



Финансирано од  
Европска Унија



# NATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA



## RECOMMENDATIONS

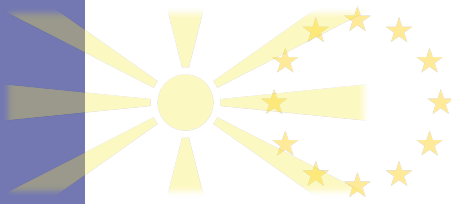
14<sup>th</sup> session of Working Group 4, Justice,  
Freedom and Security (Chapter 24)

**Topic: “Through professionalism and integrity  
to transparency and accountability in policing”**



Европско движење Северна Македонија  
European Movement North Macedonia



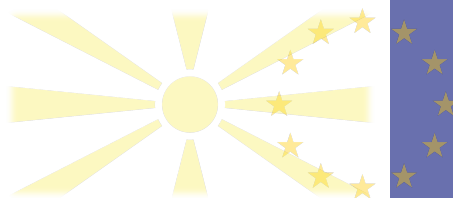


“THROUGH PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY  
TO TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN POLICING”

**RECOMMENDATIONS - 14<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF WORKING GROUP 4, JUSTICE,  
FREEDOM AND SECURITY (CHAPTER 24) ON TOPIC:**

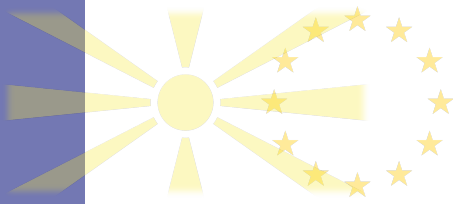
**“Through professionalism and integrity  
to transparency and accountability in policing”**

1. Police officers' integrity is vital to securing public support, which is strengthened through proper conduct towards citizens (use of limited force, fair and ethical behaviour, use of power within permissible limits, when necessary, equality in enforcing justice, avoiding insults, belittlement, and discrimination). It is recommended that the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) follow the current efforts of the European Union to strengthen mechanisms for policing with integrity and ensuring a high level of transparency.
2. The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) should continue with the directions of the OSCE mission in the Republic of North Macedonia regarding implementing the MoIA [Community Engagement and Communications Strategy](#), enhancing the work of the Prevention Unit and the long-anticipated central prevention unit coordination function.
3. The primary assumption for the development of police integrity is to protect the procedure for recruiting new police officers, which will ensure that an employment contract with the Ministry of Interior will be signed by the best candidates who have passed the prescribed procedures of selection without any political affiliation/involvement and have shown the highest results and motivation to accept the training for police officers. Establishing a fully integrated meritocracy human resources management process should be a strategic goal of the MoIA and offer a significant opportunity to reduce the pervasive, endemic levels of political interference in the police function across all areas.
4. Operational independence means that the police have the authority and discretion to make decisions about day-to-day operations, including how to deploy resources and conduct investigations without interference from political actors. To strengthen operational independence, the Government should consider organizational solutions. All leadership positions should be without political affiliation but based on merit-based employment and promotion principles. The Police Director and Assistants should be in their positions regardless of elections and changing governments.
5. In addition to the exceptional importance of the merit criteria in the recruitment of police officers (especially those in managerial positions), diversity and gender aspects should also be taken into consideration when recruiting at all levels.



Gender equality and diversity are crucial for the police for several reasons. Diverse teams bring various perspectives and experiences, which can enhance problem-solving and decision-making. A police force that reflects the diversity of society is more likely to gain trust from the community and build stronger relationships with different groups in society.

