

Partnership for Safe Communities in Serbia

Partnership for Safe Communities in Serbia

Publisher

Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
Đure Jakšića 6/5, Belgrade
Tel: + 381 11 3287 226
www.bezbednost.org
office@bezbednost.org

Authors

Saša Đorđević, Gorana Radovanović

Translation (English)

Tatjana Ćosović

Design and pre-press

comma | communications design

Belgrade, 2014.



Publication of the Report “Partnership for Safe Communities” was supported by the OSCE Mission to Serbia. The views and interpretations expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the OSCE.

Contents

Three main messages	8
Introduction	9
(De)centralisation of local safety	11
<i>Local self-government and safety</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Development of community policing</i>	<i>15</i>
Assessment of municipal safety councils	17
<i>Political decision</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Partnership relations</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Functioning of councils</i>	<i>22</i>
Gender analysis of local safety	29
<i>Neglected gender perspective of local safety</i>	<i>31</i>
Case Studies	35
<i>Arandjelovac</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Golubac</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Leskovac</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Niška Banja</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Novi Pazar</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Paraćin</i>	<i>49</i>
About the research	51

Abbreviations

BCSP	Belgrade Centre for Security Policy
CeSID	Centre for Free Elections and Democracy
Mol	Ministry of Interior
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
USA	United States of America

Summary

Twelve years have passed since the first municipal safety council was set up as part of developing the community policing concept. In the meantime, there has been no full political support at the national level to the idea that municipal safety councils and community policing can improve the safety of citizens in Serbian municipalities and towns. Crime prevention seems not to be attractive to politicians.

The number of municipal safety councils has dropped by 7% relative to 2007. It is estimated that advisory bodies in charge of improving safety and/or crime prevention operate in 76 municipalities and towns across Serbia. One half of the remaining municipalities where such advisory bodies have not been set up find the idea of their establishment attractive. The other half find the idea unattractive. The interest of the majority of Serbian municipalities and towns is indicative of the critical mass that is willing to improve safety in local communities. The problem relates to the way of organising the work of municipal safety councils and ensuring the participation of all local stakeholders, i.e. creating partnership. The police and the prosecution are not the only institutions that can improve safety. Also important are local self-government authorities, schools, civil society organisations, healthcare institutions, youth offices. The number of actors depends on local communities' safety problems.

In building a safe partnership, it is important to continue working on the action plan for implementation of the community policing concept, whose adoption is late for more than seventeen months already. What is positive is that different players are involved in drafting the plan. However, too much time is spent on the normative regulation of municipal safety councils and the discussion about which law (the police or local self-government law) will stipulate the establishment of councils. The legal foundation for setting up councils does exist, but what is missing is the operationalisation of these working bodies. The action plan for implementation of the Community Policing Strategy should insist on bridging this gap.

Finally, what is often disregarded is that each community consists of men and women, girls and boys, who differently perceive threats at their safety and have a different feeling of their personal (un)safety. The phenomena such as violence, thefts, traffic accidents or natural disasters have different consequences on women and men. The sources of unsafety for women and men are different, as well as their feeling of personal safety. Therefore, in designing the activities for the prevention and enhancement of safety in the community, account should be taken also of whether individual groups (women, girls, men, boys) are more exposed to some threats (and which ones), at what places violence occurs, and what is the cause of their unsafety.



Three main messages

1. The protocol on operation of municipal safety councils should be developed and adopted

The valid legal framework for the establishment of municipal safety councils is appropriate. Some representatives of the police and local self-government authorities are considering additional legal regulation of councils (either through the Police Law or the Law on Local Self-Government). The idea is to make the formation of these bodies an obligation for all local self-governments. However, emphasis should be placed on strengthening the partnership through the development of a special protocol for improving safety and pre-empting crime at the local level. First of all, the protocol should regulate concrete mechanisms of cooperation between the local police and local authorities, and prescribe guidelines for operation of these councils. The Ministry of Interior (Mol) and the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government should initiate adoption of the protocol.

2. The action plan for the Community Policing Strategy should be adopted as soon as possible

The action plan implementing the Community Policing Strategy must not be too general. Qualitative and quantitative indicators, based on which it would be possible to monitor the effects of measures taken, should be envisaged for each activity. Deadlines or at least the duration should be defined for all activities. It is important to determine concrete persons or at least organisational units responsible for the implementation of planned activities. Finally, the cost for the implementation of activities should be calculated, regardless of whether the action plan will be implemented at the budget expense or from international grants.

3. Account should be taken of gender safety requirements at the local level

The gender perspective must be borne in mind when analysing and solving safety problems at the local level, since the sources of unsafety for women, men, boys and girls are different, as well as their feeling of personal safety. In addition, the participation of women in municipal safety bodies should be raised, so as to empower them to decide on safety problems in their communities. Police officers must be further trained about the extent to which gender roles and inequalities between women and men affect their safety.

Introduction

Political decision makers in Serbia place the struggle against crime in their top priority. Such struggle is often accompanied with arrests attractive for the media, the leaking of information on current investigations and statements that the crime rate has been reduced. Pre-emptive activities are missing. Crime prevention is not sufficiently attractive for politicians. The results of preventive work are not directly and promptly visible, but are shown within five or ten years. It is highly possible that the benefits of prevention will be reaped by the next government. This is not in the interest of any politician in Serbia. This is why actions against crime rely largely on punitive measures. What is invisible in this struggle are those scarce crime prevention activities undertaken in Serbian towns and municipalities. There has been almost no coverage on fourteen pre-emptive actions undertaken by the MoI in 2014.¹

Arrests followed by media hype do not solve the problem of crime in Serbia, save for being presented in media headlines. The resulting effect on crime reduction is hard to measure. Statistical analyses of criminal actions are necessary and important. The problem is that these analyses fail to interpret the reasons for a reduction or increase in crime. Punitive measures pronounced by courts do not explain the causes of criminal behaviour. They, in the best case, may help only determine the problem and offer a starting idea for crime prevention.

Moreover, there is a misconception in Serbia that only a police officer and prosecutor may affect crime reduction and enhance safety. The standards of the United Nations, Council of Europe and European Union promote a different solution.² Partnership is an indispensable prerequisite for effective crime prevention and improvement in safety. The goal is to build safe communities. This implies joint active work within the partnership of different stakeholders at the local level, with the aim to curb violence, disorder and crime activities, and to enhance the quality of human life. Partnership should be initiated by the police and local self-government.

The need for the partnership of different stakeholders in Serbian municipalities and towns has been recognised in several laws and strategic documents.³ In practice, partnership is most often implemented through the formation of municipal safety councils which aim to improve safety in communities. In practice, councils face various challenges and problems. One of the problems which may seriously jeopardise the idea of partnership is the police opinion that cooperation with local self-government authorities has so far not been satisfactory.⁴ Similarly, representatives of local self-governments believe that almost nothing takes place in terms of cooperation between the police and local self-government.⁵ This fundamental difference in attitudes is most visible in

-
- 1 These are short-term preventive actions: *Who Holds the Key to a Safe School; For Life Without Violence: Solve the Conflict in a Clever Way; Knowledge Against E-Violence; Domestic Violence is a Crime: Let's Take a Ball, Turn to Sports; Alcohol is not Cool; Prevent Violence Among Children; Be a Supporter Not a Hooligan; Stop Violence: Play Sports; Violence is Reality; Safe and Secure Summer; Enjoy Life: Drugs are Not My Choice; Safe Street, Safe City; Learn to Act in a Clever Way; Stop Violence; Silence for a Peaceful Dream.*
 - 2 See: the ECOSOC Resolution 2003/26 – Prevention of urban crime; ECOSOC Resolution 2006/20 – United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention; ECOSOC Resolution 2007/12 – Strategy for the period 2008-2011 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; ECOSOC Resolution 2008/24 – Strengthening prevention of urban crime: an integrated approach; Recommendation No. R (87) 19 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Organisation of Crime Prevention; Resolution 160 (2003) on local partnership for preventing and combating violence at school; Council Decision 2009/902/JHA of 30 November 2009 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and repealing Decision 2001/427/JHA.
 - 3 See: Article 17 of the Police Law (RS Official Gazette, Nos 101/2005, 63/2009 – Constitutional Court decision and 92/2011); Development Strategy of the Ministry of Interior 2011–2016, December 2010; Community Policing Strategy (RS Official Gazette, No 43/2013).
 - 4 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.
 - 5 Interview, representatives of local self-government bodies, 4 August 2014.

the discussion about the normative regulation of municipal safety councils. There is agreement on the need to legally regulate the operation of councils. The differences in opinion relate to which law should apply to councils. The police believe this must be the Law on Local Self-Government, whereas local self-governments favour the Police Law.

The idea about municipal safety councils is fundamentally beneficial as effective crime prevention entails partnership of different stakeholders in the community. The key problem is the quality of work of council members and the criteria to assess their success in crime prevention and improvement in safety.⁶ As the first municipal safety councils were set up far back in 2002 at the onset of the community policing concept, it would be reasonable to examine the current situation, results and scope of work of municipal safety councils. The latest analysis on the operation of municipal safety councils was carried out seven years ago by the Mol and the OSCE Mission to Serbia.

All the above indicates the need for an independent assessment of municipal safety councils in Serbia. Therefore, the primary aim of this Report is to raise public awareness about the concept and importance of partnership, notably between the police and local self-government, in building safe communities. The findings should help the Mol and Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government in drafting the action plan to implement the Community Policing Strategy, whose development is late for 17 months already. Furthermore, civil society organisations will be able to rely on the Report in taking their own positions to espouse appropriate mechanisms for the improvement of safety vis-à-vis the police and local self-government.

The first part of the Report contains a comparative overview of legal responsibilities of the local self-government in regard to safety and development of the community policing concept following the adoption of the strategic plan in April 2013. The second, main part analyses the operation of municipal safety councils so far. The gender dimension of local safety is then presented, followed by the analysis of the safety situation in Arandelovac, Golubac, Leskovac, Niška Banja, Novi Pazar and Paraćin. The research methodology is presented in the final section of the Report.

6 Gorazd Meško, Andrej Sotlar, "Prevenција kriminaliteta u lokalnim zajednicama – između *ad hoc* pristupa i na znanju utemeljenih preventivnih djelatnosti" (*Crime Prevention in Local Communities – Between the Ad Hoc Approach and Scientifically Established Preventive Activities*). *Policija i sigurnost*, 1, 2013, p. 46.

(De)centralisation of local safety

Message

It is necessary to understand that the police and prosecution are not the only ones responsible for safety, but that the responsibility also lies with the local community.

Comparative practice of developed democratic societies (the USA, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Finland, Sweden, Slovenia) shows that safety maintenance and improvement at the local level should not be the exclusive responsibility of the police and judicial bodies. Even though the local self-government authorities in Serbia do not have essential police powers, it does not mean that they should not or must not improve safety in their communities. Whatsoever, the idea of a safe community complements the principle of proper governance. Crime prevention and (un)safety are part of the idea that citizens should be provided with greater safety in relations with state administration authorities.⁷

The preventive role of local self-governments in Serbia may be effective through partnership with the police in the performance of some police activities such as: maintaining public order, providing assistance in cases of peril and offering other types of safety assistance to those in need, including the safety protection of life, rights, freedom and personal integrity of individuals, supporting the rule of law, and the regulation, control, assistance and oversight of road traffic.⁸

This section of the Report contains an overview of legal powers and possibilities of the local self-government to influence local safety. The community policing concept in Serbia is also presented, following the adoption of the strategic plan for 2013. These are the factors that can affect the decentralisation of decision making about citizens' safety. In this Report, safety is observed through the reference frame of human safety.

Local self-government and safety

The concept of human safety means that institutions must ensure ongoing protection and act pre-emptively in accordance with citizens' needs. The main purpose of safety is the protection of human life against threats, in line with long-term objectives of a human being as an individual.⁹ The main components of human safety are: (1) economic safety; (2) food safety; (3) health safety; (4) ecological safety; (5) personal safety; (6) community safety; (7) political safety.¹⁰ Community safety is the sixth factor of the human safety concept. It implies the process where the key institutions of a community (a town, municipality or local community) join within a partnership to ensure a safer environment for everyone.

7 Maurice Chalom, Lucie Leonard, Franz Vanderschueren, Claude Vezina. *Urban Safety and Good Governance*. Montreal: International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2001.

8 Snežana Đorđević. "Analiza primene principa supsidijarnosti u Republici Srbiji" (*Analysis of Application of the Subsidiarity Principle in the Republic of Serbia*), in: "Studija o primeni načela supsidijarnosti u Republici Srbiji" (*Study on Application of the Subsidiarity Principle in the Republic of Serbia*), eds: Snežana Đorđević, Miroslav Prokopijević, Dejan Milenković. Belgrade, Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government, 2013, p. 116.

9 United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

10 Ibid, p. 24.

Given such understanding of safety, it is possible to determine seventeen legal obligations and possibilities (Table 1) based on which the local self-government may improve safety at the local level. Essential for the creation of a safe community is the legal obligation of the police to cooperate with the local self-government.

Table 1: Powers and possibilities of the local self-government to improve safety¹¹

Economic safety	Food safety	Health safety	Ecological safety	Personal safety	Community safety	Political safety
(1) Adopts the municipality's budget and final statement.	(2) Protects citizens against infectious diseases; (3) Examines health safety of staples and objects of general use in production, trading and imports; (4) Supplies drinkable water to the population.	(5) Prepares, proposes and establishes institutions of primary healthcare; (6) Provides short-term accommodation services in shelters; (7) Ensures safety of socially vulnerable persons.	(8) Ensures environmental protection and adopts the environmental protection programme; (9) Protects against natural and other disasters; (10) Participates in the protection and rescue system in emergency situations.	(11) Ensures the maintenance of residential buildings and the safety of their use; (12) Organises the use of construction land; 13) Ensures the construction, reconstruction, maintenance and use of local roads, streets and other public facilities of municipal importance; (14) Prescribes the working hours for catering, trade and handicraft facilities.	(15) Arranges and ensures the performance and development of utilities activities; (16) The police must cooperate with the local self-government in order to ensure the safety of persons and property.	(17) Ensures the exercise, protection and promotion of human and minority rights, and public information in the municipality.

Within the survey, local self-governments and police stations in Serbia were asked to assess the application of concrete powers based on the Law on Local Self-Government and the Police Law.¹² They were asked to assess their own work, based on their subjective feeling, on the scale from 1 to 5, but also the work of the other institution – the local self-government, i.e. the police.¹³ These data were compared, though to a limited extent due to methodological differences, with the CeSID survey of December 2013 about citizen satisfaction in 34 municipalities in Serbia.¹⁴

11 The table was drawn based on the following: the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (RS Official Gazette, No 98/2006), Law on Local Self-Government (RS Official Gazette, Nos 129/2007 and 83/2014 – other law), Police Law (RS Official Gazette, Nos 101/2005, 63/2009 – Constitutional Court decision and 92/2011).

