

Press Release

November 2, 2017

Overview

The Minimum Standards for Maximal Security Project, commissioned by European Police Union (**EPU**), was launched by a group of policing professionals from around the Europe to research and document the hidden or unacknowledged discrepancies between various police forces in Europe when it comes to their uniforms, equipment and training.

The project has issued, among other reports, the most comprehensive analysis which precisely and in details describes police uniforms and equipment in 15 European countries, members of EPU.

Background

EU, now more than ever, deals with extensive problems of border-crossing criminality, a rapidly increasing flow of refugees and an intensity of aggressive extremism and violent terrorism. Nowadays, governments in Europe are clearly unable to guarantee basic safety to our citizens due to the stifling effect of austerity measures and heightened risk of terrorism.

European integration cannot be stopped, so the establishment of full European cooperation between various national police agencies has become a necessity. But, in order for it to truly work, certain minimum standards have to be established. Police officers, who ensure our safety while risking lives and limb, deserve the very best protection and work conditions!

The **goal** of this project is: ***to establish minimum standards for the European police officers when it comes to their Uniforms, Equipment and Training.***

Aiming to achieve that, the European Police Union has created and conducted the specific survey in order to identify extreme differences and deviations among police forces in different European countries. Once identified them, the next step was looking for their cause, which could have come from one of two sides:

- it is either the **Law** that is the problem, in which it is regulated badly or not regulated at all; or
- it can be the **Practice**, in which the law is not implemented, or simply it is violated.

In order to do that the scientific approach was used. EPU has set up a work group (with members from various countries), which have investigated the breaches in the basic rights (and social entitlements) of police officers in Europe. The benchmarks for this research were the requirements stipulated in the European Social Charter and the National Legislations.

The third step represents the generation of the Analysis Report and the final, forth step, is the Collective Complaints through EU institutions and national bargaining.

About the Survey

The survey covered only the “regular”, uniformed police officers that work in patrol or traffic control, and it has been scientifically prepared, executed and evaluated. It was conducted in 2016 and concluded in November that year, with a total number of 52 questions. They were divided by the subjects that they cover, in this order:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • 3 Basic Informative questions | • 12 Training questions |
| • 20 Uniform questions | • 17 Equipment questions |

Survey was aimed to get the better understanding of occupational safety within European police organizations. Questions were asked about the personal protection equipment, weapons/equipment and clothing (uniform), as well as information on training and retraining. It also sheds the light on the psycho-social police workload and the circumstances that it is done under in different European countries.

Key Findings

Police officers require personal protection equipment if they are to work in a safe and healthy manner. With the results of our research we can confirm that equipment of suitable quality is not always available in the required numbers, especially in Eastern European countries.

Police officers in Europe have regularly lost their lives or have been heavily wounded due to ineffective or missing equipment. Here are some of the findings that fully paint the picture of the situation on the field and employer's lapses:

- There is a huge difference in the type and amount of uniforms that the police officers are provided with upon employment;
- Most of the time police officers are not issued **bullet & stab-proof vests**;
- Some eastern European countries have unreasonable extensive wearing periods for uniforms; For example, Republic of Serbia has an extremely long period of between 7 to 8 years while in most of other countries it falls under the range of 3 to 4 years;
- In a number of countries officers are not provided with uniform replacements in case of wear or damage;
- Besides being armed with handguns police officers in all surveyed countries have just two more things in common when it comes to their basic equipment kit. All of them carry handcuffs and batons, but for the rest of the equipment it varies from country to country;
- Even though the National legislations clearly state that police officers are to be equipped with **pepper sprays** and **Taser guns**, they are not in some of the countries;
- Officers in all of the surveyed countries are also not equipped with totally necessary communication instruments, such as walkie-talkie. While in the large number of European countries, or to be exact 80% of them, police officers have some type of radios that in the most case scenarios they get assigned during shifts), just in three of them they are provided with mobile duty phones at all times.
- They receive poorly maintained and underequipped vehicles, which present a risk to passengers as well as other road users and pedestrians. The only piece of equipment that all cars have in common is beacon and siren for emergencies. We have concluded that while Dutch, German and Ukrainian police vehicles are **well quipped**, Serbian, Bulgarian and Bosnian are **unequipped**, and that rest of them **moderately equipped**.
- Toxic lead carbonate is being used by forensic teams, while it has been prohibited for industrial use;
- In just a few of the surveyed countries policemen and women, depending on their positions and career advancements, receive additional training in, for example, communications, medical (first aid), IT courses, foreign languages, Schengen regulations, traffic monitoring, documents forging, forensics, etc.

