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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Law Enforcement Working Party
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Subject:	Outcome of the EMPEN (European medical and psychological experts' network for law enforcement) course, organised with the support of CEPOL, held in Jurmala (Latvia) on 9-12 June 2015

The European medical and psychological experts' network for law enforcement (EMPEN), related to the Law Enforcement Working Party, held a meeting on 9-12 June 2015 in Jūrmala, Latvia, under the Latvian Presidency and with support of CEPOL (course 50/2015). The theme of the course was "Personnel selection in law enforcement organisations: multiple purposes and levels".

The meeting was attended by 50 participants from 29 countries, 26 of which were Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain). Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey also participated at the meeting.

The LEWP is invited to take note of the report on the outcome of this meeting as set out below.

The opening speech was made by the Chief of the State Police of Latvia, Mr Ints Kuzis, on behalf of the Presidency. He emphasised the highly demanding nature of police work, as police officers are constantly exposed to high stress, risk and conflict situations, which they need to assess promptly and precisely, as well as to make decisions that influence the lives of other people. Selection is the basis of all the personnel management processes, as the effectiveness of selection is essential in determining how fast employees learn the job, how effective their work is, and their level of commitment to the organisation. Also, society satisfaction with the way the police work depends on the right choice in the process of personnel selection. Mr Kuzis underlined the importance of the medical experts' and psychologists' roles in personnel selection as this played a vital part in ensuring that policing was successful.

Content of the course

The course consisted of 13 presentations by experts and participants on the course and 2 presentations on the results of pre-course surveys (“Practice of personnel selection” and “Trust in psychologists and in peers in law enforcement organizations”). For the first time in this network parallel sessions for medical experts and psychologists were organized in order to give an opportunity to go deeper into the topic and discuss professional details.

The following topics were presented in the psychologists' session:

- Psychological assessment in the Police of the Czech Republic. *Ms Adéla Rudá, the Czech Republic*
- Task analysis as a basis of selection and education of police students. *Mr Ólafur Örn Bragason, Iceland*
- Implementation of competency -based personnel selection in the State Police of Latvia. *Ms Daiga Caune, Latvia*

The following topics were presented in the medical experts' session:

- Medical aspects of personnel selection. *Dr. Zora Brucháčová, Slovakia*
- Specialised medical selection and support in the Hungarian Counter -Terrorism Centre.
Dr. Éva Feher, Hungary
- Presentation of the results of the pre-course survey “Practice of personnel selection. Medical aspects”. Discussion of criteria, methods and challenges in medical assessment in law enforcement organizations.

The following topics were presented in the joint sessions:

- Mutual collaboration within EMPEN and potential development of the network.
Mr Marc Stein, Luxembourg
- Presentation of the results of research "Attitudes on work and profession of police personnel". *Mr Michael Eckerskorn, Germany*
- Psychological selection of candidates for Special Forces. *Mr Kaspars Eināts, Latvia*
- Psychiatric aspects of personnel selection for law enforcement agencies. *Mr John Tobin, Ireland*
- Selection and work of the peer-support system in Austrian police. *Mr Markus Wirtenberger, Austria*
- Professional psychological selection in the Slovenian police – external and internal levels.
Mr Dejan Kozel, Ms Elizabeta Vovko, Slovenia
- Selection of criminal investigation personnel. *Ms Guida Manuel, Portugal*
- Presentation of results of pre-course survey “Trust in psychologists and in peers in law enforcement organizations”.
- Presentation of results of pre-course survey “Practice of personnel selection. Psychological aspects”.

Activities of EMPEN

Since the establishment of the EMPEN in 2011¹, CEPOL has provided support to the network by financing annual training courses and by making use of the electronic knowledge exchange network. The support of CEPOL has allowed the network to function, share ideas and collaborate so far.

As the EMPEN course is not included in the CEPOL's list of approved activities in 2016, the future meetings of the network are called into question. Many members of the network have expressed serious reservations about their opportunities to participate in future meetings if the costs of the meeting were to be covered covered by police organizations of the Member States. Thus equal representation of the experts of the network is endangered.

The course ended with a discussion on further collaboration in personnel selection and other aspects of medical experts' and psychologists' work in law enforcement organizations, taking into consideration the uncertain situation regarding future support by CEPOL.

The network proposed to provide the law enforcement organizations with the following services:

- Collaboration regarding participation in international EU missions. By now each country has an individual system of psychological assessment of and support for police officers who apply to take part in international EU missions. EMPEN offers to develop a common system of psychological assessment of candidates (including setting selection criteria and recommending assessment methods) and a strategy of providing psychological support during and after the missions.
- Collaboration in scientific research. At the moment each Member State conducts its own investigations, the results of which are not known to other countries. EMPEN can serve as a platform for psychological and medical research in law enforcement organizations. It can be carried out by conducting cross-cultural research and sharing the results of national research. Such themes as suicide by police officers, domestic violence and drug abuse among law enforcement personnel were presented as topical by course participants.

¹ 9044/11.

- Sharing best practice regarding assessment methods. As results of the pre-course survey show, a large variety of psychological assessment tools are used in law enforcement organizations of the Member States. In order to maximise the efficiency of psychological assessment, it is important to analyse and evaluate different methods of psychological assessment and share experience and best practice within the network.
- A workshop on building a peer-support system. Peer support is an alternative form of psychological support, where especially selected and trained law enforcement employees provide initial psychological help for their co-workers, thus making available different forms of psychological support for police officers. Some of the Member States have established efficient peer-support systems in their law enforcement organizations, while others are planning to initiate them. Having a workshop and exchanging experience in building a peer-support system can be very helpful for all the Member States that are interested in this system.
- Development of recommendations on psychological and medical issues for law enforcement organizations. EMPEN can develop recommendations that cover different aspects of medical experts' and psychologists' work in law enforcement organizations in order to pass on best practice and establish a united approach. It can be especially helpful for new Member States as well as for new medical and psychological professionals in the Member States. Following the recommendations of the network, law enforcement organizations could improve the level of psychologists' and medical experts' work and also provide transfer of knowledge and experience. One of the topics on which recommendations can be offered is personnel selection for law enforcement organizations.
- Development of training programmes. Network experts can collaborate in the development of specific training programmes for employees of law enforcement organizations (for example, prevention of corruption, training in resilience).
- Increasing the number of medical experts in the network and development of the corresponding topics (law-enforcement personnel retirement, epidemics related to migration etc.).

- Medical experts reported that an annual journal about medical issues in law enforcement field would help to improve the distribution of information.

To implement the aims mentioned above, annual meetings of the network should be held in the future and, ideally, supplemented by more focused and practice -orientated (workshop style) meetings during the year.

Reinforcing EMPEN can significantly strengthen law enforcement organizations and thus the internal security of the Member States (by efficient selection of and training and support for employees). Therefore EMPEN expressed the wish that CEPOL finds an opportunity to continue financially supporting the meetings of the network.