12 The BCSP questionnaire was answered by 42 local self-government units in Serbia. The answer from the MoI was not received until the moment of drafting the Report, although police stations had submitted their answers to the BCSP questionnaire to the Cabinet of the Minister of Interior.

13 The grading was of school type – 1 means the specific power cannot be applied at all; 5 means the power is entirely applied.

14 CeSID. Istraživanje zadovoljstva građana (*Survey of Citizen Satisfaction*), Belgrade: Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, 2014.

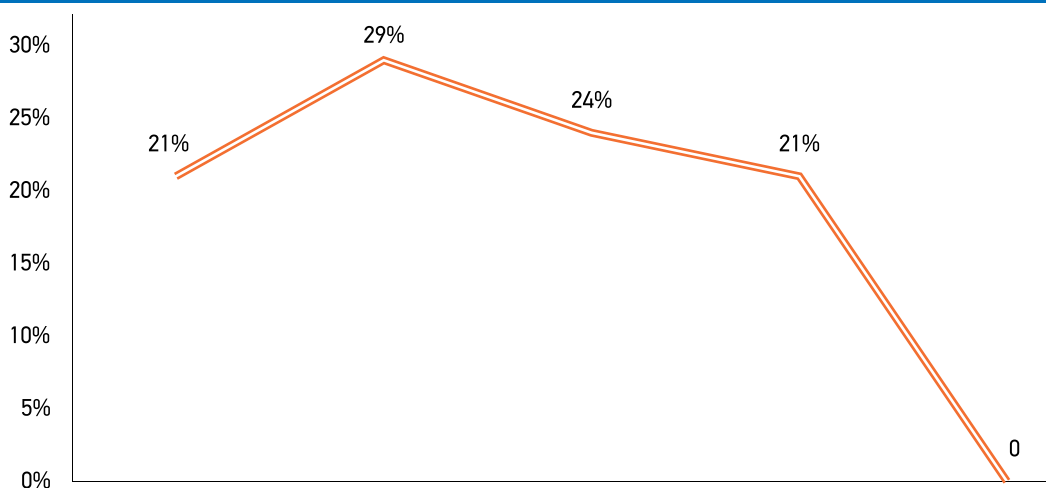
The majority of self-governments are highly satisfied with the performance of utilities activities.¹⁵ As many as 72% of surveyed municipalities believe that the local self-government performs utilities activities very well or excellently. Citizens' attitudes are entirely different. More than two-thirds (65%) are dissatisfied with the supply of water, sewerage.¹⁶ Besides, more than a half of citizens are dissatisfied with the cleanliness of their towns and the traffic situation (53%).¹⁷

Similarly, in regard to the arrangement and use of construction land, more than two-thirds (73%) of Serbian local self-governments believe these activities are performed very good and excellently. In contrast, only 4% of citizens believe that construction and urban activities are excellently performed by municipalities.¹⁸ Furthermore, local self-governments assess their care about the environment as very good (615). However, some local self-governments (17%) are highly self-critical, believing that the quality of their environmental work is not good. Conversely, somewhat less than a half of citizens (48%) are not satisfied with environmental quality, at the same time believing that the local self-government need not invest in this field.¹⁹

The lack of self-criticism among towns and municipalities, or citizens' insufficient knowledge about the work of local self-government authorities has also been noticed in regard to powers needed to improve safety. This relates to the maintenance of local and uncategorised roads and streets, protection against natural disasters, activities regarding catering facilities, ensuring the protection of human rights.

The greatest differences in the self-assessment of Serbia's local self-governments have been ascertained for the safety of residential buildings (Chart 1) and the analysis of the safety situation and submission of proposals to the police on how to improve safety (Chart 2). No local self-government believes that the situation in these fields is satisfactory. A half (50%) of surveyed local self-governments in Serbia believe that the maintenance of residential buildings is not satisfactory.

Chart 1: Maintaining the safety of residential buildings



15 Utilities activities include: the supply of drinking water, cleaning and removal of atmospheric and waste waters, production and distribution of thermal energy, management of municipal waste, urban and suburban transportation of passengers, management of cemeteries and funeral services, management of public parking lots, ensuring public lighting, management of green markets, maintenance of streets and roads, hygiene maintenance of public surfaces, maintenance of green surfaces, chimney services and zoo-hygiene activities.

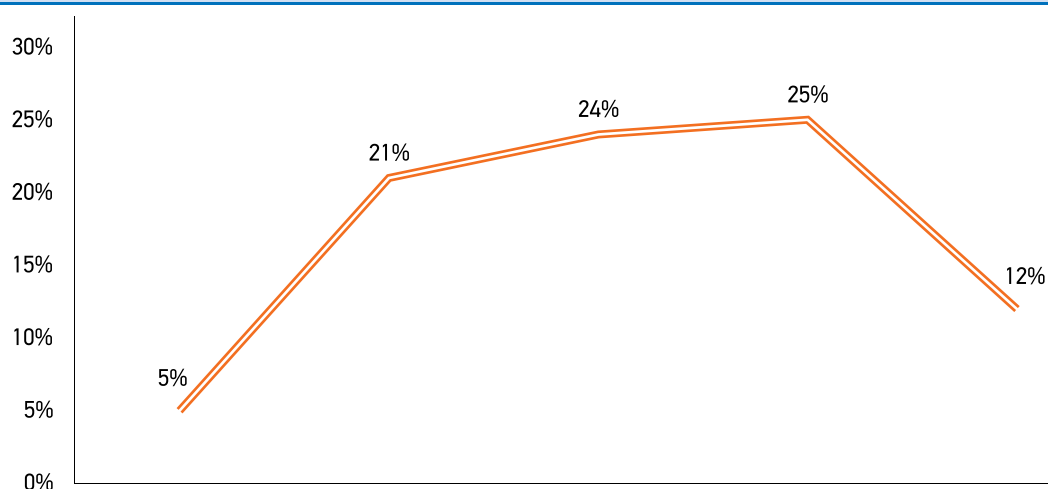
16 CeSID. Istraživanje zadovoljstva građana (*Survey of Citizen Satisfaction*), Belgrade: Centre for Free Elections and Democracy, 2014, p. 42.

17 Ibid, p. 42.

18 Ibid, p. 24.

19 Ibid, p. 37.

Chart 2: Determining safety priorities of persons and property



Cooperation for the purpose of establishing safety priorities, between an assembly or executive body of the self-government and the police, varies in intensity in Serbian municipalities and towns. Somewhat more than a third of surveyed municipalities (38%) believe this power is being exercised very well or excellently, while 24% believe it is exercised well and 26% believe it is at a low level.

The Police Law does not stipulate precisely the manner of cooperation between the local self-government and police, which represents a weakness. In practice, cooperation implies police participation in the operation of municipal safety councils. Further, the police submit to the president of the municipality, president of the local assembly or mayor, daily, ten-day and monthly reports on the safety situation in the local community. The data received by local self-governments pertain to safety incidents, but also include statistics (about the number of criminal and traffic offenses etc) at the county level. Once a year, the police district submits the safety situation report to the assembly.²⁰

The problem concerns the fact that the described practices have not been noticed in all municipalities and towns in Serbia. Communication between a local self-government and the police largely depends on the quality of personal relations between the mayor or the municipal president with the head of the police district or station. In some local self-governments, such as Novi Pazar, the police do not even wish to submit the safety reports because the persons who were to receive such data have not undergone a security check.²¹ Not a single regulation stipulates such condition. Three years ago, Kragujevac served as an example of good practice of cooperation between the local self-government and police. Due to political conflicts in the town, such cooperation is now of very low intensity.²²

Given the above deficiencies, it is important to implement the Community Policing Strategy, adopted by the Serbian Government in August 2013. The implementation of the Strategy is not under the exclusive remit of the police though it relates to police work, precisely because the Government adopted it. The fourth area of Strategy development relates to safe partnership among the police, government authorities, local self-governments and civil society.²³ What poses a problem is that the action plan implementing the Strategy has still not been adopted, though the Government was obliged to adopt it by end-July 2013.

20 Interview, representatives of local self-governments, 4 August 2014.

21 Interview, representative of the City of Novi Pazar, 5 November 2014.

22 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

23 Community Policing Strategy (RS Official Gazette, No 43/2013), p. 5.

Development of community policing

The international community is still the main initiator of the development of community policing, regardless of twelve years of implementation of different activities aimed at solving the causes of the safety problem and building partnerships. Since 2002, the community policing concept has been implemented in numerous pilot municipalities and towns in Serbia.²⁴ The first draft strategic plan of community policing was completed in 2007. Six years later, the Community Policing Strategy was adopted. The aim of the 2013 Strategy was to complete the trial phase of the adoption of the “new model of organisation and method of police work”²⁵ in Serbia. The action plan has still not been adopted, irrespective of great expectations from implementation of the Strategy. Namely, while developing the Strategy there was an option to finance the implementation of the strategic plan. The Kingdom of Norway offered financial support of one million euros.²⁶ This did not take place as the action plan has not been adopted. An additional problem which may aggravate the overall situation in terms of further development of community policing is the intention of some MoI representatives to embark again on drafting the strategic plan.

Attempts have been made to adopt the action plan. In 2013, four workshops were organised, involving representatives of the MoI, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government, Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Education, Office for Human and Minority Rights, and Office for Cooperation with Civil Society.²⁷ Another workshop was organised in late 2014. The draft action plan is full of deficiencies and is too general. There are no qualitative and quantitative indicators for the implementation of activities. Deadlines have not been specified either. Funds for implementation of the action plan have not been determined. New changes to action plan are planned following the workshop held in November 2014. Another problem is the fact that most persons who participated in 2013 did not attend the latest workshop.

The action plan has not been adopted for political reasons. The first reason is the Government reshuffling, which ended in September 2013. This was followed by preparations for extraordinary elections in Serbia. The new Government was established in February 2014.²⁸ The development of community policing was definitely not a priority of the then Government, in contrast to the struggle against corruption.²⁹ Moreover, unlike corruption, crime prevention and local safety issues are not a priority for the European Union. This is why the European Union does not issue any exclusive requirements for Serbia in this field. The strategic plan was adopted primarily because the Kingdom of Norway promised to finance its implementation.³⁰ Had it been otherwise, it is questionable whether the strategy would have been adopted. Another problem is that the strategy was adopted by the Serbian Government and not by the MoI – the aim was to oblige all players (primarily the police and local self-government) to participate in implementation of the action plan. Though the idea is good, it has been rendered senseless because of the Government’s intention to transfer the entire financial burden on the MoI budget, after two years of implementation of the action plan

24 About the development of community policing before the adoption of the strategic plan, see: Dave Mellish, Zoran Đurđević. “Rezultati evaluacije projekta policije u lokalnoj zajednici i bezbedna zajednica u Srbiji” (*Results of Evaluation of the Project of Community Policing and Safe Community in Serbia*), *Nauka, bezbednost, policija*, 9 (2-3), 2004, p. 215-236; Đorđević Saša. “Izgradnja bezbedne zajednice” (*Building a Safe Community*), “Zbirka predloga praktične politike za reformu policije u Srbiji” (*Collection of Proposals of Practical Policy for Police Reform in Serbia*) 6, p. 6-27.

25 Community Policing Strategy (RS Official Gazette, No 43/2013), p. 1.

26 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

27 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

28 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

29 The action plan implementing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy was adopted within the defined framework – three months after the Strategy was adopted.

30 The final part of the Community Policing Strategy states that implementation costs of the action plan in the first two years would be covered by the grant of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The costs of implementation of the new action plan will be covered from regular funds designated for the MoI and will not have any additional financial effects on budgets of all levels of authorities.

under Norway's auspices.³¹ This proves the lack of political readiness to implement the community policing concept because the responsibility is not equally divided among government authorities, notably the MoI and the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government. Moreover, the current pressures on the budget of the Republic are extremely strong.

The absence of the action plan has slowed the activities that should regulate the operation of municipal safety councils. The situation has changed in some other fields. The police have started to nominate prevention and community policing officers. They are active in headquarters of police districts and are in charge of coordination of community policing in the territory of the entire county. Currently, one or two police officers have been assigned to each police district (depending on the size of the territory covered by the district). The duties of these officers concern community policing. There are special sections in bigger towns such as Kragujevac, Novi Sad and Niš. A department has been set up in the Belgrade Police Directorate. The level of community policing has thus been raised and an institutional organisational framework has been set up. The problem is that this is not the only task for community policemen. Currently, they cannot entirely devote themselves to crime prevention. It is estimated that only 10% of time is spent on prevention-related activities.³² Moreover, there is complete lack of understanding among colleagues of prevention and community police officers. Besides, their superiors are not sure about how to value their work, believing even that it is not police work at all.³³

In August 2014, the General Police Directorate sent an instruction to all heads of police districts in Serbia to assign at least one "sectoral" policeman in each security sector (the basic police unit equivalent to the local community). The role of these policemen is similar to that of contact police officers in Croatia: the establishment of everyday and direct relations with citizens in a precisely defined territory. The aim is to find preventive solutions relating to crime, fear of crime, disorders and violence in the neighbourhood.³⁴

The scope of work of prevention and community police officers and sectoral policemen has still not been precisely stipulated. For the time being, only an instruction has been sent in relation to community policing by security sectors. Training for these officers has still not been implemented. This has already been done in Montenegro and Croatia.

