

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION FOR THE BALANCED POSITIONING OF SERBIA IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Željko NIKAČ, Branko LEŠTANIN*

Abstract: An important part of modern international relations is international police cooperation, which is based on respect for the principles and standards of international law as well as the autonomous principles of apolitical and anti-criminal solidarity of states. The fight against organized crime, terrorism and other serious forms of crime is not possible without the good institutional international cooperation of police authorities. In the previous period, the Republic of Serbia developed various types of international police cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral level. The cooperation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with numerous foreign partners, among which INTERPOL and EUROPOL stand out as leading international police organizations, is particularly emphasized. In addition to this cooperation, the Ministry has also developed partnership relations with some regional police organizations whose activities are not negligible in the fight against organized crime in the former Yugoslavia and the Balkans. In the paper, the authors emphasize the specifics of the actions of domestic police authorities in relation to the area of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, which is under international administration according to UN Security Council Resolution 1244 from 1999, and where cooperation is achieved with international representatives of EULEX and KFOR. The analysis shows that the development of international police cooperation with international police organizations is important for the balanced positioning of Serbia in international relations. International police cooperation also contributes to more effective reforms

* Full professor, University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, Belgrade; Ph.D. candidate and police officer, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia. E-mail: zeljko.nikac@kpu.edu.rs

in the security sector, which in turn strengthens Serbia's position for faster EU accession.

Keywords: International police cooperation, Serbia, positioning, international relations, EU.

INTRODUCTION

In the third decade of the 21st century, modern society and the entire international community are faced with numerous challenges, risks, and threats to the survival and further development of humanity. In addition to war conflicts and emergencies, one of the greatest dangers for modern society, the state, and the individual (family) in peacetime is growing crime, especially in its most serious forms like terrorism, organized transnational crime, and others. Today, crime equally affects developed countries and regions, but also underdeveloped and countries in transition where there is a difficult economic situation, an unstable political system, and ineffective mechanisms for the protection of civil rights, human freedoms, and other values. In such an environment, crime in its most severe forms has developed, which has seriously threatened to nullify the good initial results of social, economic, and political reforms and to stop the construction of the legal system in those areas. A similar situation was in the former SFRY and in the Republic of Serbia after the collapse of the common state, the end of the civil war, sanctions by the international community and severe consequences: stagnation of the economy, refugees, unemployment, poverty and rising crime. At the end of 2000, the long-awaited changes in society, public administration, and security sector reforms began with the aim of more effectively fighting crime, establishing the rule of law, and building a legal state. The increase in crime in the pre-war and transition period was affected by the severance of political and other relations between the former republics, as well as the lack of cooperation with the most important countries in the world at that time. The fight against crime at the domestic level emphasizes the multi-agency approach and cooperation of the most important entities in a given country, while at the international level it is international criminal law assistance and international police cooperation that takes place at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels (Nikač, 2015, pp. 79-87). As a result of the mentioned changes, Serbia returned to the membership of INTERPOL (2001) and established criminal law and police cooperation with numerous countries and international organizations, especially with the countries of the former Yugoslavia and the Balkans. Serbia has also established cooperation with EUROPOL, as the EU's

specialized police cooperation agency, with which operational and strategic cooperation agreements have been signed (Official Gazette, Republic of Serbia, 2014). Serbia's cooperation with the EU is further highlighted within the EU Strategy for the Western Balkans from 2018 and the New EU Model for the Western Balkans from 2020 (Forca & Nikač, 2020, pp. 148-183). Cooperation with the EU and specialized agencies is also necessary from the point of view of Serbia's application for accession to the Union and to meet the requirements of Chapters 23 (*Justice and Fundamental Rights*) and 24 (*Justice, Freedom and Security*). This includes the harmonization of national norms with EU regulations as well as the operationalization of cooperation through various mechanisms and law enforcement agencies. Of course, this cooperation does not exclude other forms and types of cooperation with other countries and international organizations in the fight against organized crime, terrorism, and other serious forms of crime.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION

