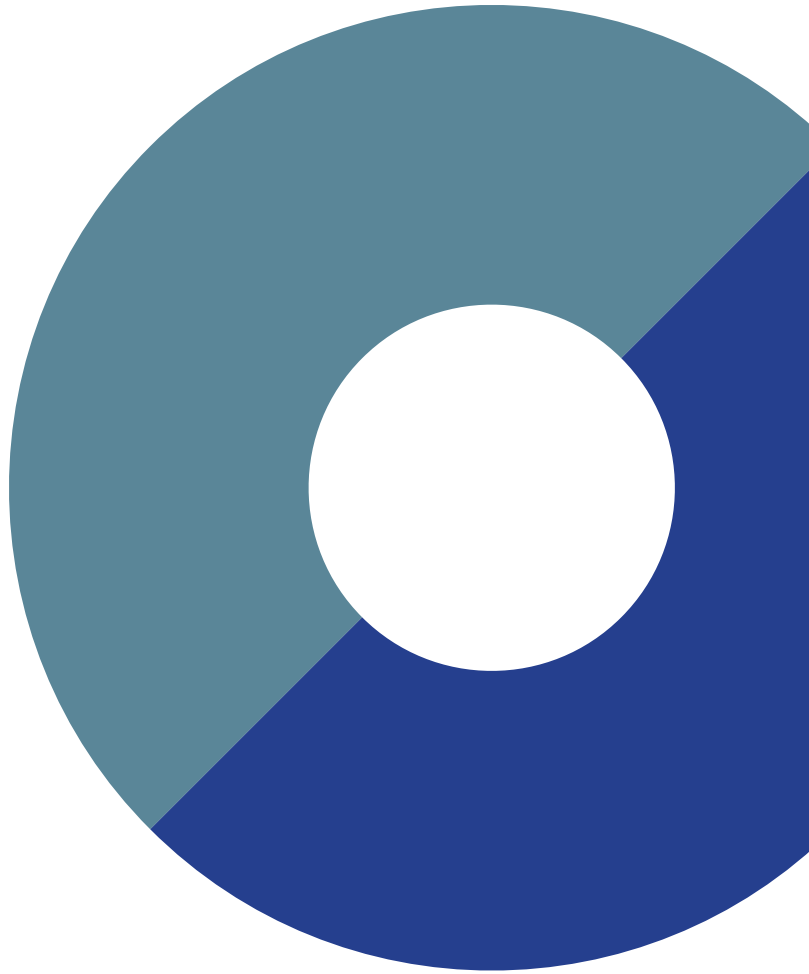


European  
Forum *for*  
Urban  
Security



Publication  
*Police-population relations:  
Challenges, Local Practices  
and Recommendations*

# Introduction



Good relations between the police and citizens are a key requirement for enabling the police to work effectively and impartially, and for the population to feel secure. However, these relations prove to be conflictual in certain European countries or cities, even though the image of the police as an institution is relatively good in most countries. It is crucial to ensure that these relations are good because the police are a key stakeholder in the crime prevention chain, as recalled by Efus members in the *Manifesto of Aubervilliers and Saint-Denis* (2012).

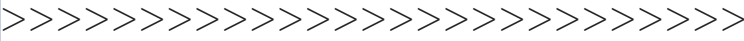
As cities play a central role in local life, they can participate in bringing the police and citizens closer by acting as intermediaries. Taking into account the organisational, cultural and doctrinal characteristics of each national police force, a group of cities from various European countries worked together to identify the factors of estrangement between the police and the population, but above all to define how local authorities can contribute to reinforcing or, in certain cases, restoring this relation.

Led by Efus from 2013 to 2015, the European IMPPULSE (*IMproving Po-lice-Population Understanding for Local Security*) project brought together eight cities: Amiens, Aubervilliers, Nantes, Toulouse (France), Barcelona (Spain), Milan (Italy), Lisbon (Portugal) and Brussels (Belgium), represented by its Po-lice Zone. For two years, and through a series of pilot projects carried out in each of the partner cities, they were able to work on one or several aspects of this issue.

At the end of the project, and based on their experience, the participants established a series of principles and recommendations aimed at improving relations between police and citizens, which can also benefit other European local authorities.

These principles and recommendations are presented in the publication *Police-Population Relations: Challenges, Local Practices and Recommendations* (bi-lingual French/English edition). Below is a summary of this publication.