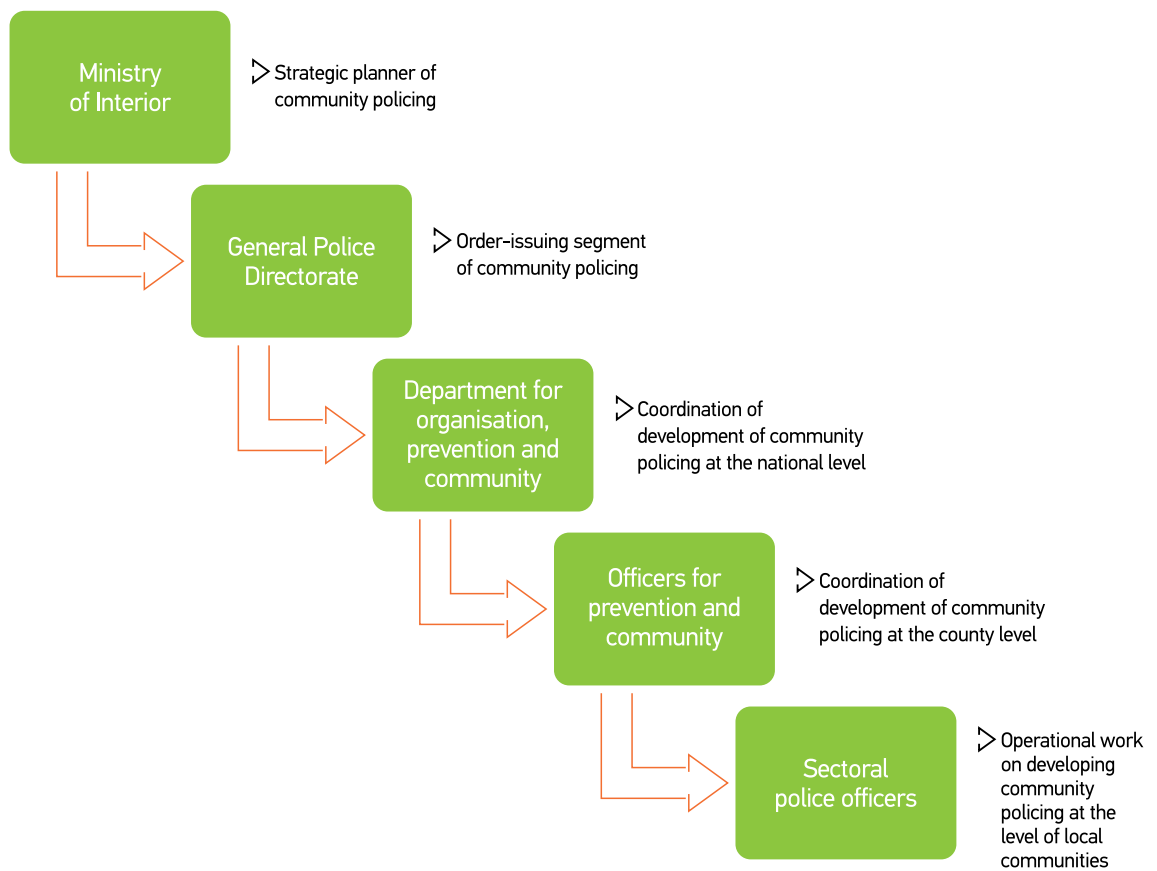
31 Community Policing Strategy (RS Official Gazette, No 43/2013), p. 10.

32 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

33 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

34 Irena Cajner Mraović, Vladimir Faber, Goran Volarević. "Strategija delovanja policije u zajednici" (*Strategy of Community Policing*). Zagreb: Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia, Police Academy, 2003.

Figure 1: Analysis of the organisational set-up of community policing in Serbia



In further decentralisation of local safety, the development of community policing in local communities should be fostered and the scope of work of municipal safety bodies determined.

Assessment of municipal safety councils

Message

A special protocol should regulate the operation of municipal safety councils.

It is estimated that 76 towns and municipalities in Serbia (45%) have municipal safety councils (Chart 3).³⁵ The number of councils has fallen by 7% relative to the 2007 research by the MoI. In 2007, of 170 towns and municipalities, safety councils existed in 90 of them.³⁶ The majority of municipal safety councils (74%) were formed within the municipal or town assembly, while a smaller number (21%) operate within the cabinet of the municipal president or the mayor. Municipal safety councils are thus given greater importance because of stronger legitimacy.

Chart 3: Is there a body in your municipality/town in charge of improving safety?

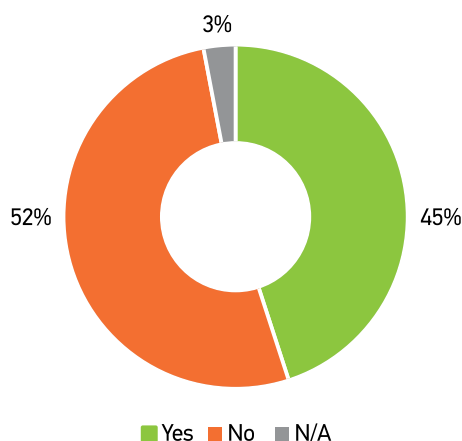
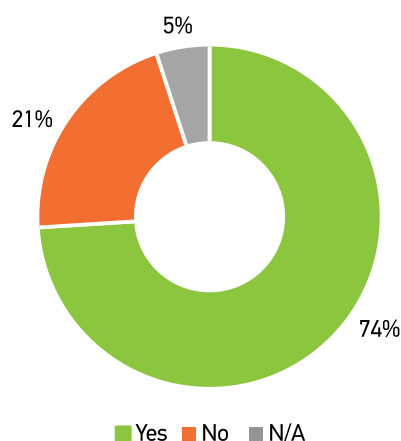


Chart 4: Is there a body in your municipality/town in charge of traffic safety activities?



The number of local bodies coordinating road traffic safety is significantly higher than the number of municipal safety councils. In as much as 74% of Serbian municipalities and towns (Chart 4), there are bodies coordinating the activities of road traffic safety. One of the reasons is the legal possibility of executive local self-government bodies to set up such bodies.³⁷ It is noteworthy that local self-government units are not obliged to establish local traffic safety bodies, but may do so if deemed necessary. Furthermore, the Law on Traffic Safety enables the establishment of the body coordinating the activities of road traffic safety at the national level. Such body was set up in 2014.³⁸ A similar idea has been put forward for crime prevention. The initial framework of the National Crime Prevention Strategy of 2008 proposed the idea of setting up the National Crime Prevention Council.³⁹ The Council has never been created.

35 The assessment was made based on answers to the BCSP questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled in by 42 local self-government units in Serbia.

36 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

37 Article 8 of the Law on Road Traffic Safety (RS Official Gazette, Nos 41/2009, 53/2010, 101/2011, 32/2013 – Constitutional Court decision and 55/2014).

38 Decision on Setting Up the Coordinating Body for Road Traffic Safety (RS Official Gazette, No 62/2014).

39 Saša Đorđević. "Fostering the Creation of National Crime Prevention in Serbia", *Policing in Central and Eastern Europe – Social Control of Unconventional Deviance*, eds. Gorazd Meško, Andrej Sotlar, John Winterdyk. Ljubljana: Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, p. 214-225.

One of the main topics in the discussion between representatives of the local self-government and the police is the establishment of the legal basis for formation of municipal safety councils. This is followed by the role of local self-government units in nominating heads of police districts or stations. The chance for increasing the number of councils certainly exists provided it is stipulated by law as it is the case with the Law on Road Traffic Safety. What is, however, more important is to understand that such possibility does not necessarily raise the quality of work of such bodies. A greater number of municipal safety councils is not the same as the quality of their work.

It is therefore necessary to shift the current dialogue and efforts of the police and local-self government from discussions about the legal basis for the creation of municipal safety councils to building the environment which implies the fulfilment of the following assumptions:

1. there is a political decision that councils are necessary;
2. there are partnership relations between different stakeholders at the local level, primarily the police and local self-government;
3. concrete guidelines have been prescribed for the establishment and operation of councils; financial and human resources for the operation of councils have been provided;
4. there are qualified leaders in the local community who are capable of taking preventive activities and mobilising actors at the local level;
5. effective preventive programmes for enhancing safety have been developed.⁴⁰

The fulfilment of these assumptions helps create an environment where the result of preventive activities against crime, violence or fear of crime is visible. The following part of the Report contains the assessment of the current situation relating to these assumptions.

Political decision

Twelve years have passed since the establishment of the first municipal safety council as part of community policing. In the meantime, there has been no full political support at the national level to the idea that municipal safety councils and community policing can improve citizens' safety in Serbian municipalities and towns.

Such situation persists regardless of positive results of pilot projects implemented in Vrnjačka Banja, Kragujevac, Zvezdara and Novi Bečej far back in 2002.⁴¹ The implementation of pilot projects from 2002 to 2004 was followed by drafting of a strategic document. This was one of the main recommendations within the evaluation of pilot projects. The Strategy was drafted for three years and completed in 2007, whilst the adoption procedure protracted over six years. The action plan for the 2013 Strategy has still not been adopted. This proves that crime prevention is insufficiently attractive to politicians. The results of preventive work are not directly and promptly visible, but are

40 Krunoslav Borovec. "Razvoj vijeća za prevenciju kriminaliteta u lokalnoj zajednici prema održivim i učinkovitim koalicijama" (*Development of Crime Prevention Councils in the Local Community Towards Sustainable and Effective Coalitions*), *Policija i sigurnost*, 1, 2013, p. 1-25.

41 Dave Mellish, Zoran Đurđević. "Rezultati evaluacije projekta policije u lokalnoj zajednici i bezbedna zajednica u Srbiji" (Results of Evaluation of the Police Project in Local Community and Safe Community in Serbia), *Nauka, bezbednost, policija*, 9(2-3), 2004, p. 215-236.

shown within five or ten years. It is highly possible that the benefits of prevention will be reaped by the next government. This is not in the interest of any politician in Serbia.

Seven months into his mandate, the new Minister of Interior has announced four times the implementation of community policing activities. Not even once has the development of the action plan implementing the Community Policing Strategy been mentioned, nor the idea of partnership with the local self-government and other players in Serbian towns and municipalities which can affect safety, or the idea of municipal safety councils. No statement of the police director about the development of community policing has been found through the search of media articles over the past year. The Mol operational plan for 2014, published on 17 October 2014, envisages the adoption of the action plan implementing the Community Policing Strategy.⁴²

In August 2014, the Minister of Interior announced that “the police will return to the community to a higher degree”, reminding that “in the past almost each local community or each street had its own patrolling police officer and that a sufficient number of policemen will be dispatched to each place where criminal offences are being perpetrated”.⁴³ The statement was given at the moment when the police director sent an instruction to all heads of police districts to assign at least one policeman in charge of security in the local community. During his visit to the Kraljevo police district, the Minister said that “the police must be the master of situation in the field in regard to crime, which is why the police should engage more in the local community”.⁴⁴ When the Council of Europe delegation visited Serbia in October 2014, it was stated that “we are already working on community policing, aiming to enhance the safety of all citizens of Serbia”.⁴⁵ The media reported not a single word about the nature of these activities. Finally, during the visit of representatives of the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade, the Mol underscored in its statement the interest in the “expert support that the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade can provide in the field of professional training and improvement of the Mol work on respecting human rights, community policing, struggle against corruption and crime”.⁴⁶

The Minister of State Administration and Local Self-Government mentioned the issue of safety on the occasion of announcing amendments to the Law on Communal Police, by saying that “the decision on employing community police officers lies with a local self-government unit, for the purpose of raising effectiveness and capacity, and arranging life in the local community, but in accordance with austerity measures, taking into account the scope for additional employment”.⁴⁷ Such public statements indicate that political decision makers still fail to provide full support to the idea that municipal safety councils are needed.

The situation is different at the local level. Crime prevention and operation of municipal safety councils are discussed much more widely. There is a positive attitude that municipal safety councils are needed to citizens in Serbian municipalities and towns. Some municipalities (Golubac, Paraćin, Arandelovac) are planning to establish municipal safety councils, while others are developing strategic local safety plans (Leskovac, Novi Pazar).⁴⁸ Police officers in charge of prevention also believe that a political decision does exist, in the interest of the local community and police. However, such decision is not fully and appropriately applied in practice.

42 Ministry of Interior. *Fact Sheet*. Belgrade: Ministry of Interior, 2014, p. 145.

43 Telegraf. “Stefanović: Imamo dokaze, formirana radna grupa za Dragoslava Kosmajca” (*Stefanović: We Have Evidence, Working Group for Dragoslav Kosmajac Set Up*), 4 August 2014, <<http://goo.gl/OeZHHa>>.

44 RTS. “Stefanović: Dobra bezbednosna situacija” (*Stefanović: Good Safety Situation*), 28 June 2014, <<http://goo.gl/CJTnG6>>.

45 RTS. “Stefanović sa Seidovim o reformama u policiji” (*Stefanović Talks to Sejidov about Police Reforms*), 28 October 2014, <<http://goo.gl/hKpcnA>>.

46 Ministry of Interior. “Ministar Stefanović sastao se sa šefom Kancelarije Saveta Evrope u Beogradu” (*Minister Stefanović Meets the Head of the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade*), 14 November 2014, <<http://goo.gl/sb1mOt>>.

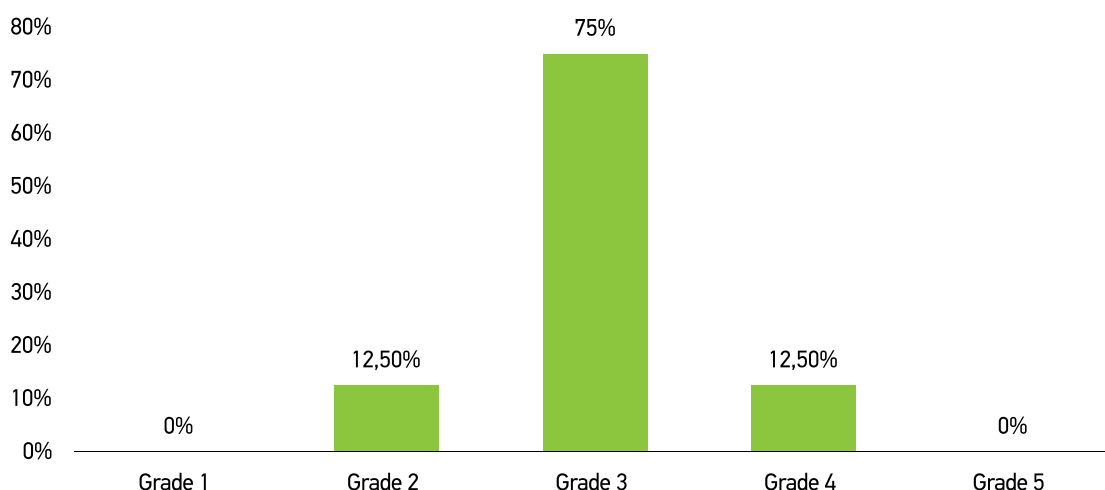
47 RTS. “Šira ovlašćenja za komunalne policajce” (*Wider Powers for Communal Policemen*), 23 November 2014, <<http://goo.gl/jaJfSl>>.

48 Interviews with representatives of six local self-governments in Serbia, October 2014.

Police officers believe that local self-governments are interested in improving safety, but that their initiative is missing. The problem is also reflected in the fact that local self-governments and the police do not determine the same safety issues as priorities in a particular local community. Some issues identified by local self-governments are often outside of the police remit.⁴⁹ Frequent governance changes at the local level and the re-examination of activities implemented by predecessors impact the decision to launch a preventive activity. Local self-governments do not have explicit powers in the field of safety, which exacerbates cooperation, whereas the Police Law obliges the police to cooperate and examine the priorities of Serbian municipalities and towns. By contrast, local self-governments are not obliged to examine the safety priorities defined by the police.⁵⁰ The situation becomes particularly complex in cases of conflict between police district heads and mayors, as it has happened in Kragujevac.

What is encouraging is the positive assessment of police officers in charge of prevention in police districts, about the cooperation between the police and local self-government in improving safety. A vast majority of respondents (75%) believe the situation is good.

