

# RAILPOL

## The European network of railway police forces

### I: General remarks

Sharing responsibility for railway police tasks in the European Union is one of the key prerequisites for security in a single European area – an area of travel and transport freedom, security and justice. Prevention of threats related to this particular form transportation by the police will help guarantee the effectiveness of measures against cross-border crime – in particular pick-pocketing and crimes involving vandalism and graffiti, as well as forms of organised crime that use railways as a means of transport, such as illegal immigration and the trafficking of human beings and illegal drugs. Terrorism has recently become an item that should also be taken more into account in all security plans.

The response to this challenge is intense co-operation between the national railway police organisations. They must become more tightly integrated to form a European railway police network – a European RAILPOL. This specialised form of police cooperation will complement existing international police organizations and networks in Europe.

#### Rail network

As a result of EU enlargement on 1 May 2004, the EU rail network will soon include an area extending from the North Cape in the North to the Mediterranean in the South as well as from the border of Belarus and Ukraine in the East westwards all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Within this area, every EU citizen has the right to move freely, even if some rules regarding border control (e.g. the Schengen Agreement) will still apply. Furthermore, as the internal borders are lifted, the railway transport network will become increasingly more important. All member states have a shared responsibility for safe trans-national rail-links and as a result, shared responsibility for cross-border policing of rail transport.

#### Special fields of crime – Public Order – Social and Economic Life

Each member state is affected by pickpockets and perpetrators of vandalism and graffiti travelling across borders. Organised gangs, in particular organisations that smuggle illegal immigrants or drugs, operate in networks across national borders, all over the world. Terrorists use logistics bases and roads all across Europe, even if their goals are situated outside Europe. Crimes involving the illegal dumping of waste and toxic products are increasing and are internationally organised. Once the borders are abolished, such groups will shift their activities to rail transport in ever greater numbers.

Europe also hosts more and more large-scale events in a wide range of different areas: sport, political meetings and summits, protest marches, etc. A lot of those events are organised at European level, involving thousands of people moving across Europe, going to or coming back from the event location. Most of these participants use the train as a means of transport, because of its low cost, reliability and comfort. Even if most events are completely legal, they require the police services to make additional investments in time, resources and procedures.

The successful policing of public order events on railway networks needs effective and efficient organisation within national as well as international police organisations.

## II: Fundamental principles

### RAILPOL

Representatives of individual European railway police services have expressed support for the creation of a European railway police organisation (RAILPOL). At the initiative of the Netherlands, this issue is now being pursued in the form of a project group launched in January 2004 and chaired by the Netherlands, with Belgium, France, Germany and the U.K. as members. The main aim of these countries is that the project should be adopted by the European Council at the initiative of the Netherlands as the "Plan for Police Prevention of Threat in the Railway Sector of the European Member States by means of an organisation (network) known as 'RAILPOL'".

### Organisational structure of RAILPOL

RAILPOL ensues from the European Commission's policy of co-operation in the field of police & justice (Third Pillar) and will operate within its own forum (RAILPOL). RAILPOL will initially consist of a strategic structure or forum made up of directors/experts from the national railway police organisations that will function as the central body for the co-ordination of future co-operation in railway policing. This structure will be responsible for elaborating and taking strategic decisions. Furthermore, the forum will have the task of monitoring the proper implementation of measures it has adopted, which will give it an important operating role. This inspection authority will assure quality and a well-balanced approach throughout all the participating countries.

Besides the strategic core-group, RAILPOL will enlarge the scope of its activities by bringing together on a regular basis different experts dealing with specific operational matters. The aim is to improve the exchange of operational information and techniques and to provide advice to the core-group. The core-group will facilitate the contacts between the experts and will support them in organisational affairs (meeting rooms, agenda, secretariat, etc).

The European member states will be called on to designate national contact for RAILPOL.

## III: Objectives

RAILPOL pursues the following objectives:

1. To strengthen co-operation between railway police organizations in cross-border threat prevention to improve security of the European railway network.
2. To create a network of railway police organisations which will focus on both strategic and operational issues and will operate within the EU framework:
3. To strengthen and develop the technical and operational expertise within the participating countries by improving the exchange of information and best practices; this will entail setting up a contact network of experts and organizing meetings and seminars:
4. To implement the principles of operational co-operation by encouraging, co-ordinating and, if necessary, organising joint operations or activities, such as:
  - joint operations targeted at pickpockets and graffiti prevention;
  - joint cross-border escorts for sport or other major events (e.g. escorting football fans from stations to stadiums and back again);
  - targeted measures to detect cases of illegal transport (in containers/concealment in passenger trains);
  - inspections of cross-border freight transports to find illegal immigrants hiding in freight wagons and freight (baseline measurement/see annex);
  - large-scale operations focused on finding and exposing human trafficking and trafficking routes used by the aforementioned groups.



## **IV: Future tasks – fields of activity for RAILPOL**

### **Problem areas**

Different organizational and command structures, language barriers, varying legal powers have to be identified, and solutions have to be proposed and implemented. A common language will assume increasing importance. The most important railway police terms and a minimum of colloquial language will be needed in order to be able to work together. Much greater flexibility will be expected of our railway police officers as well as the willingness to serve in foreign countries for a longer period of time as well. In addition, the willingness to understand and adjust to foreign languages, laws and command structures is also desirable. Our goal must be to define a single European standard. Common rules must be formulated for policing European railways and carrying out inspections according to a uniform standard.

### **Participation of additional countries in RAILPOL**

Additional railway police organisations in Europe will be invited to become members of RAILPOL. Participation is voluntary.

### **Funding of RAILPOL**

RAILPOL will be financed from its own resources. During the development stage AGIS (an EU programme) will finance the project for two years. After that, funding must be ensured at a national basis.

## **V: Conclusions**

The goals of RAILPOL are the intensive exchange of information, ongoing co-operation, joint offices, joint patrols, the possibility of cross-border policing, joint training measures, etc. Effectively preventing rail-related threats as well as close co-operation with the trains' countries of origin, transit and destination depend absolutely on active co-operation between member states.

August 2004