# Principles and recommendations



The cities that took part in the IMPPULSE project recall certain fundamental principles governing the relations that the police have with citizens and propose a series of recommendations that can benefit all cities concerned with this issue.

## >>>>> Principles

- ▶ Transparency and accountability in the information given to citizens and possibility for them to challenge the action of the police before a mediator.
- ▶ Representativeness: favouring diversity of gender and ethnic origin in the recruiting and operational organisation of the police corps, in particular by adapting the profile of police officers to the neighbourhoods in which they work.
- ▶ Proximity and accessibility: the police must be accessible to the population. It is important to reduce as much as possible the physical distance between police officers and inhabitants (by a visible presence on the ground by means of foot, mounted, and/or bicycle patrols) as well as facilitating access to police services by up-to-date technological means (telephone, Internet and social networks).
- ▶ Reactivity: the police must respond as quickly as possible to the expectations and requests of the population, regardless of time or place.
- ▶ Equality of treatment: the police must remain impartial both in their approach to individuals and in their handling of conflicts.
- ▶ Proportionality and subsidiarity: force must be used only as a last resort and not, as far as possible, by community police officers.

## >>>>> Recommendations

### **An overall framework:**

- ▶ It is advisable to recall the link with justice and the whole criminal chain so that the population do not consider the police as the sole party responsible for security; the police must be one of the stakeholders working for social cohesion within the community.

### **The doctrine on police action and organisation must:**

- ▶ be based on proximity with the public as a method for intervention in order to provide answers to citizens' everyday problems in the same way as responses to emergencies and serious crime;
- ▶ focus more on the quality of service rather than on the quantitative measure of the activity of services;
- ▶ promote a bottom-up approach based on the situation on the ground, by fostering initiative at the local level, taking into account the principles of subsidiarity and proximity, with and involving the whole hierarchy.

### **The role of cities:**

- ▶ The role of intermediary that the city can play in order to build and strengthen the police-population relation must be accepted by both citizens and police organisations.
- ▶ The cities must get involved in setting up and running consultative forums that represent the whole population, and notably groups that are estranged from institutions. This will allow for a dialogue on the most needed preventive actions. Cities can also play a role in supervising citizen participation in the preventive action of the police.

### **Citizens must be able to:**

- ▶ express their expectations concerning security and be heard;
- ▶ be informed of the follow-up given to security problems that concern them directly, as well as measures taken by the police to resolve problems in their city;
- ▶ participate without being asked or allowed to stand in for the police; this participation must be based on a number of ethical principles and safeguards in order to avoid abuses and risks.

### **The image of the police:**

- ▶ The police must be visible with uniforms and equipment adapted to the circumstances.
- ▶ They must organise the reception of the public by taking into account the population's geographical constraints and sociological characteristics.
- ▶ The police must organise their communication with the media to better report on and showcase their work in the press, in documentaries, works of fiction or in any other media production.

### **Training and evaluation:**

- ▶ Basic and lifelong training of the police must include, in particular, themes such as the management of violence, mediation techniques and methods for communicating with the population. It is advisable to carry out work on mutual representations as well as on the knowledge of each local community and its population.
- ▶ It is essential to develop quantitative and qualitative monitoring indicators to measure the evolution of police-population relations and the impact of on-going projects.

## **Pilot projects**



The pilot projects developed by the partners are based on the observation that the relation between the police and the population is often compromised by causes such as the citizens' lack of knowledge or comprehension about the role and competences of the police; the lack of specific training for police officers; the difficulties met by the police when having to tackle minor offences, and the fact that citizens and the police rarely have the opportunity to meet and discuss. In light of this, the partners chose to set up concrete actions capable of delivering short-term results.

### **>>>>> Training police officers for contact with citizens**

#### **Training the local police for relations with citizens, City of Brussels**

The Police of Brussels Capital Ixelles drafted and implemented two projects through IMPPULSE, intended to be innovative and creative.

The first, called "Dilemma Training", was aimed at improving the initial contact between citizens and police officers. The Internal Affairs department identified the the complaints most frequently submitted to the police. Based on this, four video clips, entitled "And if it was you?" and designed and performed exclusively by police staff, were created, each presenting one example of unwanted behaviour in an exaggerated manner. The videos formed the basis for a brand new type of interactive training programme, which teaches police staff to identify unwanted behaviours and their causes and to come up with a mode of intervention that is professional, applicable and efficient.