Chart 5: Assessment of police officers engaged in preventive activities about the existence of the political decision on the need for cooperation between the police and local self-government for the purpose of improving safety



Partnership relations

Representatives of the police and local self-government interpret differently the quality of their cooperation. They together try to have a positive attitude. This is important because of further promotion of the idea to build safe communities. The quality of cooperation depends most on personal relations between representatives of local authorities and the local police. It is noteworthy that the intensity and quality of cooperation vary depending on a particular municipality or town.

Police managers believe that the community policing concept is being politicised. This was noticed the moment when local politicians began to equate the community policing concept with police decentralisation, i.e. they thought they could exert influence on the appointment of police district

⁴⁹ Professional consultations with Mol representatives, 25 November 2014.

⁵⁰ Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

heads.⁵¹ Under the new amendments to the Police Law, it is highly possible that the opinion about candidates for police district or station heads will be sought from local authorities.⁵² This does not mean that they will have any influence on the selection of candidates. Police officers in charge of prevention believe the intensity of cooperation with the local self-government depends on the current political situation in the municipality or town. This is why some police officers believe that the establishment of councils should be separated from mandates of town or municipal authorities, so as to ensure work continuity. There are even attitudes that police officers in local self-governments “are good only when they can be used for something – e.g. as cheap workforce in the headquarters for emergency situations”. Regardless of such a negative attitude, primarily towards politicians, cooperation is considered useful for the sake of exchanging information.⁵³

Local self-government representatives generally believe that cooperation with the police is good or appropriate given the closed nature of this institution. Representatives of local authorities are satisfied when they regularly receive information from the police. They believe that cooperation depends most on the quality of personal relations between the municipal president or mayor with the police district head or police station commander. Local self-governments wish to emphasise material assistance to the greatest extent (cars, fuel, printers, alcometers, premises), which they provide to police stations. Some municipalities, however, have problems. The police refuse to share information and coordination is lacking. Cooperation in some municipalities was even good until late 2013, whereafter it ceased. The police lack proactive work. The problem that they particularly emphasise, believing it slows down cooperation, is centralised decision-making at the MoI because “the approval from Belgrade is needed for a simple thing about an event”. Nonetheless, the quality of cooperation with the police is much better than with the prosecution and courts.⁵⁴

Similar findings have been obtained in the analysis of answers to the BCSP questionnaire. The majority of Serbian municipalities and towns (41%) where municipal safety bodies operate have assessed cooperation with the police as very good (Chart 6). Such attitude reflects the fact that police district heads or police station commanders (police managers) are the most important part of the structure of municipal safety councils, just after representatives of local authorities. Whatsoever, police officers believe that the entire work of municipal safety councils depends primarily on police managers.⁵⁵ Still, such assessment diminishes taking into account the local self-governments without municipal safety councils (Chart 7). Somewhat less than a third of local self-governments in Serbia (31%) consider cooperation with the police very good. This may suggest that the existence of municipal safety councils does affect, to a particular extent, the quality of cooperation between the local self-government and local police.

51 Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.

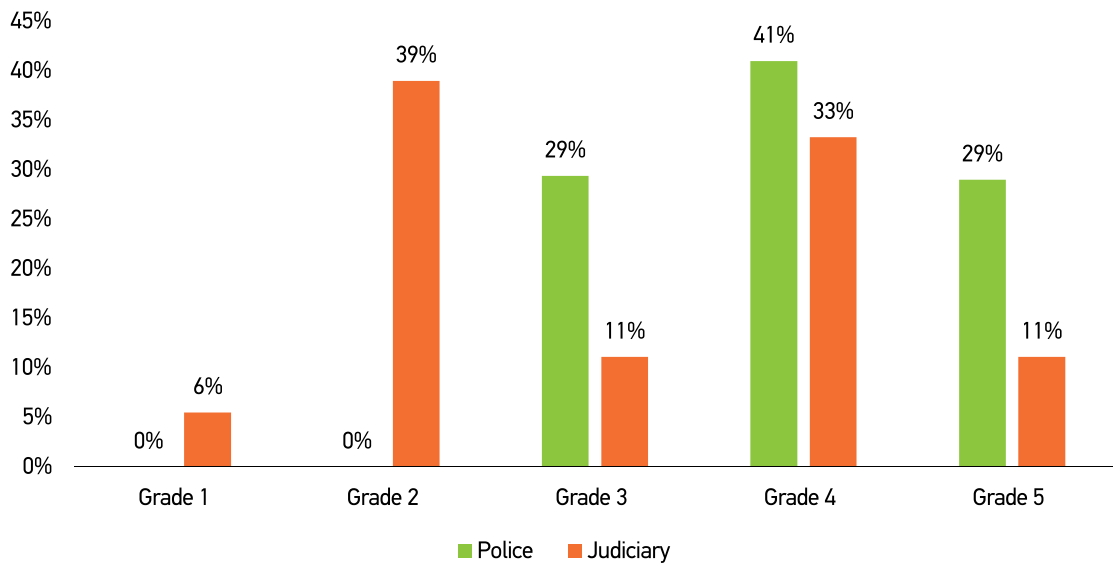
52 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

53 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

54 Interviews with representatives of six local self-governments in Serbia, October 2014.

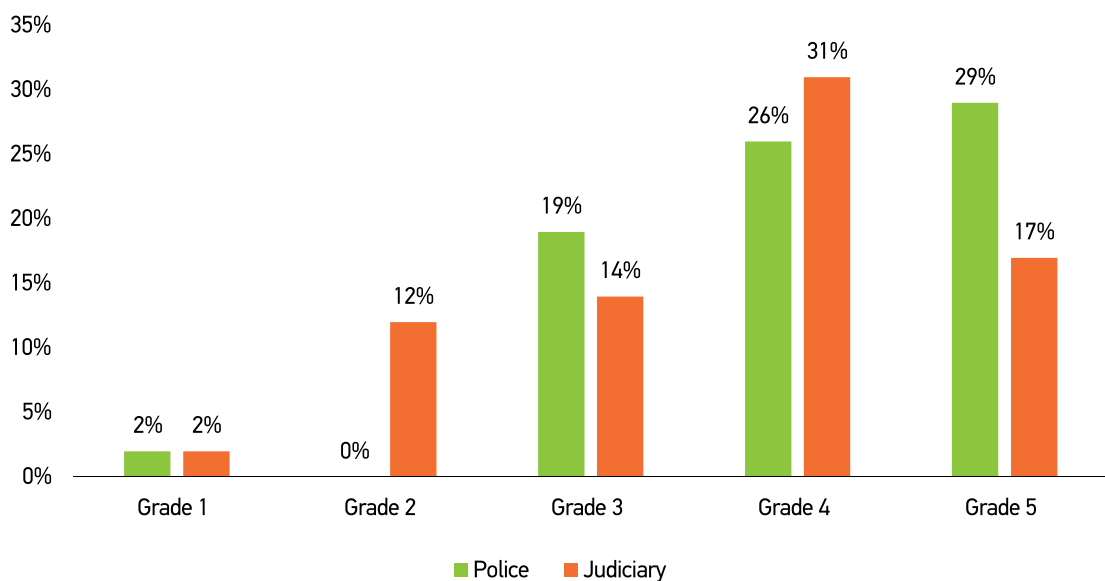
55 Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

Chart 6: Assessment of cooperation of municipal safety councils with the police and judicial bodies at the local level



The quality of cooperation between municipal safety councils (Chart 6) and the local self-government (Chart 7) with judicial authorities (the prosecution, courts) is lower compared to the police. Representatives of local self-governments believe the prosecution should be involved in operation of municipal safety councils. According to police managers, cooperation with the prosecution varies in quality depending on the town. The problem of different approaches to the classification of criminal offences is mentioned. Prosecutors link their work to concrete investigations to a higher extent and do not observe safety in a wider context.⁵⁶ This Report does not take into account the prosecutors' attitude.

Chart 7: Assessment of cooperation of the local self-government with the police and judicial bodies at the local level



⁵⁶ Interview, Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing, 14 November 2014.



Functioning of councils

There is no legal basis for the establishment of special working or temporary municipal safety councils at the national level. The Law on Local Self-Government and municipal statutes as supreme legal acts of local self-government units are most often taken as the legal basis for the establishment of municipal safety councils (Chart 8).⁵⁷ The Law on Local Self-Government enables municipal assemblies to establish permanent or temporary working bodies to examine issues under their remit. The main role of working bodies is to issue opinions on draft regulations and decisions adopted by the municipal assembly, but also to perform other activities if so stipulated by the municipal statute. The number of working bodies, selection, rights and duties of the president and members of working bodies are determined by the municipal statute.

The Statute regulates the organisation and operation of bodies and services in a municipality or town. Some statutes of towns envisage in advance the establishment of working safety bodies. For instance, the City of Novi Sad Statute stipulates the establishment of the Council for Public Order and Safety as a working body within the Assembly.⁵⁸ In some other towns (Novi Pazar, Kragujevac, Belgrade), the possibility of establishing working safety bodies has not been explicitly envisaged. However, it is possible that the town assembly may set up permanent or temporary working bodies. The rules of procedure of the town assembly further operationalise the organisation and operation of such bodies. The identical situation exists in Serbian municipalities.

The second possibility is that the municipal president establishes working bodies needed for functioning of the municipal administration. The Law on Local Self-Government does not envisage direct responsibility or the possibility of the municipal president to establish such bodies. It has been, however, stipulated that he/she may perform activities prescribed by the municipal statute or another regulation.⁵⁹ This means that municipalities may vest the president with supplementary responsibilities, including the creation of working bodies. For instance, the president of the Čukarica municipality has the power to establish committees and other bodies needed for more efficient functioning of the municipal administration in accordance with law and the statute. The president of the Alibunar municipality may set up professional working bodies for particular activities under its remit.

The former possibility is more frequently used in Serbia – municipal assemblies, and not municipal presidents, set up working bodies in charge of improving safety (Chart 8). It is assessed that there are no problems regarding the adoption of a regulation governing the operation of municipal safety councils (Chart 9). The authors of this Report believe a law (the Police Law or Law on Local Self-Government) need not stipulate the establishment of municipal safety councils, nor should such an option be envisaged as it is the case with the Law on Traffic Safety. Municipal safety councils can be set up based on the existing legal framework. The current efforts in introduction of the legal obligation should be abandoned and emphasis should be placed on strengthening partnerships through the development of a special protocol for improving safety and preventing crime at the local level. Similar protocols have been drafted in the field of protection of children and pupils against violence, abuse and neglect in educational institutions and cases of domestic violence.

57 Article 36 of Law on Local Self-Government (RS Official Gazette, Nos 129/2007 and 83/2014 – other law).

58 Article 26 of the City of Novi Sad Statute (Official Journal of the Novi Sad City, No 30/2008).

59 Article 44 of Law on Local Self-Government (RS Official Gazette, Nos 129/2007 and 83/2014 – other law).

Chart 8: Where was a municipal safety council set up in your municipality/town?

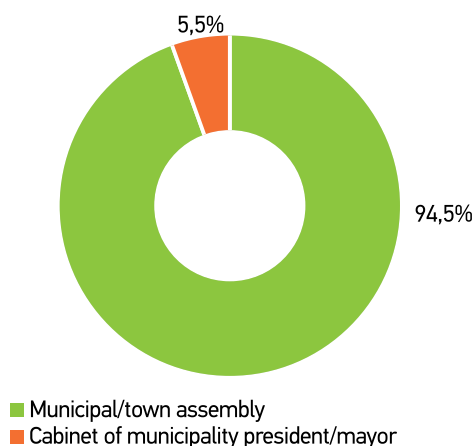
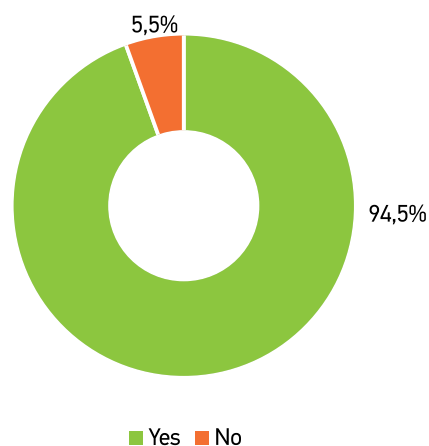
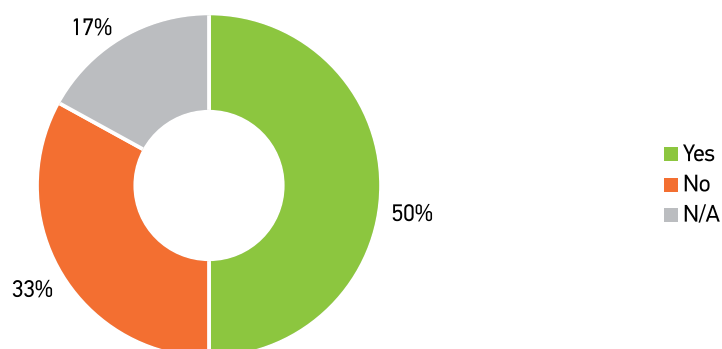


Chart 9: Does a regulation or document stipulate the scope of work of the municipal/town safety council?



The idea of the establishment of municipal safety councils is attractive for a half of municipalities and towns which have not set up such councils. The second half do not find the idea attractive (Chart 10). Representatives of some municipalities believe safety councils will enable better exchange of information and coordination between different local stakeholders for the sake of improving safety.⁶⁰ In Golubac, however, there are several concrete reasons for the establishment of municipal safety councils. Safety is the precondition for successful tourism development. For instance, several thousand tourists visit Golubac during summer. Besides, Golubac is a transit area for a large number of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens travelling to their countries. There are also problems regarding the smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco due to the vicinity of the Romanian border. What has also been noticed is greater availability of “lighter” drugs and an increase in domestic violence.⁶¹ In principle, each local self-government unit should decide independently on the creation of municipal safety councils depending on the gravity of safety problems.

Chart 10: Does your municipality/town plan to establish a special municipal/town body in charge of improving citizens' safety?



