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# Introduction to Handbook on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe

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and Andrej Sotlar

In the mid-1990s, the College of Police and Security studies in Ljubljana, Slovenia, began organizing a biennial international conference on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe which became a traditional police studies event which grew beyond its primary boundaries and became a conference on Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

We introduced the idea of the *Handbook on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe* to potential authors in 2008 when we contacted scholars from

Central and Eastern Europe and invited them to contribute to this comparative policing publication. We subsequently met with the authors on several occasions. The most fruitful discussions on policing in Central and Eastern Europe and the need for an international publication on the topic emerged from the 2008 to 2010 biennial conferences on policing in Central and Eastern Europe, and further developed at the first European conference on criminalistics/criminal investigation (2011) organized by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security in Ljubljana, Slovenia. After the 2008 conference in Ljubljana, a special issue on policing in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond (Meško & Fields, 2009) was published in *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*. Another important publication was published two years later and dealt with comparative criminology, criminal justice, and policing issues in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (Meško, Sotlar, & Winterdyk, 2011).

This *Handbook* consists of two introductory reflections and 14 chapters written by scholars and police professionals who had conducted a variety of research projects on policing and development of police organizations in the region. The editors of the volume, Gorazd Meško, Charles Fields, Branko Lobnikar, and Andrej Sotlar, have been colleagues for more than a decade and have a variety of experience in comparative criminology, criminal justice, and policing research. Gorazd Meško has recently conducted several comparative studies, especially on the development of criminology in South Eastern Europe (Meško,

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<sup>1</sup>For more information, see web pages of the conferences on Criminal Justice and Security in Central and Eastern Europe (previously Policing in Central and Eastern Europe, 1996–2010): [www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2012](http://www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2012); [www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2010](http://www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2010); [www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2008](http://www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2008); [www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2006](http://www.fvv.uni-mb.si/conf2006).

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Fields, & Eskridge, 2008), private security (policing) (Meško, Cockcroft, & Hope, 2009), crime prevention and fear of crime (Meško, Kury, Bren, & Vošnjak, 2012), policing (Meško & Dobovšek, 2007; Meško & Fields, 2009; Meško & Furman, 2013; Meško & Klemenčič, 2007), and fear of crime (Meško et al., 2012). Charles Fields has edited textbooks (Fields & Moore, 1996, 2005) on comparative criminal justice and participated in numerous comparative projects. Joint research projects of Gorazd Meško, Chuck Fields and partners include criminology in Southeastern Europe (Meško, Fields & Eskridge, 2008), policing in the developing democracies (Meško & Fields, 2009), and prisons (Meško, Fields, & Smole, 2011). Lobnikar and Meško (2010) and Sotlar (2009) (Meško, Sotlar, & Winterdyk, 2011) have recently contributed publications on comparative criminology, security, and policing issues. In addition to criminology, criminal justice, and policing research, we teach comparative criminology, criminal justice, and policing at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor, Slovenia, and at the College of Justice and Safety, Eastern Kentucky University, USA.

“Central and Eastern Europe” has a variety of meanings. It mostly denotes a political and geographical entity, but political definitions of Central and Eastern Europe are quite contradictory and ambiguous. Therefore, we decided to include the countries within the borders of Germany to the West, Russia to the East, the Baltic states to the North, and Macedonia (FYROM) to the South.

Editing such a volume on comparative perspectives is an intellectual challenge with many traps, and comparing often means judging. Therefore, we are aware of the developments and cultural contexts of formal social control in the studied countries. The intent of this publication is not to benchmark these countries according to their developments in policing, but to gain insight on the development of police organization, policing history, and social control practices in the past 20 years from different national perspectives and scholarly disciplines. Police studies in Central and Eastern Europe are conducted by anthropologists, conduct disorder scholars, criminologists, criminal justice and defense scholars, economists,

lawyers, political scientists, psychologists, retired police officers, security scholars, sociologists, and others. A variety of perspectives depend on the educational and research background of scholars contributing their papers to this ambitious volume dealing with rapid societal changes after the 1990s, characterized by the breakdown of communism in Central and Eastern Europe and new challenges of emerging democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. The quality of the available information on policing and the police is also related to a particular tradition of research on police and policing in the countries covered in the volume: in some, police studies are a part of social scientific research, while in others, police and policing are still a matter of internal research within the ministries of the interior or justice. Police scientists may be the police officers who conduct studies on the police and policing, or (other) researchers. In addition, it is necessary to point to the relationships between the police and those researchers that include insiders, outsiders, trustworthy colleagues, etc. Writing about and researching the police has political implications and implies governance and the governmental ability of control of numerous security threats. These issues are also related to the police and policing research.

