogantly race through the city in their shiny, expensive cars, we want and need the repression and the power of that uniform.

The violation of traffic regulations is perhaps the most benign example. What about the cases of major crime, mafia conflicts, drugs trafficking... The impotence of the police in all these cases is only increasing the frustration of the citizens and making them feel additionally unsafe.

Things are not easy for the police either. As far as the citizens are concerned, in such a complex judiciary system the police are the first and the most visible institution. The police are expected to act like Superman. And yet we keep forgetting that their powers are limited.

Being an ordinary citizen, my request is very simple and clear. I want to be able to walk down the street peacefully, send my children to school safely, not be afraid of various *Celos* and *Gasis*, and have my property protected. The state, which I finance via various taxes, and police as its institution are obliged to provide this for me. Apart from that, I do not want my children be brought up to fear police officers and their arrogance, which used to be the case in the socialist system of former Yugoslavia. I also do not want to say that police officers are persons who cannot make a mistake.

Is this list of requests excessive? Is there room for understanding of a police officer as

an individual, a man who, like the rest of us, has a family, problems, small salary, loans, a child who is looking for new Nike shoes, angry neighbor who he had an argument with a minute before he went for work.

Obviously, requests are too demanding and not really flexible. Perhaps there might be room for flexibility if there were no other side to the story, i.e. if there were no police officers who do not hesitate to park on the sidewalk, who do not pay bills in coffee bars, who talk over mobile phones while driving, who hang out with criminals... The uniform they are wearing has amnestied them from the regulations by which us mortals have to abide.

The rage of Sarajevo citizens following the murder of Denis Mrnjavac was partly directed towards such police. It is a cancer which the police as a state institution must root out. Only then can the police expect understanding of the public for other problems they face.

I do not expect a police officer to be a robot with no right to a mistake. But I also do not like having police officers' practice their skillfulness on me while the trains of criminals are passing by. I want a relationship between the police and the citizens to be based on mutual respect.

And we are not far away from such a relationship. The last couple of years have shown that the police *can* change, *are prepared* to take that step, and can achieve citizens' confidence through efficiency and professionalism. ■

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