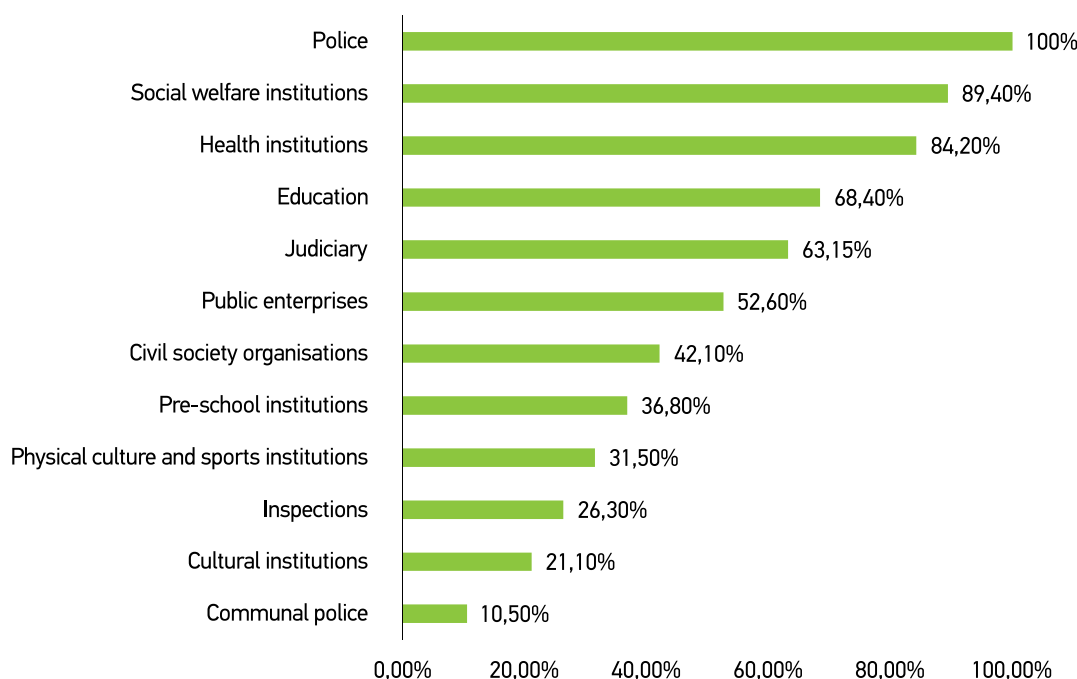
60 Interview, representatives of the Arandelovac municipality, 14 November 2014; Interview, a representative of the Paraćin municipality, 14 October 2014.

61 Interview, a representative of the Golubac municipality, 7 October 2014.



The structure of the existing municipal safety councils differs across Serbian municipalities and towns. Differences exist also depending on safety problems in the territory of a local self-government. For instance, different players tasked with improving safety in the community are involved in the council. These are, most often, representatives of the local self-government, which establish municipal safety councils, including police districts or stations, social security and healthcare institutions (Chart 10). The number of members and functions is also different. Most frequently, the number of members ranges from 10 to 20.

Chart 11: Percentage of involvement of institutions in operation of municipal safety councils



As they establish them and are supposed to manage their activities, local authorities play the crucial role in operation of municipal safety councils. It is estimated that police representatives participate in all municipal safety councils that have been established. This has been confirmed also through interviews and consultations with representatives of the local self-government and police. They are followed by representatives of social welfare (89.4%) and healthcare (84.2%) institutions. Such sequence is logical also in light of the main safety problems that local self-governments most often face, these being domestic violence and drug abuse – as emphasised by representatives of Serbian municipalities and towns and the police. Next in order are representatives of schools (68.4%) and judicial bodies – the prosecution and courts (63.15%). The army is also involved in some Serbian towns.⁶²

Those municipalities intending to establish municipal safety councils believe the above structure is desirable for proper operation of councils. There are plans to involve in the operation of the Golubac safety council the deputy police station commander, magistrate, prosecution representative (from Veliko Gradište as there is no prosecutor's office in Golubac), as well as representatives of primary schools and the social welfare centre. There is also the idea to establish cooperation with the sec-

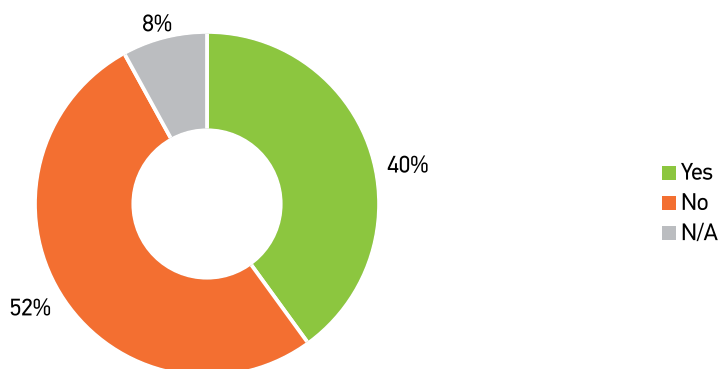
62 Decision Amending the Decision on Setting Up the Council for Public Safety and Security of Citizens and the Local Self-Government (RS Official Gazette of Pčinjski County, No 29/2008).

ondary school in Veliko Gradište because many secondary school students (150) from Golubac attend the grammar school in Veliko Gradište.⁶³ In Paraćin, there are proposals to involve, in addition to the above institutions, the representatives of all political parties.⁶⁴

Operating manuals for municipal safety or crime prevention councils generally suggest the above structure of councils. The composition of Croatian crime prevention councils resembles that of Serbian municipal safety councils. Police representatives are involved, together with contact police officers who currently number over 700 in Croatia. Also involved are representatives of schools, social welfare and healthcare institutions, minority groups, youth and civil society organisations.⁶⁵ Decisions on setting up municipal safety councils should not limit the composition, but leave the possibility of involving those players who could help solve a particular problem not envisaged in the establishment phase. The number of council members should not exceed 15 for the sake of operational functionality. In case the number exceeds 15, members should be divided into working groups.

In some municipalities and towns (Bečej, Leskovac, Bujanovac), municipal safety councils are divided into working groups, depending on safety problems and priorities of the local self-government. In Bečej, for instance, there are working groups for general (anthropological) prevention, technical prevention, community policing.⁶⁶ Eleven working groups have been created in Leskovac.⁶⁷ The division into working groups may significantly speed up the operation of municipal safety councils. However, it should be always borne in mind that the creation of new working groups should not render the work of municipal safety councils senseless. The primary focus of municipal safety councils should always be the solution of safety problems.

Chart 12: Has your municipality/town ever established working groups or bodies in charge of solving individual safety problems?



⁶³ Interview, representative of the Golubac municipality, 7 October 2014.

⁶⁴ Interview, representative of the Paraćin municipality, 14 October 2014.

⁶⁵ See, for instance: Conclusion on Appointment of the Crime Prevention Council of the City of Varaždin, Class 218-01713-01/3; Decision on Appointment of Members of the Crime Prevention Council in the City of Vukovar, Class 550-01/14-01/9.

⁶⁶ Decision on Appointing Members of Working Groups of the Municipal Safety Council, Bečej municipality, 12 December 2010.

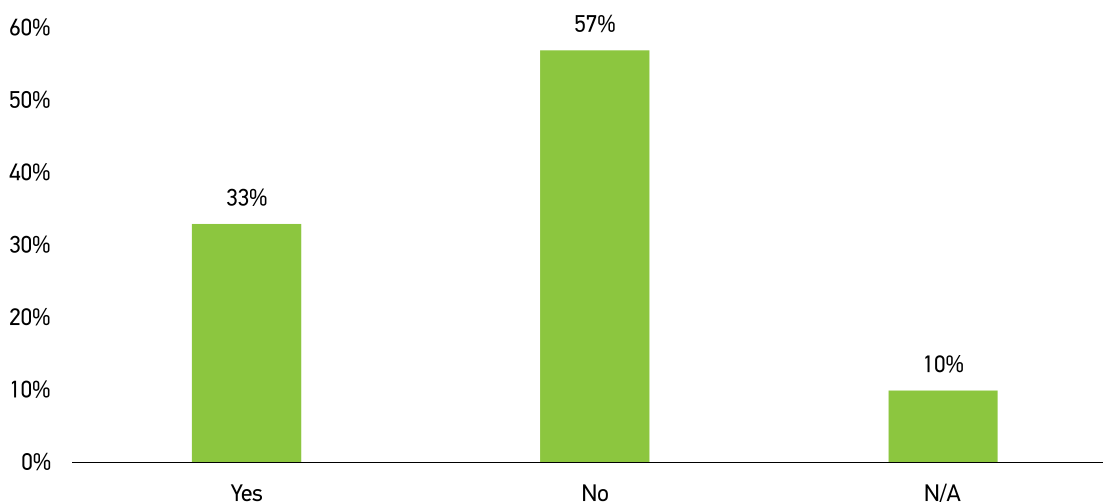
⁶⁷ Decision on Setting up the Safety Council of the City of Leskovac (RS Official Gazette of the City of Leskovac, Nos 7/2011 and 17/2014).

One of the main tasks of municipal safety councils is to analyse the safety situation in a local community. The analysis should be based on the collection and evaluation of all available data, including the determination of problems affecting citizens' safety and establishment of priorities. The present research has lowered the level of analysis in relation to this task of municipal safety councils. This was done for two reasons. First, there is still no clear vision about the councils' task. Second, the existing analyses of the safety situation have generally been prepared within the framework of the local self-government and not of municipal safety councils.

The analysis of the safety situation has not been conducted in more than a half (57%) of Serbian municipalities and towns, whereas 10% of surveyed municipalities refused to answer this question (Chart 13). The analysis of safety problems is underway in some municipalities. In one third (33%) of local self-governments in Serbia, the safety analysis has been completed. Local safety strategies have been adopted in some municipalities and towns. The quality of such documents may be questionable at times as objectives and the analysis of problems are based on sparse and obsolete data, or the data specified do not relate to a concrete municipality or town, but the entire territory of Serbia.

At first sight, such situation does not seem so bright. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that safety does not fall under the exclusive competence of local self-governments, whereas considerable resources have been spent on developing different documents aimed at improving the economic situation in Serbian municipalities and towns and propping up their development. This is why the majority of Serbian municipalities and towns have not developed a strategic or an action plan to improve safety (Chart 14). In addition, the majority (67%) of municipal safety councils currently operating in Serbia have not dealt with this issue (Chart 15).⁶⁸

Chart 13: Has an analysis of safety situation been carried out in your municipality/town?



Safety assessments are usually performed on the monthly basis, during meetings that are most often attended by representatives of the police and local self-government. This means there is no strategic analysis of solutions to safety problems. Problems affecting citizens' safety are recognised at meetings and priorities are defined. It often happens that the police and local self-government do not have the same attitude towards a safety priority. For instance, the police insist on solving peer violence, whereas the local self-government focuses on the lack of parking space.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The present research does not analyse the implementation of the existing strategies and action plans.

⁶⁹ Professional consultations with MoI representatives, 25 November 2014.

Chart 14: Has your municipality/town developed a local safety plan?

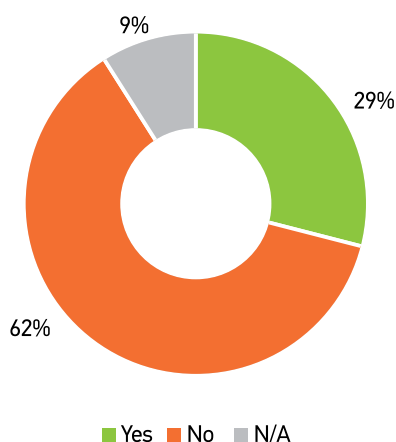
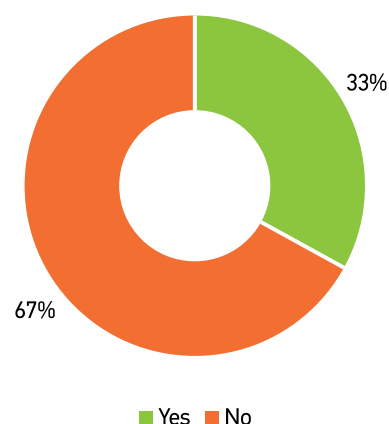


Chart 15: Has the municipal safety council developed a safety strategic and action plan?



It is estimated that members of municipal safety councils meet three to four times a year. An identical result has been obtained in the research into fifteen municipal safety councils in Vojvodina in 2011.⁷⁰

The interviewed representatives of Serbian municipalities and towns and police officers believe there is not a sufficient number of trained persons who can assess safety and jointly come up with a solution. Moreover, it happens that the opposition hinders the work of municipal safety councils. Police officers particularly believe that the local self-government lacks capacities for safety operations. What poses a problem for police officers is that safety is not a priority in Serbian towns and municipalities as they tackle this issue only when a particular threat disturbs the public. This is handled generally by lower-ranking officers of local self-governments.⁷¹ In practice, it is not indispensable that members of municipal safety councils have specialised knowledge about the causes of crime or solutions to improve safety. They may be assisted by experts knowledgeable about the methods of determining a safety problem and solution. The primary role of municipal safety councils concerns the organisation, financing and harmonisation of pre-emptive activities and programmes.⁷² The role of municipal safety councils is significant also because they can ensure that the citizens' voice about local safety be heard. This is possible through various forms of consultations with citizens and local civil society organisations, and citizens' surveys.

70 Maja Bjeloš, Zorana Brozović, Saša Đorđević. "Priručnik za rad lokalnih saveta za bezbednost" (*Manual for Operation of Municipal Safety Councils*). Kikinda: Centre for Support to Women, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 2011, p. 11.

71 Professional consultations with Mol representatives, 25 November 2014.

72 Gorazd Meško, Andrej Sotlar. "Prevenција kriminaliteta u lokalnim zajednicama – između *ad hoc* pristupa i na znanju utemeljenih preventivnih djelatnosti" (*Crime Prevention in Local Communities – Between the Ad Hoc Approach and Scientifically Established Preventive Activities*). *Policija i sigurnost*, 1, 2013, p. 53.

Gender analysis of local safety

Message

It is important to know that women and men, girls and boys perceive differently threats at their safety.

When the safety of communities is discussed, it is often forgotten that each community consists of men and women, girls and boys, who differently perceive threats at their safety and have a different feeling of their personal (un)safety. The phenomena such as violence, thefts, drug abuse, traffic accidents or natural disasters have different consequences on women and men. While women are, in the vast majority of cases, victims of domestic violence, young men are more frequently victims of traffic accidents.⁷³ Women are more exposed to sexual violence⁷⁴, the majority of suicide victims are men⁷⁵, whereas women and children generally perish in natural disasters.⁷⁶

Women and girls are generally more concerned about their safety than men and boys, and feel a higher degree of fear compared to men. Women are much more concerned about their safety at public places than men, though statistics show that men are actually exposed to a higher risk of physical assaults at public places⁷⁷, whilst at the same time public opinion surveys suggest their unproportionally smaller degree of fear.⁷⁸ Furthermore, men make up the vast majority of adult (90%) and juvenile (95%) perpetrators of criminal offences in Serbia.⁷⁹

On the other hand, women are exposed to domestic and partner violence, which usually occurs “behind the closed doors”. Women’s feeling of unsafety stems from their everyday exposure to some type of violence committed by men (domestic violence, harassment at work and in the street, verbal violence).⁸⁰ When concerned about their safety, women limit their activities in order to mitigate a potential risk to their safety. This has consequences not only on women and their feeling of freedom and safety, but also on the community as the fear of violence hampers social and economic development.⁸¹

73 See: <<http://goo.gl/WAMivf>>.

74 See: <<http://goo.gl/3t19w>>.

75 Men and boys commit suicide four times more frequently than women. This is because men decide to seek help with much more difficulty than women, due to gender roles and the stereotype obliging men to be strong and not to show the need for help. See: <<http://goo.gl/PLm15R>>.

