



EUROPEAN UNION'S ASSISTANCE TO THE POLICE REFORMS

The area of home affairs and security sector is one of the highest priorities of the European Union. The EU has common rules for border control, visas, external migration and asylum and strong cooperation in the fight against organized crime and terrorism, aiming to strengthen the rule of law and promote respect of the human rights. In this regard, the countries candidates for membership in the European Union need to develop their own internal capacity in this area and align with the EU standards.

The European Union has provided support to the Ministry of Interior from the very start of the country's cooperation with the Union. Its aim is to assist the creation of a police that is effective, accountable and enjoys the confidence of all citizens. Police services that are competent to provide rapid respond in line with the European standards. The projects funded through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) reflect the recommendations stated in the EU Country Report and aim at improvement of the organizational structure of the police, for development of the technical and managerial capacities, as well as support to the operational level of the police.



Over the years, the EU funded projects significantly contributed to the general improvement of the police work, which is reflected in a better internal organization of the police force, stronger internal police control standards, the visa liberalization with the European Union, etc. Particular attention was paid to upgrading of the skills and expanding the knowledge of the police officers in their daily work in all policing areas - from uniform police, to criminal cases investigations, to border police. Exchange of expertise with professionals from EU member states resulted in improved versions of the Law on Police, Criminal Code, Law on Criminal Procedure and of internal regulations.

Alongside the expert assistance and trainings, the EU donated to the police different types of equipment and helped to improve infrastructure. In eight police stations the premises for reception of persons and for inspectors for prevention were upgraded in accordance with EU standards. IT equipment was donated in order to meet Schengen zone requirements. Several border police stations were fully reconstructed and refurbished, and access roads to these stations were improved.

Special attention is given to the Integrated Border Management, safety of the borders and prevention of smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. Capabilities of the national police were significantly raised with EU-supported digital radio communication system, also known as TETRA, which allows 90% coverage of the territory, including main highways, green border lines and international border-crossing points.

In order to help the country cope with the most recent refugee crisis, the European Union allocated nearly 19 million euro and supported the government institutions at national and local level. Terrain vehicles for the border police, special vehicles for transportation of smugglers, new equipment for border surveillance, such as two specialised vehicles, long and short-range thermal cameras, devices for detection of validity of documents, TETRA handheld devices, are only part of the equipment that was donated for the border police. The EU also provided support to running expenses of the border guards from EU Member States deployed at the Southern Border who patrol jointly with national border police.

The future EU funded projects will aim to further strengthen the national legislation, policies and practice for border management and fight against human trafficking and migrants smuggling, to improve the ability for detection, investigation and prevention of organized crime and terrorism, improve the crime scene investigation and increase the cooperation between the Law enforcement agencies.