We hope that the *Handbook on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe* provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of police forces and policing in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. It presents up-to-date information on the police and policing in this region, rather specific from its developmental perspective, in the context of many socioeconomic and historical factors spanning national and international military conflicts, wealth, political regime, legal tradition, transformations of policing and police organization, police professional culture, transfer of ideas, joining the European Union, Schengen border, and the role of civil society, research and researchers in policing, criminal justice and criminology, underlying specific perspectives of the authors presenting policing in their respective countries.

Several years of writing, peer-reviewing, and editing have finally resulted in this volume encompassing contributions from Austria, Croatia, the

Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Republic of Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina). It is necessary to emphasize that the entire project was based on good will, dedication, and mutual support of the editors and authors, as no extra funding was provided for this joint intellectual venture. Editing of this *Handbook* began with papers written by authors using a template aimed at providing an approximate framework for outlining the development of policing and police organizations in their respective countries in the past two decades. The template consisted of a set of questions to be addressed and discussed in the papers: “What are the main features of police organizational structure and functions? What are crime, disorder, and social control trends in the past two decades? What are the main characteristics of police training and police educational systems? What changes have been related to the police and policing in the last two decades? What are the main trends in contemporary policing? What are the relationships between the police and the media? What is the relationship between the police and researchers, and what are the prospects for the future of policing in the region?”

The majority of the authors submitted drafts of their chapters in 2011. After the editors’ review, the authors finalized their contributions and, subsequently, the editors assured at least one peer-review from the region of Central and Eastern Europe and/or another from English speaking countries. In addition, we must emphasize that none of the authors are native English speakers. For this reason, researching and writing on the development of policing in a foreign language was an additional challenge, and English was a kind of a “linguistic common denominator.” The authors, peer reviewers, and editors invested enormous efforts in making the contributions comprehensible to native English and other international readers.

The chapters are organized in alphabetic order. Maximillian Edelbacher and Norden Gilbert present the development of policing in Austria, and Irma Kovčo Vukadin, Krunoslav Borovec, and Tajana Ljubin Golubin Croatia. Pavel Foltin,

Andrej Rohál, and Mária Šikolová discuss the Czech perspectives on policing. Lauri Tabur depicts the characteristics of policing in Estonia. Thomas Feltes, Uwe Marquardt, and Stefan Schwarz write about the police in Germany. Richard Leyrer presents an overview of the police and policing in Hungary. Driton Muharremi and Samedin Mehmeti address the police in Kosovo and Stojanka Mirčeva and Rade Rajkočevski from the Macedonia (FYROM) discuss development and new challenges for policing in their country. Zoran Keković and Savo Kentera present recent developments of policing in Montenegro. Policing in Russia is presented and discussed by Vladimir Sergevnik and Oleg Kovalyov. Želimir M. Kešetović presents a chapter on the Serbian police and policing. Josef Reitšpís, Libor Gašpírek, Kamil Boc, and Miroslav Felcan contribute a chapter on policing in the Slovak Republic. Gorazd Meško, Branko Lobnikar, Andrej Sotlar, and Maja Jere write about the development of the police organization and policing in Slovenia, focusing on police research and its impact on policy making in the last two decades. Mile Šikman and Velibor Lalić discuss the characteristics and the development of policing in Republika Srpska, the Serbian entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, we would like to thank all the authors, all non-native English speakers, who put their best efforts to write these chapters. In addition, special thanks go to the peer reviewers of separate chapters who have helped us improve the quality of this publication. Special thanks go also to Sanja Kutnjak Ivković, a criminologist and police scholar, a native of Croatia, working at the School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, USA, and to Paul Ponsaers of Gent University, Belgium, for their introductory reflections about the *Handbook*. Finally, our sincere thanks go to Maja Jere, a PhD student and junior research fellow, and Nataša Knap, a head librarian at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor who have helped us with administrative assistance throughout the entire process of editing the *Handbook on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe*. We hope the readers will enjoy reading these contributions and we welcome their feedback.

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