76 For instance, women and children accounted for over 80% of the tsunami victims in Indonesia in 2004.

77 Whitzman, C. (2008) *The Handbook of Community Safety, Gender and Violence Prevention*.

78 Pain, R. (2001) *Gender, Race and Fear in the City*. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, Nos 5–6, 899–913, 2001, p.8.

79 Judiciary statistics of the Judicial Institute of the Republic of Serbia. See: <<http://goo.gl/Wwqq25>>.

80 Ibid, p.6.

81 Ibid, p. 8.

Table 2: Victims of convicted adults in the Republic Serbia, by criminal offence and gender⁸²

Criminal offence	Victims (in %)	
	2010	
	Female	Male
Murder	24	76
Aggravated murder	43	57
Manslaughter in a heat of passion	0	100
Grave bodily harm	13	87
Light bodily harm	17	83
Abuse and torture	42	58
Rape	93	7
Sexual intercourse with a helpless person	100	0
Sexual intercourse with a child	89	11
Sexual intercourse through abuse of position	100	0
Prohibited sexual acts	92	9
Neglecting and abusing a minor	60	40
Domestic violence	75	25
Grand larceny	40	60
Robbery	51	49
Human trafficking	63	38

The above has been confirmed by the BCSP public opinion survey of the extent to which male and female citizens feel safe in Serbia. The research has shown that, though women and men perceive the same threats in their external environment, women feel less safe in cases of increased street crime and violence. Women also feel less safe than men when they walk alone at night.⁸³

Similar results have been obtained in the research conducted in 2014 by the Female Research Centre for Education and Communication from Niš.⁸⁴ The research was conducted in the territory of the city of Niš (all five municipalities were covered), with the aim to determine the extent to which the Safety Strategy of the City of Niš (adopted in 2010) is gender sensible, i.e. the extent to which it recognises different sources of unsafety for female and male citizens of Niš. The results have shown that women and men consider the abuse of psychoactive substances the greatest safety problem in the city.⁸⁵ Women are, however, much more concerned about sexual violence and human trafficking, while men are the most concerned about the poor economic situation. Women are, on the other hand, the most concerned about an increase in crime and violence, and are at the same time less satisfied with police work.

Therefore, the sources of unsafety are different for women and men, including the feeling of their personal safety. In designing the activities aimed at prevention and enhancement of safety in communities, account should be taken of whether individual groups (women, girls, men, boys) are more exposed to some threats (and which ones), at which places violence occurs, what is the cause of their unsafety etc.⁸⁶ Differences in the safety of women and men should also be recognised in local safety strategies, which would make these strategies effective and help increase the safety of

82 Results of the research "Women and Men in the Republic of Serbia", conducted by the Serbian Statistical Office in 2011. See: <<http://goo.gl/3eNEPj>>.

83 Ibid.

84 Total 512 adults from all five town municipalities were surveyed.

85 See: <<http://goo.gl/XCWuIT>>.

86 Gorana Odanović, Maja Bjeloš. "Bezbednost i rodna ravnopravnost na lokalnom nivou" (*Safety and Gender Equality at the Local Level*). Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 2012, p.10.

female and male citizens. Like previous BCSP surveys⁸⁷, this survey has also shown that, unfortunately, this is not the case with municipalities in Serbia.

Neglected gender perspective of local safety

Representatives of the local self-government (municipal safety councils), the police and judiciary rarely observe safety problems from the gender perspective. In addition, women are less represented in local authorities, notably municipal safety councils, which is why they are rarely in the position to decide on solutions to safety problems in their communities.⁸⁸

Domestic violence

Apart from domestic violence, representatives of six local self-governments covered by the present research do not see other sources of unsafety which particularly affect their female citizens. Over the past several years, the problem of domestic violence has become visible in the public, and it was therefore expected that it would be recognised as important. According to a representative of the Golubac municipality: "The problem is present and it should be tackled more seriously". Representatives of the Safety Council of the City of Leskovac are also aware of the importance of the problem – on the Council's proposal, in December 2014 the City Assembly decided to abolish the legal aid fee to victims of domestic violence. Representatives of the Arandelovac municipality have pointed to fruitful cooperation among the Social Welfare Centre, the police and other institutions in cases of domestic violence.

Prostitution and human trafficking

All respondents, apart from the representative of Novi Pazar, answered that the problem of prostitution and human trafficking is not present in their municipalities. The representative from Novi Pazar stated that prostitution does exist and that it takes place in some bars and nightclubs in the town, though it is rarely spoken about in public. In the past years, several police actions aimed to curb prostitution in the territory of Novi Pazar and several strip bars and nightclubs were closed.⁸⁹ However, the prostitution chain was not broken. Prostitution cases are often dropped in courts because girls, being under pressure, refuse to testify or they alter statements, making it hard to convict the organisers of prostitution chains. We were told in Arandelovac that the Social Welfare Centre intervened only once in a prostitution case when a taxi driver from Arandelovac pimped an underage girl in a hotel in Kragujevac.

According to Mol data⁹⁰, in the first half of 2014, eleven criminal charges were filed in Serbia for human trafficking. Total 45 victims were registered, of whom 36 were men – victims of labour exploitation, whilst the majority of women were victims of sexual exploitation (six of seven registered victims). Over the past years, the majority of victims were women – victims of sexual exploitation. Of all municipalities covered by the research, human trafficking seems to be the most widely present in the territory of Novi Pazar. Judging by data, in the 2010–2014 period, one to two criminal of-

87 In 2011, in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia, the BCSP conducted a survey about gender equality and safety in 16 Serbian municipalities. The results have been published in the report "Security and Gender Equality at the Local Level", available at: <<http://goo.gl/W8UWkN>>.

88 Gorana Odanović, Maja Bjeloš. "Bezbednost i rodna ravnopravnost na lokalnom nivou" (*Safety and Gender Equality at the Local Level*). Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 2012, p. 7.

89 Večernje Novosti. "Prostitucija cveta u Novom Pazaru" (*Prostitution Blooms in Novi Pazar*), 6 December 2011, <<http://goo.gl/scL0Qc>>.

90 See: <<http://goo.gl/L3yAg9>>.

fenses of human trafficking were recorded in Novi Pazar each year.⁹¹ Only one criminal offense of human trafficking was observed in Leskovac (in 2013), whilst three criminal charges were filed in Niš in 2013 and one criminal charge in 2012.

Youth safety

In interviews with representatives of local authorities, youth safety emerged as a very important topic. Young people face the problems of drug abuse, excessive alcohol consumption, violence and juvenile delinquency. They are, however, perpetrators of criminal offenses to a higher extent than they are victims. The annual share of criminal offenses committed by young persons ranges between 34% and 41% of total criminal offenses committed in the Republic of Serbia.⁹² Annually, criminal charges are filed against 22,500 to 27,000 of young persons. In contrast, the annual share of criminal offenses committed against young persons equals between 22% and 28% of total criminal offenses committed against natural persons in the Republic of Serbia⁹³, i.e. between 16,500 and 18,500 of young persons fall victim to crime each year.

In the 2008–2013 period, of the total number of recorded criminal offenses, young persons were victims of 46% of criminal offenses against life and limb, 37% of offenses against sexual freedom, and 49% of rape.¹ In gender terms, girls are exposed to sexual violence to a high extent², while young men are exposed to physical violence. Namely, youth safety cannot be observed only through the general category of “youth” as these are individual girls and boys who face different safety problems. This should be borne in mind also when developing and implementing policies for enhancing their safety, as only in such way will the relevant activities be effective.

The information that should further encourage local self-governments to direct more attention to the prevention of violence in school is that almost 70% of safety risk events (criminal offenses, misdemeanours and other) take place in *school facilities*, whereas the remaining 30% in the immediate vicinity of schools. This is why municipal safety councils, often presented by representatives of school administrations as well, should take the initiative to launch various activities, such as the development of the analysis about security challenges in schools.⁹⁴

Cooperation between municipal safety councils and gender equality bodies

Local gender equality bodies (committees, councils) are insufficiently involved in solving of safety problems of women in local communities.⁹⁵ Municipal safety councils, however, rarely examine local safety from the gender perspective. Not being the priority of local authorities, gender perspective is not systematically integrated in the process of creation, implementation and monitoring of safety policies at the local level. Furthermore, female and male members of local bodies are insufficiently knowledgeable about the link between gender and safety. This link is often interpreted in the context of protecting women who are victims of domestic violence. This is why the cooperation among the police, judiciary, municipal safety councils and gender equality bodies is generally lim-

91 Apart from 2013 when no criminal charges were filed.

92 According to the draft National Youth Strategy 2015–2025, <<http://goo.gl/F0wdM4>>.

93 Ibid.

94 Gorana Odanović, Maja Bjeloš. “Bezbednost i rodna ravnopravnost na lokalnom nivou” (Safety and Gender Equality at the Local Level). Belgrade: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, 2012, p. 32.

95 Ibid, p. 34.

ited to the prevention and protection of women who are victims of domestic violence.⁹⁶ There are few examples of cooperation aimed at involving a larger number of women in the process of defining priorities or decision-making in the field of local safety.

The majority of municipalities that completed the questionnaire intended for local self-government units have responded that the safety body cooperates with the local gender equality body. Such cooperation is, however, largely based on personal relations and good will of individuals. The institutionalisation of cooperation is the missing element as it would ensure the continuation of cooperation even after individuals leave institutions. An example of good practice are protocols of cooperation between institutions in the struggle against domestic violence. The signing of protocols has enabled that victims of violence receive all necessary services and protection within the shortest time period.⁹⁷

Local safety problems from the police perspective

“Problems are general and affect everyone”, said the police representatives who participated in professional consultations within this research. Asked about the extent to which problems such as hooliganism, peer violence, natural disasters, drug abuse, prostitution, domestic violence, unlit parts of the town etc.⁹⁸ affect women, men, boys and girls, and whether one category is more affected (and if so, why), police representatives assessed that all these problems equally affect all of the said groups. Exceptions relate to domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking – they are assessed to affect generally women, but also children. According to one police representative: “The phenomenon as such is being tackled”.

Such an attitude may be explained by insufficient training of police representatives about the influence of gender roles and inequalities between men and women on their safety. This is why community policing should in the coming period focus more on different sources of unsafety for women and men, as only in such way is it possible to ensure a safe community where both women and men would feel equally safe. This requires a change in the pattern of thinking so far, when perpetrators and victims of criminal offenses are most often considered “persons” and not women and men.

96 Ibid, p. 35.

97 The “Sombor model” of cooperation between the Social Welfare Centre and the police of the Sombor municipality is most often mentioned as one of the best mechanisms for handling domestic violence cases. This model represents an example of cooperation which entailed significant changes in the organisation and standards of work, particularly within the Social Welfare Centre, and can be achieved only when managers of these institutions are directly interested in changes.

98 These safety problems were specified by participants at 16 consultations organised by the BCSP with representatives of local institutions and civil society organisations in 2011, on the topic of gender equality and safety.

CASE STUDIES

ARANĐELOVAC

Surface area: 376 km² (18 village settlements, 19 local communities)

Number of inhabitants: 46,225

Degree of development: second group of development of local self-government units (80%–100% of the Republic average)

The unemployment rate equals around 31%¹ in Aranđelovac (over 5,000 of unemployed persons). There are several successful enterprises exporting abroad, but large factories which used to employ over 5,000 people are no longer operational. The municipality, however, invested a lot of effort in employing persons with disabilities. Six persons with disabilities were employed in 2013 and ten persons in 2014. In the ELKA² company, set up in 1959 with the aim to employ persons with disabilities, 60% of employees have disabilities. The system of “geronto housewives” was established in 2008 and there are currently nine such housewives, covering mainly old persons’ households in villages.

Stray dogs pose the greatest problem for inhabitants of Aranđelovac. They account for around 35% of all charges filed with the utilities inspection within a year. Dogs gather in herds, often around schools. By end-2014, a dog asylum should eventually be opened and the dog-catching service set up – seven million dinars have been earmarked from the budget for these purposes. So far, five million dinars have been spent each year on various damage claims of citizens who suffered dog bites and on the engagement of services removing stray dogs.

Two locations in Aranđelovac have been marked as critical from the safety viewpoint. One relates to a portion of a park (“Žučin park”) which was unlit for some time and was attracting drug addicts. The entire park is now lit and its full reconstruction has been planned. Another place is the Rehabilitation Institute, now derelict and under the competence of the Republic. The construction of the Institute has never been completed and citizens often complain about drug addicts and alcoholics who gather on its premises. The police intervene upon citizens’ charges and temporarily remove these persons from the facility, but they keep returning.

According to representatives of the local self-government, a lot of effort is invested in curbing domestic violence in Aranđelovac. Concrete actions are being implemented in cooperation with the Social Welfare Centre, and there is good cooperation among other institutions in this field. This issue is widely discussed in the public, mainly because two local TV stations provided relevant coverage.

Asked about prostitution or street prostitution in the town, local self-government representatives gave a negative answer. The Social Welfare Centre intervened only once, when a juvenile girl from Aranđelovac was pimped by a taxi driver in a hotel in Kragujevac. There are no other data on prostitution, though it is assumed that girls from Aranđelovac are involved in prostitution in other Serbian towns.

1 Source: <<http://goo.gl/e4ZcpQ>>.

2 Enterprise for professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities “Elka – Elektrokeramika”.

Following the rains in May 2014, Arandelovac was engulfed in a strong storm which demolished roofs in some parts of the city. Still, there were no major problems with river floods. This year, the project for driving away and elimination of waste from villages has been developed, which will solve the problem of wild landfills. A new wastewater treatment plant has been recently built, as one of the most modern plants in the country. There is no municipal safety council in Arandelovac, though the Traffic Safety Council has been operational for four years already. The Council numbers seven members and has held 30 meetings so far. The Council budget for 2014 was 7.5 million dinars. It focuses on the safety of pre-school and school children (street repairs, changes in the traffic regime, setting up traffic lights and horizontal signalisation). The Council submits regular traffic safety reports to the Assembly for consideration and adoption. The MoI must submit traffic safety reports to the Council twice a year (for January–June and July–December) and has so far always fulfilled its obligation. In 2012, the Council channelled a half of the funds collected from traffic fines to the purchase of technical equipment for the police station in Arandelovac – the station received a car, two computers and equipment for night work of traffic police.

Another municipal body active in the field of safety is the Anti-Drug Abuse Coordination Board, set up as an assembly body. Its members are representatives of the Social Welfare Centre, schools, church, local-self government, healthcare centre (neuropsychiatrists). The Board has organised educational sessions and workshops in primary schools, for pupils of the seventh and eighth grades. It has its own budget for different activities, of around 500,000 dinars. The Social Welfare Centre has also implemented projects for children with asocial behavioural indications (seventh grade). Representatives of the Centre visited schools and, in cooperation with psychologists and teachers, talked to problematic children and carried out various activities in the local community. The project lasted until 2013 when it was halted due to the lack of employees and the ban on new employment.

