

IMPULSE PAPER

Shaping European Security Together

Proposals from the German Police Union 'Gewerkschaft der Polizei' (GdP) for the European elections 2024



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**Gewerkschaft
der Polizei**

Bundесvorstand

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The European Union is facing major challenges. War has broken out in Europe again. Yet Europeans long for security. Against the background of the upcoming European elections in 2024, the German Police Union 'Gewerkschaft der Polizei' (GdP) therefore proposes the following actions:

1. Upgrading the policy field of European Internal Security

The GdP recommends creating a **specialised parliamentary committee in the European Parliament** to deal specifically with internal security.

A specialised parliamentary committee for Internal Security would be responsible for developing targeted political measures for this policy field. It would ensure that European internal security is given its rightful place on the political agenda. This would ensure continuous debate and analysis instead of it being dealt with by more general committees. At the same time, a specialised committee would give the European Parliament clear institutional weight in the policy field of European Internal Security, putting it in a better position to represent the fundamental security-related needs and interests of European citizens vis-à-vis the other European institutions. This would also be a forum for debating and deciding on issues concerning police workers or common political guidelines for developing internal security.

2. Ensuring good working standards in joint operations

Uniform, **high standards for police workers must be ensured during joint operations** involving European agencies.

At European agencies like FRONTEX, OLAF or Europol, police workers from all EU Member States collaborate together. In addition, police workers around the world participate in civilian missions for the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy. It is striking that, despite the security work being the same, there are no equal standards for workers. Working hours, leave policies or compensation for injuries on the job are subject to different national regulations. Against this backdrop, it is clear that we need uniform, high standards for joint operations.

3. Improving worker participation on assignments abroad

The GdP calls for legally binding regulations at the European level to ensure **participation of police workers on international police missions**.

Currently, from the point of view of the workers, there is a strong lack of participation at the European level, and there are various open questions, in particular with regard to the responsibility for and monitoring of international police missions. Against this backdrop, a legally binding regulation for police worker representation at the European level is essential. This is the only way to ensure that all worker concerns are recognised in good time and decided in workers' interests through strong participation. Ample consultation and information rights must be granted.

4. Creating greater security through a more intensive promotion of cross-border police cooperation

The GdP emphasises the need for **increased cross-border cooperation between police forces and security agencies in Europe** and the creation of a clear framework for joint policing.

The police forces of the European Member States are subject to different national regulations, while national borders are becoming less relevant for criminals. Therefore, increased efforts are needed at the European level to improve cooperation, create uniform instruments and facilitate the exchange of information and data for the national police authorities. In this context, European authorities need to play a stronger role and further harmonise national regulations.

Through targeted promotion of lighthouse projects for cross-border police cooperation (e. g. in transnational police units like the Franco-German operational unit), for example, important 'lessons learned' can be generated that can provide Europe-wide experience for improving cross-border policing. Structured transnational knowledge transfer must be ensured here.

In addition, targeted promotion of police-relevant security research (e. g. in the areas of technology, for example on the question of harnessing AI applications for police work, as well as in the field of social sciences) plays a significant role and can provide important practice-relevant findings to improve cross-border police work.

5. Facilitating access to European exchange programmes for police workers

Cross-border police cooperation can only function smoothly if, in addition to the legal framework, the cultural and linguistic integration of police forces and their workers is improved throughout Europe. Against this backdrop, the European **Erasmus+ exchange programme must be expanded for police workers** and access to it must be facilitated.

As in other areas of work and life, it is crucial in the police sector to give young people, in particular, the opportunity to experience European diversity and the different ways of living, learning and working in other European countries. This promotes understanding of European similarities and differences – also in the police sector – and strengthens the intercultural competence of police workers.

With this in mind, the budget for the Erasmus programme must be increased, and access to the programme must be facilitated for employees of police and security agencies. It is also clear to the GdP that police workers' unions must be given access to the Erasmus+ programme in order to promote transnational civil society cooperation in this area.

6. Expressing appreciation of active and former police workers across Europe

With complete dedication and idealism, police and security workers across Europe ensure our security and freedom 365 days a year. Their experiences in the service shape them far beyond retirement. In order to appreciate these people and their services to society befittingly, we propose launching **„Police Day“ on 1 October each year as a European day of action.**

„Police Day“ should pay tribute to the important work, dedication and sacrifice of workers and former workers of the police and security agencies. On this day, citizens across Europe could take this opportunity to express their appreciation and show gratitude – be it through public events, commemorations, recognition events or on social media. In return, the police could use this day to show that they are rooted at the heart of society. This day should therefore also be used to raise awareness of the key role the police and security agencies play in maintaining public safety and social cohesion. At the same time, „Police Day“ would provide an opportunity to address specific current challenges, such as the rise in violence against public service workers across Europe.

7. Setting priorities in the fight against cross-border crime

The GdP calls for a focus on combating **arms smuggling, illegal drug trafficking, cybercrime, the sexual abuse of children and human trafficking.**

Given the problems that the European security architecture is currently confronted with, setting priorities for political agendas is appropriate. The European Parliament must exert its influence here and ensure that priorities for European internal security policy are set in a targeted way in the coming years.

In particular, within the context of current developments, we must make joint efforts to combat:

- arms smuggling,
- illegal drug trafficking,
- cybercrime,
- the sexual abuse of children,
- human trafficking.

8. Ending violence against women

Special focus should be placed on combating **violence against women.**

Cross-border measures must be taken to prevent and punish acts of violence against women. The planned EU violence protection directive should criminalise all forms of sexual exploitation of women, including sexual violence, rape and abuse of female sexuality, as well as all forms of cyber violence against women and girls. In addition, high standards must be guaranteed for subsequent effective assistance mechanisms to protect trafficked persons and ensure their access to justice and compensation. We need an ambitious directive covering all relevant offences to make the whole EU a safer place for all women and girls.