We have also registered how police officers are being exposed to contagious infectious diseases, especially those working with refugees, and are not provided with vaccinations and proper medical care.

The Minimum Standards for Maximal Security Project

Conclusion

As we, over 800.000 police officers united in the European Police Union, share our deep belief that European citizens should have guaranteed identical level of security and personal protection, equivalent quality of services and assistance of the police officers in time of need, no matter the country of the European Union they are in, we also find it necessary that the institutions of European Union should take immediate actions to develop certain minimum standards that provide police officers and their professional organizations guaranty in several directions. First of all, such standards should be established in the aspects of police **uniform, equipment and training**.

It is an absolute necessity to adopt:

- *the general minimum standards for the uniforms type, quality and wearing/replacement periods; - **Appendix I***
- *the general minimum standard for the type and quality of the individual protection and safety means (equipment & vehicles); - **Appendix II, III-a & III-b***
- *the minimum standards for the professional training and retraining. - **Appendix IV***

Contact

European Police Union official online presentation: <http://www.europeanpoliceunion.eu/>

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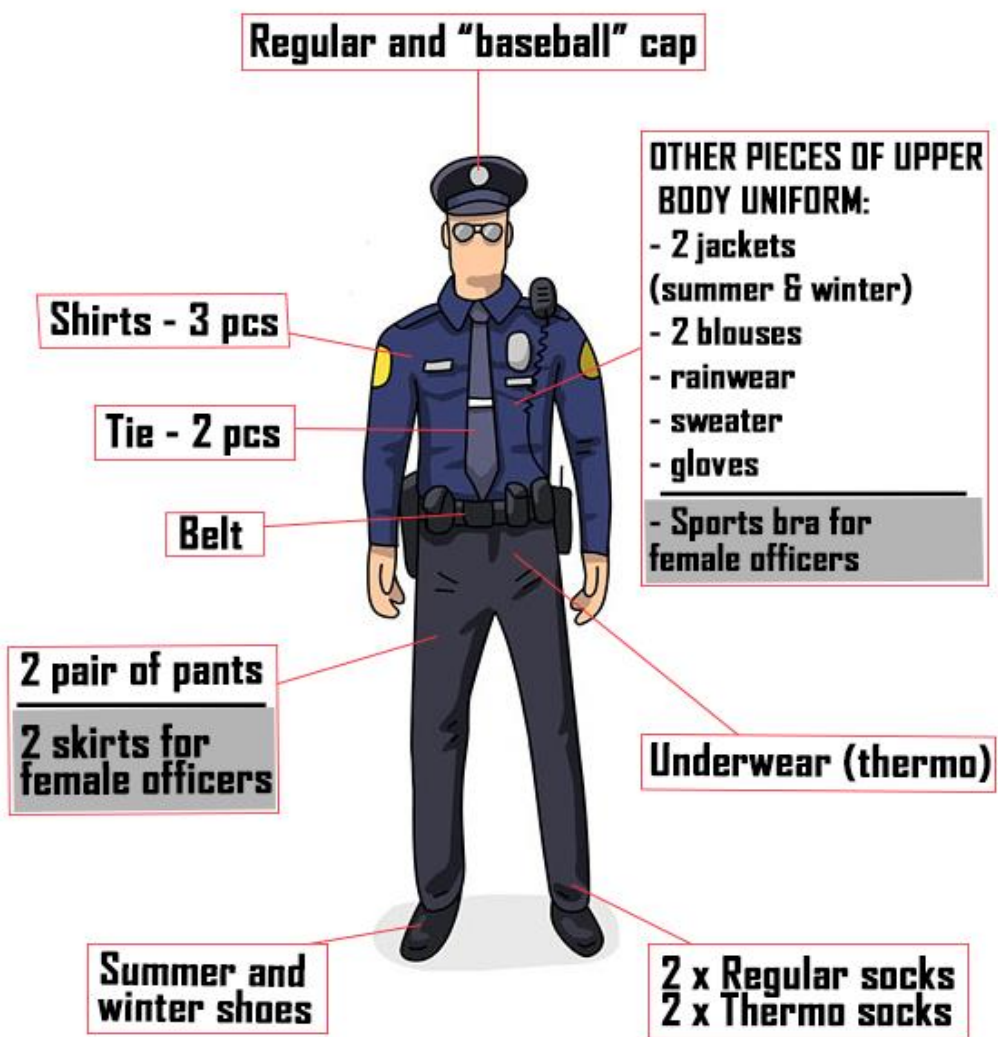
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Appendix I