The second project consisted in producing a practical pocket-book guide for all police officers. This intervention guidebook, also available online and on mobile devices, presents 20 concrete situations in which police officers can find themselves in the course of duty, and recommends simple, immediate and easily applicable solutions. The philosophy behind this guidebook, which

can be updated, is to serve citizens efficiently while increasing the knowledge of police officers.

### **Reinforcing the services provided to citizens, City of Milan**

In order to strengthen communication with citizens on security, the City of Milan launched two initiatives with the support of the IMPPULSE project.

The first aimed to provide policemen working in the emergency call centre with useful tools to respond efficiently to citizens' queries, especially when callers were in a state of panic or anger. Interactive training sessions were put in place, based on real calls received. Participants were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the processing of the call and to identify good practices. Policemen were also trained in proactive and assertive communication. Seventy-nine percent of participants said afterwards that this training was "very useful" for their work.

Furthermore, based on the fact that the majority of misunderstandings between the police and the population are linked to the lack of knowledge about the rules of intervention and jurisdiction of the local police, the City wanted to implement a project to remedy this. A guidebook for the population that explains in what circumstances and how citizens can contact the police was thus produced. It contains a series of information sheets that present all activities carried out by the local police and all contact phone numbers.

## >>>>> **Heightening citizen awareness of the role of the police**

### **Espace Citoyenneté (Citizenship Space), City of Amiens**

In order to strengthen the notion of public service, the City of Amiens has created a "Citizenship Space" (Espace Citoyenneté) where residents, associations, professionals and institutions can find information on their rights and other questions and be directed to the relevant departments. The Citizenship Space is a meeting place for residents. Its founding principles are to anticipate the concerns or worries of residents through dialogue and social bonds, and to promote tolerance and individual participation. The centre provides information on all topics linked to citizenship. It organises communication, education and awareness-raising actions, and has an array of information brochures and leaflets available. In order to ensure the integration of all citizens in the life of the city, it also serves as the "Point for Access to Law," (point d'accès au droit), a municipal scheme that is endorsed by the Departmental Council for Access to Law (Conseil Départemental d'Accès au Droit). Its purpose is to inform citizens on their rights and to organise mediation sessions when needed.

In addition, Amiens created a scheme to encourage young people to wear a helmet when driving their moped or bike. This scheme involves youngsters from neighbourhoods that are part of the "Priority Security Zones" (zones de sécurité prioritaires) and police officers. Six young residents aged between 14

and 25, as well as several national and municipal police officers, produced together a 30-second video clip to raise awareness of the need to wear a helmet.

### **Reducing congestion at the national police call centre, City of Nantes**

The emergency phone number 17 is the main point of contact between the Nantes police and the population of the city and its suburbs. Although this service works relatively well, there are a number of difficulties that are frustrating for both the callers and the police, such as the limited time devoted to each call, the number of irrelevant calls, and the fact that call handlers do not know always know where to direct callers. Through the IMPPULSE project, the City of Nantes came up with two initiatives to solve these problems.

In order to better inform residents on when to call the emergency number 17, the municipality created a communication campaign based not on the usual institutional communication traditions but rather on humour, through the creation of a cartoon character, the 'Super Hero 17', presented on posters. A number of young residents from Nantes were also involved in order to allow them to discover more about police operations.

Furthermore, the municipality wanted to improve the service offered through the number 17 by better re-directing non urgent calls to the appropriate departments. In order to improve mutual understanding among the different departments, the City therefore organised meetings between the Information and Command Centre and the different services involved in security and public peace.

### **Improving communication between different services of the community and its citizens, City of Toulouse**

The City of Toulouse has a 24/7 call centre that receives some 250,000 calls each year from residents, in particular regarding anti-social behaviour, disturbances of public peace and security problems.

Indeed, the previous tool (Peace Office) was not fully satisfactory. A major re-organisation of the call centre operation was carried out to provide Toulouse with quick and effective responses. This tool was recently renamed "Allô Toulouse". In this context, the City of Toulouse carried out an experience based on automated feedback to the users of Allô Toulouse.

This project is based mainly on the idea that in terms of insecurity, a person who is well informed can better understand the function or the intervention methods of the municipality, or its partners.

Through Allô Toulouse and the revamping of the communication tools, Toulouse's residents are now more receptive to the responses offered by the municipality to their problems. They therefore view the response they receive and the people with whom they have been in contact, in a more positive light.