The local self-government recognises the need for a safety council, notably for the purpose of better exchange of data and coordination, with the aim to improve local safety. According to local self-government representatives, the composition of the council will be the broadest possible – it will include representatives of the Social Welfare Centre, school, the police, prosecution, Red Cross etc. The composition may even be broader depending on the need.

The cooperation between the municipal president and the police has been assessed as good. The police submit to the president regular information on the safety situation in the municipality. The year 2013 saw an increase in the number of thefts in the town, but the mayor and the police station head would meet very quickly, which resulted in different activities and a prompt solution to the problem.

GOLUBAC

Surface area: 368 km² (24 settlements, 25 local communities)

Number of inhabitants: 8,337

Degree of development: an exceptionally undeveloped local self-government unit (60% below the Republic average)

According to official data³, unemployment in the Golubac municipality equals around 34%. However, according to representatives of the local self-government, as one third of inhabitants work abroad and send remittances back home, the economic situation is not critical as in some other municipalities. In addition, Golubac is a tourist place and inhabitants make profit from tourism during the summer season.

In safety terms, there are several critical places in Golubac. First of all, there is the Golubac fortress which, until recently, was not secured. Visitors could freely climb its ramparts, causing a great safety threat. There is also a weekend settlement where robberies are frequent. The settlement contains around 3,000 houses, with 5,000–10,000 tourists spending their summertime there. Furthermore, some neighbouring villages do not have the mobile phone signal, which creates difficulties for citizens who wish to report a problem to the police or face a road problem in this part of the municipality.

The greatest safety problem is considered the traffic as a highway goes through the downtown of Golubac. The problem is particularly pronounced in summer when many tourists arrive or pass through Golubac, and traffic jams are created. Besides, Golubac is a transit area for a large number of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens, this being their shortest road home. As there are only primary schools in Golubac, secondary school students (around 150) usually commute to Veliko Gradište to school. However, as the monthly bus ticket is very expensive (around 7,000 dinars), students organise themselves and several of them travel to school by car, with all of them being novice drivers. As they drive on the highway with dense traffic and a large number of freight vehicles, they face serious safety threats.

As the Romanian border is nearby, cigarettes and similar goods are smuggled, which entails additional engagement of the police and preventive work of local authorities. Human trafficking cases have not been recorded, though a bar owner from a nearby village is serving sentence on the grounds of human trafficking. According to police reports, prostitution cases have not been recorded either.

As stated by local self-government representatives, drug abuse has increased recently. Marijuana is consumed the most, notably among juveniles. The problem of domestic violence has become increasingly more visible. Judging by police data, one to two cases of domestic violence are recorded within ten days, which is why, as suggested by local self-government representatives, this issue should be tackled more seriously.

3 Source: <<http://goo.gl/Q9qJDF>>.



Citizens perceive natural disasters as a great threat to their safety. Golubac was under threat in 2006 when the Danube burst its banks, but the problem was solved with the assistance of “Srbija vode” company. The banks were raised and the new quay was erected, with moving panels set up in one part. The river Pek and other smaller nearby rivers contributed to the May 2014 floods. Several places in the neighbouring villages were critical, but local communities responded quickly and prevented flooding. The response was successful as members of the local headquarters for emergency situations were trained in the previous years, in cooperation with the Emergency Situations Sector.

There is no municipal safety council in Golubac, but the Traffic Safety Council is operational. However, there are plans to set up a safety council by late 2014. There are also plans to define the budget for council activities, though the council members will not be paid. The council members will be representatives of the following institutions: the police station (deputy station commander), magistrate (who works in Golubac), prosecution representative from Veliko Gradište (there is no prosecutor’s office in Golubac), school (Golubac has primary schools only, but there is the idea to establish cooperation with the secondary school from Veliko Gradište as many children from Golubac attend the grammar school in Veliko Gradište), Social Welfare Centre (the Centre from Veliko Gradište covers Golubac and, when needed, representatives of the Centre go to the field in Golubac). The idea to create a working group for juvenile delinquency has been put forward, because of the rising number of fights and attacks among children in primary schools.

Cooperation with the police has been assessed as very good. The police regularly send reports on the safety situation in the municipality, whereas the local self-government financially supports the local police station. For instance, it bought a radar for the police station from funds collected from traffic fines, which resulted in a reduced number of misdemeanours. The municipality is also trying to buy a car for the police station, so that the police could make more frequent patrols in the surrounding villages and along the Danube. The municipality also provides the police with 20 litres of fuel per month, and sometimes copy and printer paper etc. There are also ideas concerning the equipping of the police station, but the problem relates to the legal basis for such activities. In 2013, the Požarevac police district initiated a meeting with all local communities so as to learn about citizens’ safety problems. A similar meeting is to be held by late 2014.

LESKOVAC

Surface area: 1025 km² (144 settlements, 139 local communities)

Number of inhabitants: 144,370

Degree of development: insufficiently developed local self-government unit (60%–80% of the Republic average)

Poverty is the gravest problem facing the inhabitants of Leskovac. The town belongs to the group of insufficiently developed local self-governments, with the unemployment rate equalling around 44%⁴. According to the CeSID survey of citizen satisfaction with the local self-government in Leskovac⁵, 43% of inhabitants find it hardly bearable to live, while 10% find it unbearable.

Citizens are deeply dissatisfied with the quality of life in Leskovac – as much as 77% of them. Citizens are also dissatisfied with the work of the local self-government – 93% of them believe the local authorities do not care about their needs. The areas that citizens are the most dissatisfied with are: infrastructure (68%), transport (64%) and town cleanliness (54%).

In terms of safety in the territory of Leskovac, 75% of citizens feel safe. Compared to other smaller municipalities covered by the CeSID survey, the citizens of Leskovac are more concerned about their safety. One fourth of them said they do not feel safe, up by 10% relative to 2010 when the first survey was carried out. The number of citizens who said they feel completely safe also declined (from 67% to 18%).

The greatest safety problems highlighted by citizens include: infrastructure (53%), stray dogs (24%) and crime (10%)⁶. This implies that citizens are the most concerned about problems which they face every day and which directly affect the quality of their lives. Their dissatisfaction with local authorities is therefore also understandable, given that the first two problems are within the direct remit of the local self-government.

The interviewed local self-government representatives perceive similarly the local safety situation. Infrastructure is specified as one of major problems, notably the situation of roads. Access roads are pitted with deep holes, drains are clogged and streets and pavements are partly flooded during rains. Traffic safety, however, is not underscored as a problem – according to representatives of local authorities, “traffic police are doing their job”. Nonetheless, there are several junctions where video surveillance should be introduced, in agreement with the traffic police. Unlit parts of the city are also an infrastructural problem, these being: the quay where many young people gather, the area near the Leskovac fair and the overpass behind the bus station, which is not lit because of the town electricity debt and unsolved ownership relations.

4 Source: <<http://goo.gl/R3jt6S>>.

5 The survey was carried out by the CeSID in 2010 and 2013, for needs of the European Partnership with Municipalities Programme (PROGRES), in 34 municipalities of Western and South-Western Serbia.

6 It is noteworthy that 34% citizens considered crime a problem in 2010.

Stray dogs have also been emphasised as a problem. Leskovac has a temporary dog shelter in the nearby village of Turekovac, but its capacities are limited. The plan to build a permanent dog shelter has been discussed for several years already, but the construction has not started because of the shortfall of funds.

The gathering of students in parks has been underscored as a serious problem by representatives of local authorities – young people drink and abuse drugs in parks, and even pick up quarrels and fights with passers-by. Drug abuse is widely present among young persons, despite various educational activities under the auspices of the Youth Office and the Board for the Prevention of Addiction Diseases and Religious Sects within the Leskovac Assembly (set up in 2004). The Local Youth Action Plan 2011–2014⁷ partly addresses this problem. One of the consequences of drug abuse on local safety are pickpocketing and thefts committed by drug addicts.

According to representatives of local authorities, cases of human trafficking and prostitution have not been recently recorded in the territory of Leskovac, i.e. representatives do not possess such information. Although the police district of Leskovac submits to the mayor regular reports (bulletins) on the safety situation in the City of Leskovac, local self-government representatives have the impression that the police do not wish to share information and that there is no coordination between the police, local self-government and other institutions at the local level. Cooperation with the prosecution has so far been particularly problematic. However, as prosecution representatives are now members of the Safety Council, cooperation is expected to be better.

The Safety Council of the City of Leskovac was set up in 2011 and met when needed. The working hours of catering facilities and clubs were regulated upon its proposal.⁸ In March 2014, the new Council composition was formed.⁹ Its primary task is to develop the Safety Strategy of the City of Leskovac, which is why working groups have been created for particular fields of the Strategy.¹⁰ The process of Strategy development is largely participation-based.¹¹ One of the working groups (for the safety of vulnerable groups and gender equality) is headed by a representative of the civil society organisation “Women for Peace”. The Council plans to conduct a survey among citizens, in the Leskovac territory, about their feeling of safety and perception of the greatest safety problems. The survey results should serve as guidelines for the Council to develop the draft Strategy, which will be subject to public discussion.

7 See: <<http://goo.gl/6lbnpJ>>.

8 In 2012, eight inhabitants of Leskovac were injured in front of a café in Leskovac, of whom four were stabbed by knife. On this occasion, on the mayor's request, the Safety Council urgently met, discussed the safety situation in the town and issued the decree on working hours of catering facilities. Source: <<http://goo.gl/nTtLpF>>.

9 The Council numbers 19 members: representatives of the city council and local self-government, police district of Leskovac, Social Welfare Centre, Extraordinary Situations Department, School Administration, Magistrate's Court, Basic and Higher Prosecutor's Office, healthcare centre, Sports Association of the City of Leskovac, Students' Parliament of the Grammar School and the Serbian Orthodox Church.

10 Working groups are in charge of: 1) developing the Safety Strategy; 2) preventing addiction diseases, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency; 3) preventing crime, violence and safety in traffic; 4) preventing domestic violence; 5) safety of vulnerable groups and gender equality; 6) preventing natural disasters; 7) public health prevention; 8) youth safety; 9) prevention of infectious diseases of domestic and wild animals; 10) environmental protection; 11) safety of national minorities. Each group has three–five members.

11 In 2014, consultations were held with representatives of different local institutions, enterprises and organisations, with the aim to collect their opinions about the local safety situation and problems.

The importance of hearing the voice of a civil society representative in the local Safety Council is reflected in the Council's initiative to launch the procedure with the town council and town assembly to abolish the legal aid fee to victims of domestic violence. According to data of the "Women for Peace" organisation, the number of domestic violence cases, recorded by the Social Welfare Centre, increased in Leskovac in 2014. Total 56 cases were recorded in 2013, whilst seven months into 2014 (until July) saw 87 cases¹². Furthermore, the Cooperation Agreement was concluded between the Safety Council, Social Welfare Centre and police district of Leskovac, in the field of protecting women and children against domestic violence.

The Council meets once in three months. Its priorities include the following¹³: peer violence, drug abuse, road infrastructure and stray dogs. The bottom-ranking priorities are: violence among older persons (above the age of 30), violence on social networks, reintegration of former prisoners, human trafficking, environmental protection, hooliganism and prostitution.

12 Data presented at the event "Safety of Women and Girls in the Local Community". Source: <<http://goo.gl/vOgHMb>>.

13 Data are presented based on results of the survey of local self-government units.

NIŠKA BANJA

Surface area: 145 km² (16 settlements)

Number of inhabitants: 14,690

Degree of development: the data are unavailable as Niška Banja is a city municipality

Being a city municipality and not a local self-government unit, Niška Banja has limited powers. The municipality is striving to gain the local self-government status, primarily because it is territorially separated from the city of Niš (around 11 km). Due to its status, the municipality does not have local communities but citizens' councils. Of total four city municipalities of Niš, Niška Banja has the lowest crime rate.¹⁴

Around 33% of inhabitants of Niška Banja are unemployed. The municipality has launched several projects to provide social aid to the most vulnerable citizens. A gerontological service was set up six years ago and currently has 270 users. As funds for its operation are not envisaged by the municipal budget, it is financed through different projects.

Infrastructure (traffic and roads) poses the greatest problem in the municipality. Corridor X "cuts" the municipal territory in half, directly affecting the safety of people in villages that the highway goes through. For instance, the highway goes through the very centre of the villages of Jelašnica, Ravni Do and Gornja Studena. Unmarked railway and pedestrian crossings also pose a problem. A few years ago, an eight-year-old boy lost his life while crossing the highway outside of the pedestrian crossing. A 300m-long shoulder was then placed in this area so as to direct pedestrians to the pedestrian crossing. The part of the road next to the ambulance and the school is also problematic as the highway to Vladičin Han passes through.

Floods hit Niška Banja three times a year: in spring with the melting of snow from the Suva mountain, in summer and autumn when heavy rains create torrential streams. Gornja and Donja Studena and Jelašnica are torrential streams which dry up in summer – however, when water bursts forth they sweep up cars. During the May 2014 floods, as there were threats that the Kutinska river could burst its banks and flood around 2,000 households, a bridge was pulled down in the Nikola Tesla settlement. The danger was eliminated, but the communication of inhabitants with the Niš–Zaječar highway was thwarted and their access to agricultural estates was disabled. They now have to travel ten or more kilometres to reach their estates, at the same time jeopardising traffic with agricultural machines, whereas citizens who travel to work must cover even 20 kilometres.¹⁵

The hindrance to river rehabilitation are unsolved legal-ownership relations. As some citizens have built houses in the river bed, these houses should first be removed. However, the rehabilitation of river beds is not a priority as these rivers are classified as second-rank rivers.

14 Source: <<http://goo.gl/Z2ukNv>>.

15 Source: <<http://goo.gl/etUlf0>>.

Unsolved ownership relations are also an obstacle to solving the problem of the derelict “Srbija” hotel, in the municipality’s centre. The hotel has been closed for several years already, due to foiled privatisation, but local authorities cannot do anything as the hotel is privately-owned.

In summer, minor fires break out sometimes in the Suva Mountain and the fields (due to stubble burning). There is only one fire brigade in the City of Niš, which poses a problem when fires must be extinguished in far-away villages and settlements. It would be therefore desirable to have one mobile fire brigade which would cover distant villages.

Though Niška Banja is a tourist resort, there are no major security problems during the tourist season. A problem appears only when many buses arrive with students on an excursion. It happens that ten to fifteen buses arrive at once, which makes it difficult to accommodate so many people. Inspection intensifies in such periods because children gather in parks, bathe in fountains and make noise. As in the majority of Serbian municipalities, stray dogs are a serious problem. The City of Niš pays considerable damages to citizens, but a dog asylum has still not been opened.

Local authorities have decided not to establish a safety council, but a mountain rescue service, by late 2014. A safety council has been set up at the level of the City of Niš, but representatives of Niška Banja do not participate in its operation. The mayor of Niš should exchange information with presidents of all municipalities, but unfortunately this does not happen.