The emergence and development of international police cooperation in the form we know today is linked to the emergence of anarchism in Europe at the end of the 19th century, which forced the then leading states to oppose the forerunners of terrorism together. According to historical sources, several international gatherings were held with the aim of reforming the penal system, humanizing sentences, fighting crime, and establishing state cooperation. One of the most important conferences was held in Stockholm (1878), where several conclusions, resolutions, and the conclusion of extradition treaties, the establishment of permanent forms of cooperation, and better interconnection of national police were adopted (Babović, 1997, pp. 110-126). An anti-anarchist conference was further held in Rome (1898), at which a resolution on the formation of national anti-anarchist units was adopted, and better cooperation between police organizations and the exchange of information was initiated. Tightening of penal policy for political assassinations, more efficient search activity, and greater participation of experts in the fight against crime are recommended (Jensen, 1981, pp. 322-323). The next anti-anarchist conference was held in St. Petersburg (1904), when the "Secret Protocol for the International War against Anarchism" was signed. Then two important conferences were held in Buenos Aires (1905 and 1929) at which the International Police Convention and the Convention for the Protection of Society and Police Cooperation were adopted, which provide for the exchange of information, criminal records and other measures. (Geifman, 1995). The first congress of

the International Judicial (Criminal) Police was held in Monaco (1914) and a representative of Serbia participated in its work. Important criminalistics and criminal law issues were raised at the congress: identification and arrest of criminals, establishment of a central international file, acceleration of the extradition procedure, establishment of telegraph and telephone lines. After WWI, the Second Congress of the International Criminal Police was held in Vienna (1923), when the International Commission of the Criminal Police (ICCP), the forerunner of today's INTERPOL, was formally established. In terms of international cooperation, it is important to establish departments – services (combating counterfeiting of money and passports), launch international records and fingerprint collections, and promote international public safety. In the period between the two wars, there were several sessions of the ICCP (1928, 1929, 1932, and 1937) whose work was negatively influenced by Nazi Germany, especially after the annexation of Austria (1938) to take control and the archives of the Commission (Lazarević, 1933, pp. 15-22). After WWII, the work of the ICCP was renewed at a conference in Brussels (1946), and the issue of transforming the organization in accordance with the new social circumstances in the world was raised. Several important decisions of a technical nature were made at the meeting. The principle of equality was affirmed (one state-one vote), and the principles of universality, apolitism, and anti-criminal solidarity were emphasized. (Nikač, 2003, pp. 161-163). At a conference held in Vienna (1956), the organization was formally renamed INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) and a new Constitution was adopted (Constitution of the ICPO-INTERPOL, 1956). The delegation of the then Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia also took part in the conference as the legal successor of the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Serbia), which was the only socialist member state of INTERPOL. INTERPOL later received a special status recognized by the UN (1982), concluded the Headquarters Agreement with France (1984) and became the strongest international specialized organization for the fight against crime. Today, the organization has 195 member states and operates through the General Assembly, the Secretariat, the National Central Bureaus (NCBs), and other bodies. The Serbian Ministry of the Interior represents our country in all contacts with INTERPOL, primarily through the specialized Directorate for International Operational Police Cooperation within the General Police Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior. The Directorate is organized in such a way that it has departments for cooperation with INTERPOL (national contact point), cooperation with Europol, for coordination of other forms of international cooperation, and for operational duty and data processing (MOI RS, MUP,

2022, March 30). In addition to cooperation with INTERPOL, Serbia has established significant forms of cooperation with foreign partners at the bilateral and regional level, which is especially important today at a time of technical and technological progress and the misuse of modern tools by organized criminal groups.

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL SOURCES OF POLICE COOPERATION

In a broader sense, international legal sources of police cooperation are general norms of international public law as well as rights and obligations that entities have assumed on the basis of international agreements. These are individual resolutions, declarations, conventions, memos, treaties, and other acts that affirm cooperation between states, international organizations, and other subjects of international law and international relations (Kreća, 2016, pp. 33-52). The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNCATOC), from 2000, is the most important legal source for the work of specialized bodies in the fight against organized crime and its most serious forms (UN Treaty Series, 2007). The convention was adopted in 2000 at an international conference in Palermo, in order to send a strong message to the mafia in the city that is its cradle. Additional Protocols I-III to the Convention were further adopted: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (Official Gazette, Republic of Serbia, 2001); and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Official Gazette SCG, 2005). The Palermo Convention, among other things, envisages harmonization of regulations of the signatory states with the solutions from the Convention, special investigative techniques (methods), and special state bodies for the fight against organized crime, and encourages international criminal law and police cooperation (Nikač, 2015, pp. 265-290).