## >>>> Targeted approach by population group

### **Reducing tensions between young people and the police, City of Aubervilliers**

The City of Aubervilliers made the reduction of tensions between young adults and the police one of its main priorities. With this aim, and with the support of the IMPPULSE project, the City implemented a project based on dialogue and educational communication.

The first characteristic of this project was to organise exchanges between young people and the police in order to dispel prejudice on both sides. Thus the Aubervilliers Local Youth Council (Conseil local des jeunes d'Aubervilliers) organised several meetings between young residents and officers of the National Police. Exchanges were filmed and included in a 15-minute short film, which is available for all professionals working on the issue of police-population relations. It can also be used for debates or as a mediation tool. Furthermore, Aubervilliers organised comic strip workshops with Berthet One, a well-known cartoonist who spent some time in prison, for teenagers aged from 11 to 17 years old. Through drawing, they work on the image young people have of the police.

Another aspect of Aubervilliers's project was to inform the public about the problems and constraints experienced by the police, and to provide better information to the police about the characteristics of Aubervilliers and its population. The municipality organised five meetings between policemen and residents to explain the tasks required from the national and municipal police and the difficulties they face on the ground.

All the activities carried out by Aubervilliers as part of the IMPPULSE project were covered in the municipal magazine *Aubermensuel*, reaching a wide audience of local residents.

### **Abolishing stereotypes between young people and authority figures, City of Barcelona**

As relations between young people and authority figures such as teachers or police officers were getting worse and worse, the City of Barcelona's department of Crime Prevention Services launched an initiative called Youth and Authority (Juventud y Autoridad), in partnership with two youth centres.

Its objective is to improve relations between youngsters and policemen and teachers by working on communication and mutual understanding. Through a series of playful workshops, youngsters, policemen and teachers have the opportunity to communicate in a neutral setting, unrelated to authority. This environment allows a constructive dialogue between the three groups to be established, and encourages the discussion of existing conflicts in order to dismantle mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

The purpose of this initiative is also to give teachers and policemen the necessary communication tools and training to support them in their daily work with young people.



After a pilot-phase carried out through the IMPPULSE project, the initiative has now been extended to two new neighbourhoods. The necessary resources and funding are provided by the City Council.

### **A model of community policing, City of Lisbon**

As part of the Community Policing Project for a safer Baixa-Chiado, developed since 2007, the Lisbon Municipal Police (Policia Municipal de Lisboa - PML) wanted to draft new intervention strategies for this neighbourhood, which is the main commercial and tourist area of Lisbon.

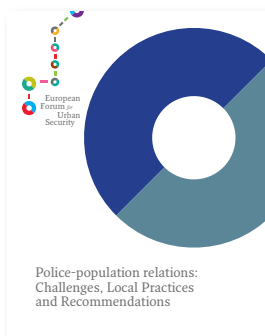
With the support of the IMPPULSE project, the PML chose to implement in this neighbourhood a local security project focusing on tourism and based on a crime prevention approach associating local partners.

Called 'Baixa-Chiado Focus on the Street', the project aims to improve the interaction and communication process between the PML and visitors and to have local business owners act as mediators between the PML and the community. An agreement was concluded with local shopkeepers, whereby they agreed to be the point of contact between tourists and the police in the event of a crime, such as an assault or theft. Participating shopkeepers have placed a poster in their shop window informing tourists that they can come in and ask for help to contact the police, if the need arises. With the specific needs of tourists in mind, the local police received training in interpersonal communication techniques and the English language.

## *Police-population relations: Challenges, Local Practices and Recommendations*

The publication *Police-Population Relations: Challenges, Local Practices and Recommendations* (bilingual French/English edition) is the result of work carried out over two years in the framework of the European IMPULSE project. Based on the experience of partner cities in the project and the point of view of experts, it presents the major challenges regarding the role of cities in improving police-population relations. This publication also describes the pilot projects carried out in the partner cities with an aim to improve this relation in the short and medium term.

Finally, this book includes indications allowing any European city or region to evaluate projects of this type as well as a series of recommendations for establishing or strengthening relations of trust between the police and the population.



The publication *Police-Population Relations: Challenges, Local Practices and Recommendations* is available and can be downloaded for free, in English and in French, for Efus members on the Efus Network online platform: [www.efus-network.eu](http://www.efus-network.eu)

If you wish to receive a printed copy, please complete the attached order form.

## >>>>> Partners



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