According to local self-government representatives, the mountain rescue service is needed because Niška Banja organises four European and world competitions in extreme sports a year (paragliding, rafting, mountain biking). So far, there have been situations when participants got injured at places difficult to access, which is why it is necessary to have trained people who could respond. EU funds will also be used to finance the mountain rescue service, and the municipality has already submitted applications within several projects with the idea to establish the service.

The police station in Niška Banja was opened in 2008, upon the municipality’s insisting. Before this, there was a police outpost in the Pantelej municipality, which also covered Niška Banja. Cooperation with the police has been assessed as appropriate, primarily because some representatives of the municipality and police know each other personally. It is therefore easier for them to perform some activities, although long-term cooperation is thus not ensured. However, local self-government representatives have the impression that cooperation should be better and the police should act in a proactive and pre-emptive way.

NOVI PAZAR

Surface area: 742 km² (99 settlements, 26 local communities)

Number of inhabitants: 100,109

Degree of development: insufficiently developed local self-government unit (60%–80% of the Republic average)

Similarly to other municipalities covered by the research, unemployment of around 54%¹⁶ is the greatest problem for citizens of Novi Pazar. Young persons (highly educated) who are the first-time job seekers account for a large portion of the unemployed. This is not surprising given that Novi Pazar is the town with the highest number of young people and one of the few Serbian towns with a positive rate of natural increase. According to the CeSID survey of citizen satisfaction with the local self-government in Novi Pazar¹⁷, two-thirds of citizens assess their living standard as medium and bearable, whilst one third consider their standard very bad.

Citizens are the most dissatisfied with infrastructure (76%), local traffic (76%) and town cleanliness (70%). On the other hand, they are the most satisfied with interpersonal relations and solidarity, although a different impression is gained based on media reports on some events in Novi Pazar, i.e. there is the impression that interethnic tensions are present.¹⁸

In September 2014, just before the elections for national minority councils in Novi Pazar, a group of Bosniaks in World War II uniforms of Muslim militia marched into the town, on the Shahida (Martyrs') Day. A week later, the Četnik movement announced a march in Novi Pazar, which was prevented by the police. On the day when the march was announced, several hundred citizens gathered in the centre, including many sports supporters, who wanted to "greet" the četniks.

The majority of citizens of Novi Pazar generally feel safe (44%). However, the number of those who generally do not feel safe has risen by almost 10% relative to 2010 (from 18% to 37%), while 6% citizens feel very unsafe. Citizens do not feel safe primarily because of crime (43%), bad infrastructure (24%), drug abuse (16%) and stray dogs (16%). What is worrying is that the number of citizens fearing crime has almost doubled – from 20% in 2010 to over 40% in 2013. The reason lies in unsolved murders of several citizens of Novi Pazar over the last two years, which prompted citizens to mount a peaceful protest in June 2013.

16 Source: <<http://goo.gl/R9KA1M>>.

17 The survey was carried out by the CeSID in 2010 and 2013, for needs of the European Partnership with Municipalities Programme (PROGRES), in 34 municipalities of Western and South-Western Serbia.

18 The last such event took place in September 2014, just before the elections for the national minority councils. A group of Bosniaks in Muslim uniforms of World War II marched into Novi Pazar. A week later, the Četnik movement announced a march in Novi Pazar, which was prevented by the police.

In June 2013, citizens dissatisfied with the safety situation held a protest in Novi Pazar. They requested the replacement of the head of the Novi Pazar police district and of his associates because of several unsolved murders. The cause of the protest was the murder of entrepreneur Enes Ajdinović, in front of his family house. The Political Council of the City met on that occasion, adopting conclusions to improve safety in Novi Pazar and issuing a request to the police to find the assassins as soon as possible. The Novi Pazar mayor then stated that “the city became a very dangerous place to live”¹⁹. On the other hand, the police district head said that not only the police are in charge of the safety situation in Novi Pazar, but that also the Safety Council should discuss safety issues, although, however, the Council is not functional²⁰.

One of the major safety challenges in Novi Pazar is sports hooliganism. The fan group “Ekstremi” of the Novi Pazar football club is often “in conflict” with fans of other clubs, and the majority of football matches in Novi Pazar are considered high-risk events. For instance, after a Red Star fan was killed in Turkey in November 2014, tensions emerged among fans and two earlier scheduled matches were postponed, whereas Partizan fans were forbidden to come to the match in Novi Pazar, with the aim to prevent conflicts between fans of these two clubs. According to local self-government representatives, the majority of hooligans are younger adults or juveniles with criminal records.

Traffic is another problem for citizens of Novi Pazar. In the absence of a bypass, a part of transit traffic goes through the town, creating jams in the centre. Moreover, there is no sufficient parking place and drivers park irregularly, which further aggravates the traffic flow.

According to local self-government representatives, robberies are committed in some parts of the town (on the outskirts), while car thefts and pickpocketing take place in the centre (in the green market, street). In the first nine months of 2013, the police arrested 200 persons, mainly because of criminal offenses of property character and with elements of violence. The majority of arrested persons were younger adults.²¹

Prostitution is also present in the territory of Novi Pazar, but is rarely spoken about in public. There are several nightclubs where prostitution is organised, but in a clandestine manner. The problem is that prostitution organisers and club owners are never punished, but only prostitutes. Trading in drugs and drug abuse are also present, partly because of the vicinity of the Montenegrin border and the administrative border with Kosovo. Due to the vicinity of Kosovo, the smuggling of goods also takes place – once goods from Serbia enter Kosovo they become exempt from VAT, and are then transited further to Serbia through Novi Pazar. There are no official data to confirm this, this being a “public secret” according to local self-government representatives.

The territory of Novi Pazar is risky also because of torrential and mountain rivers, although there were no floods in May 2014. The problem has been partly solved with the construction of the mini-dam in one part of the flow (at the source), and water cannot flood the town.

The Safety Council of the City of Novi Pazar has been operational since 2008. Though the Council has held regular meetings, particularly in advance of major public events (such as football matches), and adopted conclusions impacting safety in the community, the information on its operation has been

19 See: <<http://goo.gl/cSxaon>>.

20 See: <<http://goo.gl/qlrq446>>.

21 See: <<http://goo.gl/cSxaon>>.



sparse.²² Representatives of some local authorities have addressed the Council several times, in relation to solving some safety problems, particularly near schools, but have received no answer.²³

Under the decision on its establishment, the Council numbers between seven and fifteen members. It currently has fifteen members – councillors and persons proposed by councillors (each party nominates its own representatives). As Council members are politicians or persons nominated according to their political affiliation, it often happens that the Council’s work is politically obstructed. It is therefore necessary, according to local self-government representatives, to involve to a higher extent in the Council’s operation persons competent for safety issues, or to place the Council under the City Council’s remit as this would help more easily gather all relevant participants.

In October 2014, Council members underwent training in developing the local safety strategy and identifying the priorities to improve the safety situation in Novi Pazar, which should be followed by drafting of the Safety Strategy of Novi Pazar.

Also active in the Council work are representatives of the police, prosecution and courts (basic and magistrate courts). Cooperation between the police and prosecution is bad, in contrast to cooperation between the police and Council (“it is better than with the prosecution”). Police representatives respond to calls to participate in Council meetings, but, as stated by local self-government representatives, “they are rather passive and do not give data, with the excuse that Council members have not undergone security checks”. However, monthly bulletins on the safety situation in the town are submitted to the mayor and assembly present. In the new composition, the Council has so far not adopted any recommendations or conclusions, not has the town safety been discussed at assembly meetings.

22 Information was obtained at the seminar “Gender Equality and Safety at the Local Level”, organised by the BCSP in April 2012 in Novi Pazar with representatives of local civil society organisations, institutions, the police and prosecution. See: <<http://goo.gl/wP8uZi>>.

23 Ibid.



PARAĆIN

Surface area: 541 km² (33 settlements, 42 local communities)

Number of inhabitants: 54,335

Degree of development: insufficiently developed local self-government unit (60%–80% of the Republic average)

The unemployment rate in Paraćin is around 41%²⁴, while personal income is below the average of the Republic. The former large companies (the cement plant and glass factory) have not been successfully privatised and many people are jobless. Such a bad economic situation also affects safety in Paraćin.

Homeless persons and Roma families used to gather in the old textile factory “Branko Krsmanović”, which has been under bankruptcy since 2002 because of unsolved property relations and a large number of creditors. As they lit up fire to warm themselves, the facility is entirely demolished, with occasional fires breaking up as well. As the factory is located close to a busy pavement, citizens complained about smoke. As this is a private site, local authorities could not prevent access of these persons nor move them away, but they eventually moved away on their own. A similar problem exists in the Roma settlement of Dankovo. Due to abject poverty, inhabitants are forced to collect secondary raw materials and melt plastic (e.g. from batteries), which is why inhabitants of the surrounding settlements complain about smoke and vapours. Agricultural commodities are being stolen in settlements on the outskirts. There are several other derelict facilities in the Paraćin territory which are problematic, mainly because drug addicts gather in them.

Fights and injuries have sometimes taken place in catering facilities, which is why the decision limiting their working hours was adopted. The desecration of graves and thefts of valuables from family tombs used to be a problem several years ago, making citizens disturbed.²⁵ Lighting and video surveillance were then installed in the cemetery. According to local self-government representatives, problems of prostitution and human trafficking do not exist in the municipality, i.e. the police have so far not reported on these issues.

Paraćin suffered considerable damage in the May 2014 floods. Total 2,800 households were flooded and a large number of enterprises and legal entities. Namely, the Crnica river burst its banks (second-rank river – Velika Morava tributary), and the Gruža river flooded several villages (also a Velika Morava tributary). There were no human victims, but cattle suffered. The centre of Paraćin was entirely flooded, though river beds are maintained rather well (the confluence of the Crnica into Velika Morava is regulated). A problem occurred in the derelict textile factory where a clot was created due to the non-maintenance of the factory circle and water could not flow away.

²⁴ Source: <<http://goo.gl/wdyPQV>>.

²⁵ Four persons were arrested over suspicion that they had desecrated and plundered family tombs around 190 times in the territory of Paraćin and Jagodina. Source: <<http://goo.gl/BOmtyl>>.

The local self-government has learned several lessons from the May 2014 floods: 1) the “Srbija vode” project was not good because the maintenance of the Crnica flow should have been better, particularly within the circle of the derelict textile factory; 2) the great curve of the Crnica bed should be corrected in the centre, near the hotel (which is very expensive); 3) the Hydrometeorological Institute of Serbia does not give precise and useful data. As a local self-government representative said: “The information on the quantity of water that would pour down is not useful without further explanation of what can happen”; 4) the “Srbija vode” project lacks human, technical and operational resources. They are headquartered in Ćuprija, but have only four operative persons who cover a large territory.

The explosion in the military storage “Karadorđevo brdo” took place in 2006, three kilometres from the town. The town suffered enormous damage due to detonations, while several thousand of unexploded lethal means were scattered in the surroundings. The field is still being cleaned up. There are many weekend houses in that part of the town, including a forest park and a lake, planned to be transformed into a tourist centre. The lake was cleaned last year.

A municipal safety council has not been established in Paraćin. There is the idea to set up the council as it could network all institutions relevant for local safety (utilities, ecological and construction inspection, the police, school administration). Being without a city status, Paraćin has no possibility to establish communal police²⁶, which is considered a downside by local self-government representatives.

The council has not been established so far because of the May 2014 floods. Namely, all local resources were channelled to the restoration of flood damage and the establishment of the council is treated as less significant. The council will be set up as a body of the municipal council and the decision on establishment will be adopted by the municipal assembly. Representatives of all political parties will take part in its operation. Council activities will be financed from the budget and the municipality will provide logistical support. The first activity of the council will be to network all institutions, which will be followed by the analysis of problems in communication and cooperation. The existing bodies will then be linked and the main safety problems in Paraćin determined. Eventually, concrete activities will be implemented.

The Traffic Safety Council has been operational for several years already. As the Council disposes of part of funds collected from traffic fines in the municipal territory, traffic safety has been boosted. Besides, safety issues are also tackled by the Municipal Board for the Prevention of Addiction Diseases, operational since 2004, and the local headquarters for emergency situations.

Cooperation with the police has been assessed as appropriate. The municipal president receives reports on events and the security situation in the municipality territory, which is where the cooperation ends. On the other hand, the municipality provides material support to the police. Video surveillance at larger junctions and busy streets in the centre was installed in 2005, and cameras are controlled by the police. Cooperation with the traffic police has been assessed as very good, though the number of officers is insufficient (only 16, whereas Jagodina, for instance, has 70 officers) as they cover two regional roads and numerous local village roads.

²⁶ Jagodina, with 15,000 inhabitants more than Paraćin, has the possibility to establish communal police, though they have decided against it.

About the research

The Report “Partnership for Safe Communities in Serbia” has been prepared based on:

- the analysis of laws, strategic documents and media articles,
- the analyses of answers of local self-governments to the BCSP questionnaire on safety,
- interviews with representatives of local self-governments in Serbia,
- interviews with representatives of the Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing within the General Police Directorate of the Mol headquarters,
- professional consultations with Mol representatives,
- experience the BCSP has gained in implementing training for representatives of local self-governments, the police and civil society organisations over the past several years.

The findings and recommendations about the operation of municipal safety councils have been obtained through the survey of representatives of Serbian municipalities and towns and members of municipal safety councils. The questionnaire consisting of 24 questions prepared by the BCSP was used as the research tool. The questionnaire was answered by 42 local self-government units. The findings have been complemented with qualitative data based on interviews with representatives of six local self-governments in Serbia (Arandelovac, Golubac, Leskovac, Niška Banja, Novi Pazar and Paraćin), conducted in October and November 2014. The municipalities selected include those where municipal safety councils have been operational for a long time already (Leskovac and Novi Pazar) and those where the establishment of councils is planned (Arandelovac, Golubac and Paraćin). Niška Banja was selected owing to its specific features – it is a tourist place insisting on the development of extreme sports. The research team tried to organise a meeting with the representative of the Council for Public Order and Safety in Novi Sad. However, he was not willing to talk to the BCSP research team.

The findings and recommendations about the development of community policing have been prepared based on interviews with representatives of the Department for Organisation, Prevention and Community Policing within the General Police Directorate of the Mol headquarters. They have been supplemented following professional consultations with police officers dealing with crime prevention across Serbia. Furthermore, the BCSP research team compiled a questionnaire for police stations in Serbia, consisting of 23 questions, with the aim to examine attitudes of police managers towards the cooperation with municipalities and towns in Serbia, and the operation of municipal safety councils. At the moment of drafting the Report, answers of police stations were in the Cabinet of the Minister of Interior, which is why they were not taken into consideration.

The Report does not quote individual opinions of representatives of local self-governments or the Mol for anonymity purposes.