At the multilateral level, an important legal source of international cooperation in which our country participates is the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism, especially in the field of air transport, adopted in 1963 in Tokyo (guilty of aviation, hostage-taking), 1970 in The Hague (hijacking) and 1971 in Montreal (violation of civil aviation security). All the mentioned conventions were ratified by the former SFRY as a predecessor country, which was accepted by Serbia as one of the successor countries (Official Gazette, SFRJ, 1954; 1970; 1972). The

Constitution of the ICPO-INTERPOL is an extremely important international source in the framework of international cooperation in the fight against crime (I/CONS/GA/1956). Of particular importance is the political clause set out in Article 3 of the Constitution, which prohibits any intervention or activity that has a political, military, religious or racial character. In the context of INTERPOL's mandate, vision, and mission, cooperation with governmental and non-governmental international organizations is also envisaged (Article 41 of the Constitution). The PCC SEE-Police Cooperation Convention for SEE and the SELEC Convention are the most important regional legal sources in the field of international police cooperation in our region. Serbia is a signatory of these documents and actively participates in their implementation through forms and types of cooperation such as: exchange of information, development of communications and equipment, joint police actions, implementation of SIM (SIT), staff training, and technical support (Lopandić & Kronja, 2010, pp. 195-212).

Bilateral agreements/cooperation agreements are also very common in the fields of international police cooperation and international criminal assistance. A large number of these agreements have been signed in the function of implementing the commitments made in regional documents, but there are also a large number of agreements that have emerged as a result of good cooperation between neighboring and other countries. The Republic of Serbia (Ministry of the Interior) has signed several bilateral agreements with neighboring countries in the Balkan region and with the most important countries in the world, such as the United States, Russia, and Israel (Nikač, 2016, pp. 159-176).

NATIONAL LEGAL SOURCES OF POLICE COOPERATION

Internal legal sources in this matter include regulations of national legislation governing criminal law, international criminal assistance, and international police cooperation. The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia is a *lex generalis* regulation that stipulates that our foreign policy is based on generally recognized principles and rules of international law, as well as respect for ratified international treaties that are an integral part of the internal legal order (Article 16) (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2006). The Law on Foreign Affairs further specifies the basis of cooperation of state bodies in performing foreign affairs, mutual reporting, and coordination of foreign policy activities within the established foreign policy of the

Government (Articles 2-6) (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2007; 2009). In the field of criminal legislation, the most important legal sources are the Criminal Procedure Code (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2019), and the Criminal Code (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2005; 2009; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2016; 2019), then the Law on International Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2009), the Law on Organization and Competences of State Bodies in the Suppression of Organized Crime, Terrorism and Corruption (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2016; 2018), and the Law on Confiscation of Criminal Assets (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2013; 2016; 2019). The Police Law is the most important national legal source for police affairs and related international police cooperation (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2016, 2018). There are also jobs related to the engagement of members of the Ministry of the Interior in multinational operations abroad (Articles 19-21). International police cooperation is realized on the basis of ratified international agreements, with respect to the principle of reciprocity, and also on the basis of membership in a specific international organization.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AS A HOLDER OF INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION

The role and tasks of the Ministry of the Interior are normatively defined in Article 13 of the Law on Ministries where it is stated that the Ministry performs state administration tasks such as: policing (fight against crime; maintaining public order, securing gatherings of citizens; traffic safety; control of the state border, movement and residence of foreigners; control of weapons and ammunition; securing of foreign diplomatic and consular offices), emergency situations (accidents, dangerous substances, fires, explosions, accidents), status and legal (citizenship, residence and domicile of citizens, identity cards, travel documents), and affairs of international cooperation in the field of internal affairs (readmission, illegal migration, asylum) (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2020). The tasks and duties of international police cooperation are protocol (administrative, legal) and operational (police) in their content. The most important types and forms of international police cooperation are: exchange of information, search for persons and extradition of persons, joint operational activities, joint investigation teams, combined working bodies, staff training, technical assistance, etc. The bearers of activities within the Ministry of Interior as institutions are primarily the General Police Directorate, the Sector for