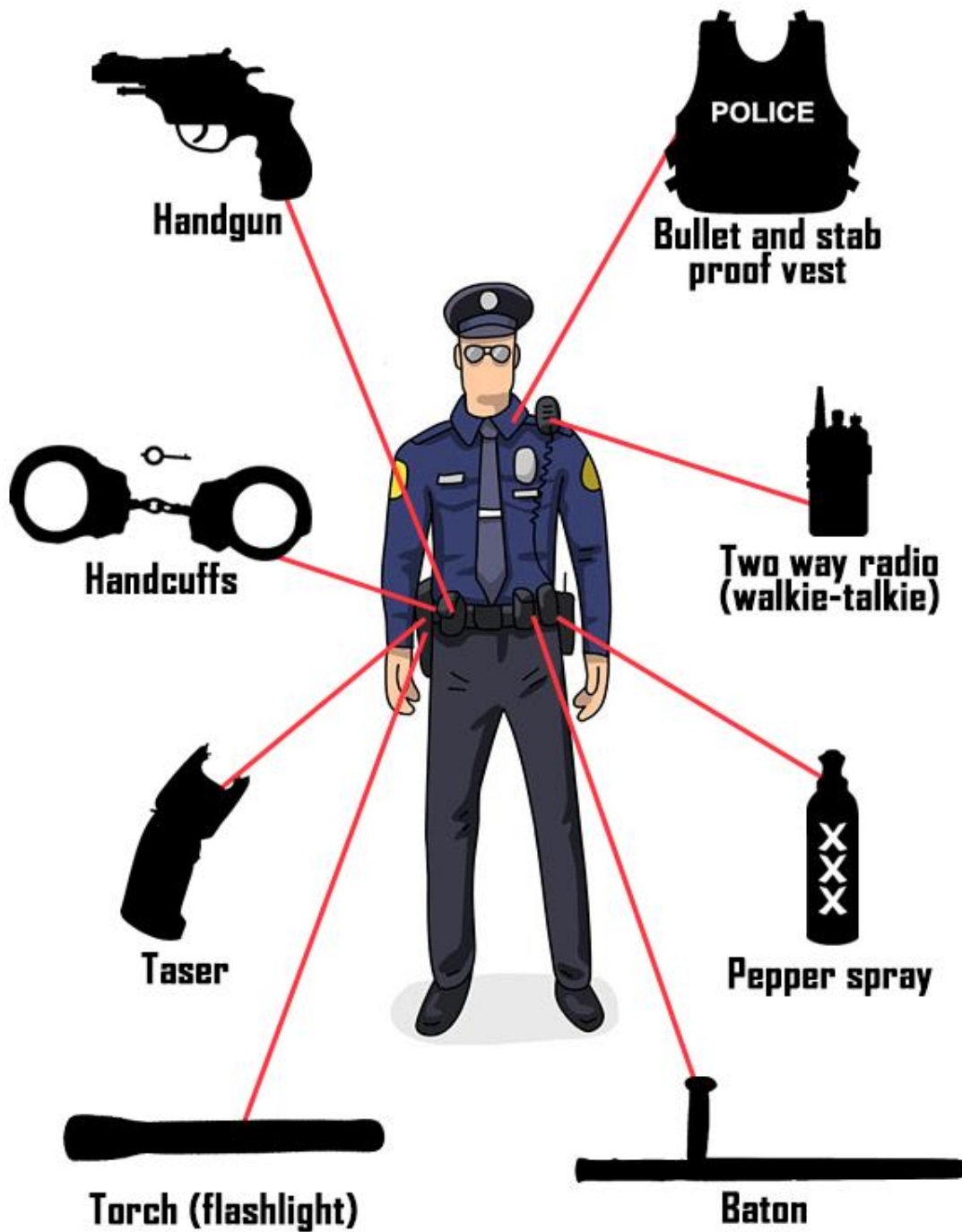
EPU's Proposed Minimum Standards for the Male and Female Police Uniforms



NOTE: [1] The maximum wearing period for both, summer and winter uniforms, should be 3-4 years.
[2] Uniform replacements should be guaranteed in any case of wear or damage.