9. Harmonising safety-related legal bases across Europe

In order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement, the EU should harmonise important legal bases that are relevant to security, especially in the digital area, and, for example, promote the **mandatory storage of connection data** at the European level.

The GdP considers the mandatory storage of connection data of digital communication, in particular IP addresses, to be particularly important for prosecuting and investigating serious crimes. All national police authorities must be able to access data stored by service providers.

The European Court of Justice has made leeway for legally compliant storage obligations in its most recent relevant rulings. Since too little is currently being done at the national level – and because pan-European solutions are more effective – European legislators are now being called upon to submit a proposal for harmonised minimum storage obligations for IP addresses throughout Europe.

10. Stepping up the fight against cybercrime

The rapid increase in cyberattacks and cybercrime has shown that **increased coordination at the European level and targeted support for national law enforcement agencies** is crucial to effectively tackle this threat and ensure the safety of European citizens.

Europol should play a key role in coordinating efforts to combat cybercrime in Europe. This includes close cooperation with national police and law enforcement agencies. Europol could collect, analyse and share information to help Member States identify cybercriminals and investigate attacks. In addition, Europol could provide training and resources to national authorities to strengthen their cybercrime capabilities. Furthermore, a smooth, secure exchange of data between Member States is essential in order to effectively tackle cybercrime. Common databases and information exchange mechanisms must be promoted to facilitate the flow of information. This would allow for faster responses to ongoing attacks and better analysis of cyber threats.

Moreover, as cybercrime is a cross-border phenomenon, cooperation with third countries and international organisations is of great importance. The European Union should actively participate in international efforts to combat cybercrime and promote the exchange of best practices.

11. Initiating structural support programmes in metropolitan areas with an intercultural focus

The GdP suggests initiating targeted **structural support programmes for metropolitan areas** at the European level with the aim of strengthening security and intercultural cooperation.

The GdP calls on the European Union to examine to what extent targeted structural support programmes for metropolitan areas, which integrate the principles of criminal geography, can be initiated. These programmes should aim to improve security in urban areas by using criminal geography analysis to identify crime hotspots and develop targeted prevention and law enforcement measures. Application requirements must be low-threshold and easily accessible. By targeting investment in security-related infrastructure and promoting a police presence in crime-prone areas, these programmes would help to reduce crime and increase citizens' sense of security. Furthermore, intercultural cooperation and dialogue between different communities in these metropolitan areas should be promoted in order to reduce social tensions and increase overall security.

12. Promoting climate resilience of security agencies and police forces

In order to implement the European Green Deal also in public administration, and especially among the police and security agencies, **environmentally friendly police vehicles and the construction of climate-neutral police stations** should be promoted, and an **infrastructure for climate-friendly mobility** should be created.

In order to ensure that the European Green Deal is consistently implemented in public administration, and especially among the security agencies, promotional measures must also be implemented in this area at the European level. It is proposed that a basis be created at the European level for systematic identification and analysis of needs with regard to climate change adaptation in the police sector within the Member States. At the same time, it should be examined to what extent financial resources can be made available at the European level for implementing the necessary climate change adaptation measures in the police sector for the Member States.

For example, it should be proposed that the EU actively promote the purchase of environmentally friendly police vehicles, such as hybrid or electric cars, by providing financial incentives and research funding. Additionally,

clear incentives are needed to support Member States in building and refurbishing police stations in an environmentally friendly way.

Finally, it is proposed that the EU support the creation of a nationwide infrastructure for climate-friendly mobility, including expansion of the electric charging points network on public road space, which must be available to public sector bodies.

13. Ensuring the resilience of security agencies in Europe

In the face of various crises, such as the COVID 19 pandemic, the return of armed conflicts to Europe and major incidents caused by climate change, the GdP advocates the development of a **European resilience** strategy. This includes preparing for different types of crises, including natural disasters, terrorist attacks, pandemics and other emergencies.

A European resilience strategy must be developed with the aim of promoting cooperation and information exchange between European security agencies to ensure a coordinated response to crisis situations. One building block is to improve cooperation at the technical level. An exemplary building block here is that the needs of the emergency services in Europe must be specifically taken into account in the upcoming allocation of mobile radio frequencies.

In addition, cross-border training as well as exercises, material and human resources must be coordinated and made available in order to improve the capabilities and flexibility of the security forces in dealing with crises. This is crucial for ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens across Europe, even in times of crisis.

14. Continuing to advance the goal of Vision Zero for transport

In hardly any other area is the need for a pan-European approach as obviously important as in cross-border mobility, which is also characterised by increasing digitalisation. It is therefore imperative that the ongoing **efforts to improve transport safety** at the European level be further accelerated.

In order to achieve Vision Zero for transport, i.e. reducing the number of road traffic accident victims to zero, further efforts are required at the European level. From a police point of view, it is particularly important that traffic rules and sanctions for violations are harmonised throughout Europe in order to ensure a uniformly high level of road safety, especially in terms of cross-border traffic.

In addition, the legal bases set at the European level, which have a direct or indirect impact on the road safety work carried out by the police forces in the Member States, must be adapted in such a way that the European police forces are technically and legally enabled to exchange the required information with each other across borders and digitally without delay and to use new, digital technologies for traffic monitoring and accident recording. In particular, conditions must be improved so that the police and the judiciary can directly read and evaluate digital accident data. Access to vehicle data urgently requires a sector-specific solution at the EU level. The General Safety Regulation (EU 2019/2144) must be adapted in a timely manner so that the event data recorder also stores the location, date and time along with the time zone for carrying out accident analyses.



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