International Cooperation, European Affairs and Planning, and the Minister's Cabinet. Certain types of cooperation are realized through other organizational units – sectors (example of emergency), work lines (example of traffic police) and organizational units (example of the Police Department for the City of Belgrade). The General Police Directorate is the most important organizational part of the Ministry of Interior, which performs classic police operations and other tasks. The Directorate is organized according to the line and territorial principle; it functions according to the principles of hierarchy and subordination, and it also includes other known forms of policing (object and duty service). The main tasks of the police are to maintain stable public order, fight crime, and perform other tasks in the field of security (Nikač, 2019, pp. 36-39). The General Police Directorate includes the Directorate for International Operational Police Cooperation (DIOPC), which has inherent competence in the field of operational cooperation of the Ministry of Interior with foreign partners. In terms of character and content, it is an operational police activity that refers primarily to the fight against crime, its manifestations and types. Cooperation related to the fight against organized crime, terrorism and the other most serious forms of crime is especially important. Organizationally, the DIOPC includes the departments for INTERPOL's affairs, EUROPOL's affairs, information management and coordination of other forms of international cooperation, and the duty service. The most important jobs and tasks of the DIOPC are the exchange of information with foreign partners, issuing arrest warrants for persons, searching for persons and objects, extradition of persons at the request of authorized claimants, protection of confidential databases, etc. (Nikač & Simić, 2012, pp. 360-368). In terms of international police cooperation, the Criminal Police Directorate has an extremely important role, which is the bearer of the fight against crime, especially its most severe forms. This Directorate includes important services such as the Service for the Fight against Organized Crime and others that deal with the suppression of the most serious forms of crime, especially those that have a transnational dimension. Other lines of work within the General Police Directorate also have a significant role, such as the Border Police Directorate, which is mostly involved in combating cross-border crime, the National Center for Criminal Forensics and others (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2017). Significant cooperation with foreign partners is achieved by the Special Anti-Terrorist Unit, which has good connections with related elite services in developed countries (joint exercises, technical assistance, staff training) (Džamić, 2013, pp. 165-171).

The Sector for International Cooperation, European Affairs and Planning is an organizational part of the Ministry of Interior that performs activities related to planning and activities in the process of European integration, management of projects financed from EU funds, etc. The Sector, independently and in cooperation with the Minister's Cabinet, plans and organizes: bilateral and multilateral contacts; participation of Ministry of Interior members in regional initiatives and peacekeeping operations; development of strategies, plans, and other documents; monitoring and evaluation of implementation; meetings and coordination in the implementation of plans; strategic analysis, etc. Within the Sector, there are several departments for European affairs, international cooperation, strategic management, development, and project management. The Sector is the legal successor of the former Bureau for International Cooperation and European Integration under the Minister's Cabinet, formed by novels organized by the Ministry of Interior in 2016 (MoI RS, MUP, 7 May 2022). *The Minister's Cabinet* is the organizational part of the Ministry of Interior in charge of international cooperation at the highest level, and it includes political relations, protocol, legal and other affairs. The Cabinet, with the help of professional services and lines of work, is preparing a platform for the participation of the Minister and representatives of the Ministry of Interior in international conferences, regional gatherings, bilateral meetings, the signing of important agreements, and other forms of international cooperation with states and international organizations (Nikač & Forca.2020, pp. 255-262).

OPERATIONAL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL POLICE COOPERATION

The Ministry of Interior, through organizational units and lines of work, participates in international police cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels and cooperates with the subjects of international relations – states (national police) and international organizations, especially specialized (Đorđević, 2010, pp. 214-230). As stated at the bilateral level, the Ministry of Interior has a large number of agreements on cooperation, first with the former republics from the time of the common state, then with countries from the wider environment and others. The subjects of cooperation in these agreements are mainly joint activities in the fight against cross-border crime, joint investigation teams, staff training, and technical assistance. According to available data, the Ministry of Interior has signed bilateral agreements with almost 50 countries, including a special

agreement with the Republic of Srpska, which is an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina (MUP, 2022, May 7). It is known that the Republic of Serbia has special and parallel ties with the Republic of Srpska because Serbia is one of the signatories of the Dayton-Paris Peace Arrangement. *Regional cooperation* is based on regional agreements and the mentioned bilateral agreements, which are in the function of regional cooperation. In a narrower sense, the most important part of the cooperation refers to the activities of the RS Ministry of Interior and the partner services of the countries of the former SFRY and the surrounding countries. Cooperation is based primarily on the previously mentioned documents: the Convention on International Police Cooperation in SEE (Wien, 2006) and the SELEC Convention (Bucharest, 2011). According to the first convention, the RS Ministry of Interior has quite good cooperation with the partner police of the countries of the former SFRY. In support of this, we are talking about cooperation with the Croatian Interior Ministry in the case of extradition to Serbia of persons suspected of participating in the assassination of the RS Prime Minister (Dr. Đinđić's case), as well as the extradition of persons suspected of killing the editor of the newspaper "Dan" (Pukanić's case). Cooperation with the SELEC is based on the presence of the Permanent Representative of the RS Ministry of Interior at the headquarters of this organization in Bucharest, as well as the participation of representatives of other bodies in the work of this mechanism (e.g., Customs representative). Representatives of the RS Ministry of Interior participate in the work of the working groups of the Center for Combating: Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants; illegal production and trafficking of narcotics; fraud, cyber and financial crime; stolen vehicle shops; terrorism and the transport of dangerous goods. For more important operational actions, the Operational Coordination Unit (OCU) is launched, in the work of which the liaison officers of all member states participate. (Pena & Sikimić, 2011, pp. 184-191). Among other mechanisms of regional police cooperation, we mention informal forms of cooperation that take place through non-governmental organizations, such as the SEPCA (Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association) and the PF (Police Forum) (Nikač & Simić, 2014, pp. 424-436). A significant part of the cooperation is related to staff education, the development of the Women's Police Officers Network (WPON), crime prevention (e.g., vehicle theft), and the development of ILP-Intelligence Led Policing (Leštanin, Božić & Nikač, 2018, pp. 241-254). Of particular importance in regional cooperation are other initiatives that are more political and broader, such as: the SEE Stability Pact (SPSEE), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the SEE Cooperation Process (CPSEE), MARRI-