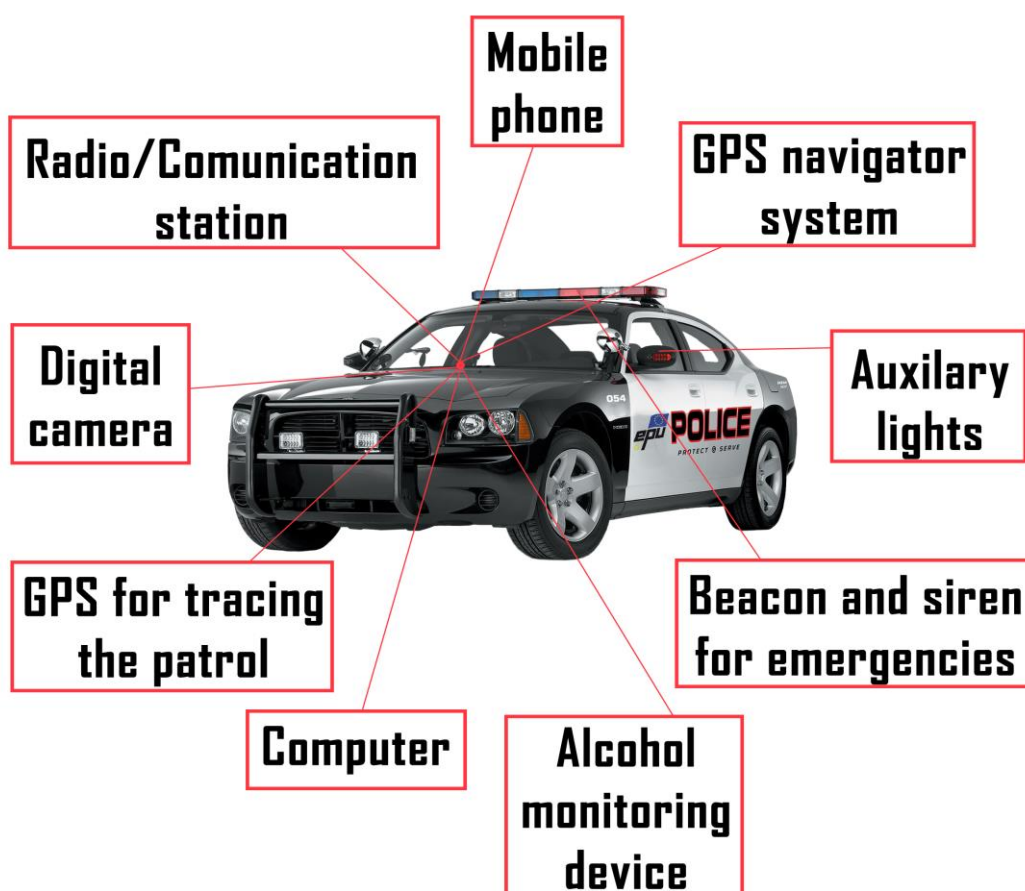
Appendix II

EPU's Proposed Minimum Standards for the Police Equipment



Appendix III-a

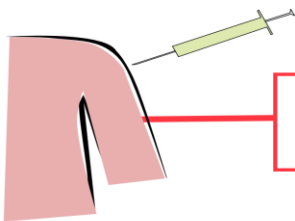
EPU's Proposed Minimum Standards for the Police Patrol & Traffic Control Cars



Appendix III-b

EPU's Proposed Minimum Standards for the Police Patrol & Traffic Control Cars





All police officers should be vaccinated on regular basis against infectious diseases, such as Hepatitis, TBC and other health hazards.

All police officers should be retrained regularly on:

- Use of firearms (shooting ranges minimum 10hr per year);
- Use of coercive measures/public and self-defense (counter-violence);
- Updates on the regulation changes;
- Driving under extreme circumstances (speed chases and etc);
- Communication & Community Policing



For those who are motivated and able to pursue career advancements, departments should provide additional training in: communications, medical (first aid), IT courses, foreign languages, Schengen regulations, monitoring, documents forging, forensics, etc.

