



**2011 AEPC Annual Conference on
“Police Training for Becoming Professionals Respected by Society”**

Final Declaration

2011 AEPC Annual Conference on “Police Training for Becoming Professionals Respected by Society” was held in Belgrade, Serbia, 5-6 May with participants from 27 different member institutions. The work of Annual Conference was organised in plenum, with three keynote speakers, and within three different workshops. After an open exchange of views, the following conclusions have been drawn from discussion:

Police are granted with much authority and responsibility compared to other civil services. They have legal authority to exercise power, discretion and control over the public, including the responsibility of making life-and-death decisions. Such powers must therefore be tempered with high ethical standards. It has become obvious that only properly educated and trained police officers are able to respond adequately to moral and ethical dilemmas of their profession.

Regarding the fact that the main goal of police service is building community well-being, the public therefore demand certain standards of behaviour for police officers which shall ensure that citizens have trust in the police and that they believe their work to be legitimate. Police are not an army of occupation, but servants of the people. The public need to have confidence in the police service, based on trust in the integrity of the men and women who serve.

Police cannot function properly without a strong support of the public. Public support relies on the authority of the police. Police authority, acceptance of the police by the public is built on the credibility of the police. Police gain credibility by adopting human rights-based approach. Therefore it is important to incorporate the issue of human rights into formal police training. Police officers should be trained to respect human rights. Less use of force, even when allowed by law, has to be one of the fundamental principles in police training. Human rights training contributes to awareness what it means for policemen to use powers and what it requires to overcome unwelcome inappropriate behaviour by police officers.

Authority of the police and proper and ethical functioning of law enforcement services will enhance willingness of citizens to contribute to improving the effectiveness of *policing* in their local communities. Community policing methods are prerequisites for effective prevention strategies, carrying out crime control and maintaining public order.

Quality education is necessary but not sufficient for police officers to be respected by society. An imperative condition for quality police education is a good and strong selection of candidates for the police. An individual has to be motivated to be engaged in ethical behaviour. It is necessary for police education to be available only to the persons whose profiles can satisfy the high ethical standards which are expected of police employees.

Police education should be based on the work with mentors enabling students to develop their whole personality of the future members of the police with their cultivation of moral values and insistence upon professionalism and legality.

Since the police are believed to be a public service to citizens, police training has to develop communication skills of students. Police officers should be taught how to present information to the public and to adjust their behavior towards the media. By developing such skills, police employees will become open to media and therefore more transparency will be brought to the police work, which is very important to a modern democratic state.

One of the key requirements of quality education in general, and police education as well, are qualified teachers who are at the same time highly motivated to transfer knowledge to students in the best possible way. In order to do their best, trainers should be motivated by an appropriate and satisfying wage, by pleasant and safe working environment and an atmosphere which promotes further specialization and use of the latest methods in educational process.

Experts from outside the police should be engaged in training, such joined courses contribute to transparency and accountability of the police. In order to students do their best to prepare their future profession, a necessary component of education must be case studies and scenario training as well as practical training at police stations and prosecutors offices.

Continuous improvement of educational process according to the development of science and technology, and the society in general as well, leads to the improvement of knowledge, views and skills of the members of the police, who will in turn be able to overcome all new challenges including new forms of crime such as organized crime and terrorism.

Taking into consideration that the human society is continuously developing and changing, that there is a constant emergence of new forms and types of crime, it is clear that the methods used in police work must be adjusted accordingly. A key role in adapting the police profession to the ever changing social circumstances is played by education process. Therefore, participants of the conference agree that discussions relating to police education are always ongoing and mandatory, as there are never final conclusions or constant truths.

Yet, for the time being, the drawn conclusions are four-folds

- Human Rights are the essence of the police work, and should therefore be **fully integrated at all levels of policing** and police training (not as a separate, specific topic).
- Importance of **cooperation** to enhance the respect of Human Rights in Policing and to learn from each other's good practices and mistakes.
- Trust towards the police services increases and becomes stronger in the countries where **police training has been improved**, as it is shown by the many creative initiatives that have been developed during the conference.
 - **Motivation** of all students, trainers and officers on the field is essential to fully integrate Human Rights in daily policing.
 - Police training should notably focus on the following aspects: **communication skills, ethical and social behaviour, community policing**.
- Respect of Human Rights at all levels of policing increases to **trust from the society towards the police but also the pride police officers get from their job**.