Migration, Asylum, Refugees, Regional Initiative, and the RAI-Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (Nikač & Juras, 2015, pp. 283-302).

COOPERATION WITH EUROPOL AND EU LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

From the point of view of geopolitical position, the Republic of Serbia is a country located in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, at the crossroads between the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian worlds. Serbia is one of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia which, after the termination of the common state and the independence of Montenegro (2006), continued its independent development and participation in international relations. Cooperation with the EU and its institutions, including EUROPOL, the Schengen Agreement, and other cooperation mechanisms, is the most important form of regional cooperation in Europe (Lopandić & Janjević, 1996, pp. 202-225). This is especially important today because the Republic of Serbia is a candidate for EU membership after the Stabilization and Association Agreement was initiated in 2007 and Serbia applied for EU membership in 2009. After the Agreement entered into force on September 1, 2013, the first intergovernmental conference between the EU and Serbia was held on January 21, 2014, which started political negotiations (Ministarstvo za evropske integracije, 2022). This was followed by the procedure of opening several chapters, among which the most important for us are No. 23 (justice and fundamental rights) and No. 24 (justice, freedom, and security). Within this second ("police") chapter, there are important sub-areas: a) asylum, migration, visas, external borders and the Schengen acquis; b) combating organized crime, drug abuse, human trafficking, and terrorism; c) judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters, and in criminal matters; and e) police cooperation and customs cooperation (EU pregovori, 10 May 2022). The European Police Office (EUROPOL) is the most important partner of Serbia in terms of international police cooperation, which was pointed out by the European Parliament in 2009 in relation to the countries of the Western Balkans (European Parliament, 2009, Europol, priorities of Europol in western Balkans-speaking points for EUROPOL assistant director). Today's security challenges, risks, and threats are almost identical on the old continent and in the world, and among them are transnational organized crime, terrorism, and other most serious forms of crime. The world's most developed countries and their services make periodic assessments of society's vulnerability to the most dangerous forms of crime, as did EUROPOL by adopting the EU SOCTA

document in 2021 and establishing a specialized ESOCC European Series and Organized Crime Center (EUROPOL, 2022, May 10). Following the adoption of the Western Balkans Roadmap (2007) and highlighting EUROPOL's stronger role in our region, EUROPOL has signed several agreements at operational and strategic level with the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Serbia signed a Strategic agreement with EUROPOL in 2008, and it emphasizes the need for international cooperation in the fight against organized crime, terrorism and other serious forms of crime (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2009). The most important type of cooperation is the exchange of information on the most serious crimes, suspects, and criminal elements of crimes. The agreement establishes the classification of information to be exchanged, designates national contact points, defines the procedure for submitting requests for assistance-enforcement and provides for the establishment of liaison officers (Simić & Nikač, 2016, pp. 367-384). The holder of the cooperation is the General Police Directorate, i.e., the Directorate for International Operational Police Cooperation, which consists of the Department for Cooperation with EUROPOL and a seconded liaison officer at EUROPOL's headquarters in The Hague. Cooperation was raised to a higher level in 2014 when the Agreement on Operational Cooperation between EUROPOL and the Ministry of Interior was signed, preceded by a Memorandum of Understanding and Establishing a Secure Communication Line and a Bilateral Agreement on Connecting Computer Networks (EUROPOL, May 10, 2022). The operational agreement includes the exchange of information, the concretization of the exchange of liaison officers, and other forms and types of police cooperation. The most important goal of this document is a more effective joint fight against organized crime, terrorism and the most serious forms of crime (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2014). As a good example of cooperation, we point out the recent exchange of information and deciphering of the mobile application "SKY" in the case of the organized criminal group Belivuk/Miljković, which is accused of the most heinous crimes in Serbia, the region and South America. We are of the opinion that the cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and EUROPOL should be improved due to the common geostrategic space, new challenges, risks and threats, and similar work issues. In that part, Serbia can contribute to further harmonization of norms with EU law, preparations for joining EUROPOL's IT system, and activities after eventual EU membership.