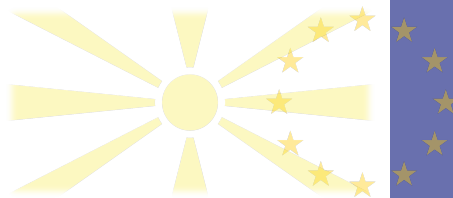
6. The MoIA should enhance the integrity test as a solid tool for assessing integrity in the European framework. This test can offer positive results. However, this test is invasive, and it is suggested that other appropriate measures should be applied before its application. This test must be used with utmost care and under professional leadership and control, i.e. institutional expertise and resources are necessary, which the MoIA should provide. According to practices, Integrity testing includes with or without cause and overt and covert testing. These four elements can combine to create different integrity testing systems. The integrity test cannot be used as a broad-spectrum anti-corruption tool but as a targeted mechanism for suspected serious wrongdoing by individuals or a group.
7. A vital prerequisite for adequate supervision of police work is accessible channels through which citizens can submit their complaints - directly to the police, as well as to other external mechanisms. To understand how the existing mechanisms work, it is recommended that the MoIA take the initiative to discuss the effectiveness of the existing tools for collecting, updating, managing, and acting on complaints from citizens. In this dialogue, the participation of civil platforms, representatives of the relevant institutions, and international police bodies is significant. Most likely, the need to establish a special department for complaints in the Ministry of the Interior will also be debated.
8. Despite the significant progress in ensuring public order and peace, as well as greater security for citizens, the Ministry of the Interior, with its leading role among the administration bodies, should continue to improve the concept of community policing by finding solutions to the problems they face most of the citizens. For example, loud music at night and other types of loud communication for which there is regulation, but it is not enforced or does not have the effect of discouraging offenders; seeking an effective solution to the problem of stray dogs on the street; seeking a solution to prevent the burning of polluting objects or the burning of stubble; more rigorous sanctions for drivers who manifest violence and violate the safety of public spaces.
9. To achieve greater integrity for police officers, primary and continuing training programs (according to the annual training plan in the Ministry of the Interior) should include topics that will offer in-depth knowledge of police integrity and



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professional police behavior. The contents that will significantly contribute to increasing integrity refer to training on conflict of interest in police work, the risks of such practices and indicating preventive activities. All forms of education should be implemented at all levels within the police organization (cadets and all management levels). However, experts point out that leadership is a critical aspect of integrity and how it is practiced at different hierarchical levels.

10. Leading by example is a cornerstone of ethical leadership and preventing corruption in law enforcement. Through their actions and behavior, leaders set the standard for ethical conduct, creating a culture that rejects corruption at all levels. Leaders are the first line of oversight and should be given priority in training and understanding the role of models for their staff.
11. Adopting the Ministry of Interior Integrity Plan for 2023-2025 represents a positive step. Preparing the next Integrity Plan would benefit from including representatives from academia, the civil sector, other professional organizations, international partners, etc. Also, The Integrity Plan must be circulated to all police officers.
12. Community Policing as a concept and developed methodology aims to increase trust in the police by strengthening the credibility and legitimacy of police actions in communities. Originally, the concept is based on local ownership, which means that decision-making and management should be decentralized. Decentralized decision-making allows officers to take responsibility for their role in community policing. When officers can create solutions to problems and have the mandate to take risks, they feel accountability for the solutions and are more likely to take responsibility for the well-being of the community.
13. The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (and its competent committees), as the most important instances for control of the security sector, including the oversight police mechanisms, should discuss the level of compliance and effectiveness in the supervision of the competent institutions (Ministry of Interior, Public Prosecutor’s Office, and Ombudsman Office within which the action of civil society organizations is provided for). Six years after the establishment of the body for external oversight of the police is a significant period that allows the assessment of progress and weaknesses.
14. To accelerate the adoption of the proposed amendments to the Law on Ombudsman, which would extend the mandate of the selected three representatives from civil society organizations from 1 to 3 years; this, in turn, would strengthen the role of the External Oversight Mechanism known as Ombudsman Plus.



15. It is recommended that a mechanism for establishing a balance of accountability between the police, the political echelon, and the citizens be initiated. There is an inherent tension between preserving police operational independence and ensuring democratic accountability to the political echelon and the public. The police cannot operate in an environment without political oversight.