Other EU law enforcement agencies also have some cooperation with our country and the Ministry of the Interior, both those of a police-security nature and agencies in complementary areas. The Agency for Operational

Management of the EU's External Borders, better known as FRONTEX (fr. *Frontières extérieures*), was established to coordinate and cooperate with the border services of EU countries, manage external borders and promote common standards (Sintić, 2012, pp. 143-154). FRONTEX analyzes the risks of endangering the EU borders, controls and controls the external borders, provides technical and operational assistance to member states, participates in operational actions of readmission, return of asylum seekers to their home countries, etc. In this sense, FRONTEX cooperates not only with EU agencies but also with non-member countries (border police), especially transit countries with which it has concluded 16 agreements and a memorandum of cooperation (FRONTEX, 2022, May 12). FRONTEX has concluded a Working Arrangement with the Ministry of Interior on operational and technical cooperation, as well as an IBM-Eastern Partnership Integrated Border Management Capacity Building Project. Our representative is the Border Police Directorate, which works closely with FRONTEX in terms of data exchange, technical support, staff training, etc. The most important common task is the fight against illegal migration, human trafficking, trafficking in human beings and organs, and the fight against other forms of cross-border crime. The Ministry of Interior also cooperates with EU police education institutions, such as the European Police College-CEPOL, with which it has established cooperation with the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies (UCIPS). The primary tasks of the institution are staff education, training, and scientific and research work. Representatives of the UCIPS have so far participated in several programs under the auspices of the College, such as the European Joint Master Program-EJMP in Budapest (CEPOL, 2022, May 14). The Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Interior have good cooperation with several EU agencies that are not from the security sector but related to police affairs. There is good cooperation with the *European Body for the Enhancement of Judicial Cooperation*-EUROJUST, whose main task is to detect and prosecute the most serious crimes of transnational organized crime. In that sense, the agency cooperates with partners in the EU and non-member countries in terms of investigations, prosecution, extradition, and mutual criminal assistance (EUROJUST, 2022). Cooperation has also been established with the *European Crime Prevention Network*-EUCPN, which promotes prevention activities and the development of good practice in combating crime. Cooperation primarily includes the exchange of information on the prevention of the most dangerous and most common forms of crime, risk assessment of recidivism, professional expertise, and expertise for the needs of institutions. In order to cooperate more efficiently, the Ministry of Interior uses our

national contact point – the liaison officer at EUROPOL, which it often does in cooperation with EUROJUST (EUCPN, 2022, May 14). The National Center for Criminal Forensics and the Department for Combating Narcotics Smuggling, independently or through a liaison officer at EUROPOL, cooperate with the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction-EMCDDA (EMCDDA, 2022, May 15). As an information agency, the Center collects, processes, analyzes, and exchanges data in the field of drug phenomenology and addiction in Europe. In this sense, it cooperates with EU members and agencies, non-members, and specialized international organizations (UNDCP, WHO, etc.). The Ministry of Interior also has contacts with the European Network and Information Security Agency-ENISA as an agency that helps EU institutions, members, and users to identify dangers, risks, and threats related to data security more easily. The Agency strives to ensure a high level of protection and security of networks and data, especially personal data of EU citizens and others (Zečević, 2003). The Ministry of Interior also has occasional contacts with the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia-EUMC, noting that these problems are not present in our country, but individual incidents at sports events are possible.

COOPERATION WITH EULEX

As it is known, the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija has been under international patronage since the end of NATO aggression and the signing of the Kumanovo Agreement (1999, June 30), according to which FRY forces withdrew from Kosovo and Metohija and were replaced by international forces KFOR (Stevanović, 2016, pp. 11-56). The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1244 in 1999, which established the international administration in Kosovo and Metohija (civilian and security forces), the Ground Security Zone, and the Air Security Zone. Also, the UN Secretary-General is authorized to appoint a Special Representative for the Control of the Implementation of the International Civilian Presence and Coordination with International Forces UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) (Leštanin, 2017, pp. 61-78). Then the legal successor appears, EULEX (European Union Rule of Law Mission), as an EU mission to ensure the rule of law in Kosovo and Metohija. According to the decision of the Council of Europe, the EULEX mission has a total of 1,500 members, including judges, prosecutors, and police officers in charge of establishing the rule of law, democratic standards, and public order (Council Joint Action on the European Union Rule of Law

Mission in Kosovo, 2008). The Ministry of Interior continued cooperation with international forces in Kosovo and Metohija in a new format and signed a Protocol on Police Cooperation with EULEX on September 11, 2009 (MUP RS, 2009, internal). The protocol is based on the mentioned UN Security Council Resolution 1244, then the Decision of the Council of the EU (Council of the European Union, 2008) and the Report of the Secretary General on the UN Mission in Kosovo (UN GS, 2008, November 11). Among the most important solutions, we emphasize the exchange of information for the fight against organized crime (especially narcotics), investigative mechanisms, mutual information on cross-border events (human trafficking, illegal crossings, narcotics) and joint actions. It is envisaged that police and criminal cooperation will take place according to the principles of data secrecy, conspiracy, confidentiality and other operational standards. The following is the Technical Protocol on Integrated Administrative Line Management, which establishes Joint Crossing Points and Crossing Control by Belgrade and Priština, in the presence of EULEX. At the beginning of 2013, the First Agreement on the Principles Regulating the Normalization of Relations was concluded (Đukanović, 2013, pp. 365-385). The Government of the Republic of Serbia has initialed this 15-point document addressing important issues such as: the Union of Serb Municipalities; the police and the regional chief for Serb municipalities (4) in northern Kosovo and Metohija; the judiciary; and municipal elections (RS Government, 2013, March 22). Documents known as the "*Brussels Agreements*" were further signed under the auspices of the EU. The first in a series is the *Agreement on Freedom of Movement*, which provides for the normal movement of people on both sides of the administrative line, but only with the use of identity cards issued by Priština (Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Priština). Upon entry of persons from the territory of Kosovo and Metohija into the territory of central Serbia, persons are issued an Entry/Exit Document with a validity of 60 days, while all crossings of the administrative line are electronically recorded (from September 21, 2015) to prevent abuse of freedom of movement, suppression of illegal crossings and committing crimes. On this basis, the use of driver's licenses and license plates issued by Priština is also allowed, which has recently been modified by an agreement that both parties use the so-called markers over the designation of the territory and in order to preserve status neutrality until the final solution of this issue (RS Government, 2011, September 1). The issue of vehicle insurance in the event of a traffic accident and damage has been similarly resolved (RS Government, 2011, December 8). Also, a special decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia temporarily resolved the issue of control over the

crossing of the administrative line towards Kosovo and Metohija and the issuance of certain documents. (RS Government, 2015, September 10).

An Agreement on integrated management of the administrative line was reached at the end of 2011 and, in the function of its implementation, a year later, the mentioned Technical Protocol was adopted, which established common crossing points and the area of the administrative line was divided into three regions (RS Government, 2011, December 22). In the meantime, they reached an agreement on opening two more common crossing points, so that there are now a total of eight (8). The common crossing points are in the function of simplifying the procedures of crossing the administrative line, control of persons, goods and vehicles and suppression of crime. Mutual information on procedures related to the processing of persons, vehicles, and goods has been agreed upon, and mechanisms for the exchange of operational information for the suppression of crime and the protection of life, property, and other universal values have been established. Special Contingency Plans have also been adopted to provide assistance in the same situations (Technical Protocol and Technical Arrangement on the Functioning of Temporary Joint Crossing Points, internal document). Serbia's official platform for dialogue with Priština is the National Assembly Resolution on Basic Principles for Political Talks with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Priština adopted in 2013 (Official Gazzete, Republic of Serbia, 2013). We are of the opinion that the police cooperation of the Ministry of Interior with the EULEX forces and indirectly through them with Priština is necessary for solving the everyday life problems of citizens, then for economic reasons and especially for supporting the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija. Police cooperation is extremely important due to the intersection of criminal roads and the activities of organized criminal groups, which in turn use the current instability and other circumstances.

COOPERATION WITH INTERPOL

International police cooperation of the Ministry of Interior with INTERPOL is the most important type of cooperation between our police in the fight against crime at the global level. Especially due to the fact that INTERPOL is the oldest specialized international organization in the field of crime prevention, transnational organized crime, and its most serious forms. As it was said, Serbia has a rich tradition of cooperation and participation in the work of INTERPOL since the initial international

conferences, the period between the two wars and especially after WWII. The period of disintegration of the SFRY, war conflicts in this area, and international sanctions was especially difficult when the FRY (Serbia and Montenegro) as a legal successor was not granted legal continuity in terms of membership in INTERPOL. At the 62nd session of the INTERPOL General Assembly in Aruba in 1993, Resolution 01/93 was adopted, depriving the FRY of its membership in the Organization and sending it to apply for membership in INTERPOL as a new subject of international law and international relations (Nikač, 2015, pp. 137-143). After the social changes at the end of 2000, the FRY returned to the UN and the international community launched a program of assistance to the FRY (Serbia and Montenegro). In this context, at the 70th Conference of the General Staff of INTERPOL, held in Budapest in 2001, the FRY was readmitted to INTERPOL as an equal member (70th General Assembly, 2022). We are of the opinion that the position on re-application for admission to the organization (legal discontinuity) is not fair, but our country accepted it for pragmatic reasons and returned to the organization in which it participated. Today, the Republic of Serbia cooperates with INTERPOL and other member states through the previously mentioned Directorate for International Police Cooperation within the General Police Directorate, specifically the Department for Cooperation with INTERPOL, which is also the NCB Belgrade and the contact point for cooperation. We add that the Ministry of Interior also has a representative – a liaison officer at the INTERPOL headquarters in Lyon, France. In terms of content, cooperation refers to the exchange of information, joint actions, international criminal assistance (interrogation of persons, procedural actions, etc.), participation in joint investigative teams of national police in coordination with INTERPOL, issuing international arrest warrants, etc. (Nikač, Božić & Simić, 2017, pp. 269-284). Cooperation takes place mostly in the field of combating organized crime and its most dangerous forms, terrorism and other serious forms of crime. Recently, cooperation in combating illegal trafficking in human beings, organs and body parts, cybercrime, hooliganism, smuggling of all goods, etc., has been topical (INTERPOL, 2022, May 16). The Ministry of Interior has a significant place in cooperation with INTERPOL as the leader and the most important specialized international organization for the fight against crime. This is especially seen in relation to the important geostrategic position of Serbia in this part of the world, the Balkan crime route that passes through our territory, and Serbia's desire to contribute to the joint fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism. An integral part of this cooperation is bilateral cooperation with neighbors and

other countries, and especially regional cooperation with countries that were once members of the Yugoslav federation.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, crime represents one of the most difficult problems of the modern world, which knows no borders or physical barriers. It is a social phenomenon of transnational character that threatens to destroy the universal values of human civilization. Organized crime, terrorism, and other serious forms of crime are the number one global problem today, and the fight against them requires solidarity, cooperation, and the involvement of the entire international community. The consequences of crime are equally felt by developed countries, developing countries, and those in transition, as well as by citizens, individuals, and families who have always been the basic cohesive units of the community. Countries in transition, such as those from the former socialist bloc, like Serbia and other post-SFRJ countries, felt even more severe and devastating consequences, primarily due to the lack of effective mechanisms to fight organized crime, corruption, and other serious crimes. In contrast, organized crime groups had no barriers and established a network for criminal cooperation in order to make extra profits. It additionally contributed to the development of other forms of crime that are also very dangerous and harmful, and all together cause further harmful consequences for national economies, socio-political order and the legal system and, in general, for security. At the domestic level, states have responded with new normative solutions within the framework of criminal legislation and criminal-operational measures of the police to combat crime. In Serbia, several new legal solutions and criminal legislation amendments have been enacted. The adoption of the Law on the Competence of State Bodies in the Suppression of Organized Crime, Terrorism and Corruption, the Law on Confiscation of Assets Acquired by Crime, etc. was particularly significant. A multi-agency approach and cooperation between the most important actors in the fight against crime has been developed under the "umbrella" of the National Security Council, which is chaired by the President and coordinated by the security forces. On the international level, international police cooperation was deepened, led by the Directorate for International Operational Police Cooperation, whose task is of a primary nature in cooperation with the most important international organizations – INTERPOL and EUROPOL. Particularly significant is the regional cooperation developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the conclusion of numerous bilateral agreements and

participation in regional cooperation through the most important organizations such as SELEC. International police cooperation contributes to the development of international criminal law and also reflects the mutual trust of states and their services. This is particularly important considering the process of European integration of Serbia and, in that context, also for the cooperation of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with EUROPOL. The authors believe that in the context of the current situation in the world and the numerous challenges, risks, and threats to national and international security, the state and movement of organized crime, terrorism, corruption, and other most serious forms of crime should be looked at in order to find appropriate and effective answers. It would be possible to do this through a thorough consideration of existing internal and international security problems and the adoption of a national strategy for international police cooperation, in order to achieve a more balanced position for Serbia in international relations.

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