

Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society: Principles, Practice, Partnerships

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POLICING MULTI-ETHNIC EUROPE:
THE CASE FOR PARTNERSHIP

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Introduction

Policing across Europe has been facing a challenge. As Europe's population has become increasingly multi-ethnic in composition through migration, and as established minorities have increasingly asserted their human and democratic rights, new demands have been made on policing throughout our continent. So far, in all countries, police have been slow to respond to these changes, and minorities have suffered in consequence. This Conference is a major opportunity to help to address this challenge.

Four specific challenges have been posed to the police by this development. Two of these are common to all public service agencies in our societies, and two specific to the police.

First, the police must adjust the way they provide their services generally to the fact that their 'public' is now multi-ethnic in composition. Most importantly, police must be able to treat members of minority groups fairly, equally and with respect, so that minorities receive the same high standard of service as members of any other ethnic group. In addition, police need to be sensitive to cultural diversity between groups, and to appreciate the practical implications of such cultural diversity for the delivery of police services.

Secondly, employment in the police must be open to members of all ethnic groups, so that the composition of the police reflects that of the public, and all sections of the public feel they are represented.

These are the two challenges which are common to all service agencies. But there are two further challenges which are special to the police. These special challenges arise from the nature of the police role, and from the relationship in which it places them with minorities.

Thirdly, then, there is a special challenge for the police because minorities often do not see the police as their friends, but as a threat or as the oppressor. This is not caused by chance or simply by the behaviour of particular individuals: it tends to result from the very nature of policing in a multi-ethnic society. On the one hand there are the police, who have the principal responsibility for the law enforcement and the maintenance of order in society. On the other hand there are the minorities, who are by definition groups who - to quote the American sociologist Louis Wirth - "are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination". Minorities, in consequence, are often inclined to see the police not just as neutral in the performance of their role, but as part of the institutional structure of the dominant social group - and as its enforcement agents.

Where the police are visibly composed of officers only or mainly from the dominant group background, this perception of the police will seem to be confirmed. It will be further reinforced if police officers have been perceived to abuse or harass members of minorities, to stigmatise them, or to treat them less favourably. In addition, in many states the relations between police and minorities are further threatened by the fact that police have responsibility for the implementation of laws relating to immigration and citizenship status which differentially affect minorities of migrant origin, or for laws relating to mobility and residence which may particularly affect Roma or Gypsy communities.

As a result, in multi-ethnic societies there tends to be a structured potential for suspicion and lack of confidence as regards the police on the part of minorities. This will inevitably materialise, and even develop into hostility and conflict, unless appropriate steps are taken to establish dialogue and cooperation, and to actively address the underlying causes.

However, addressing this structured asymmetry in their relationships with minorities is not the only specific challenge faced by the police. The police may be perceived by the minorities as part of the problem, but the police also have a key role to play in the solution. As the agency responsible for law enforcement and public order, the police have the crucial role to play in combating the racism and discrimination that create and sustain minority status (in the social and political sense of this term, as defined above).

The fourth challenge for the police, therefore, is to appreciate the nature and extent of racism and discrimination in our society today, and their impact upon minority ethnic communities, and to use their legal and constitutional powers as effectively as possible to eliminate all such manifestations. The scope of police powers varies, of course, between individual states, but in all states it is the police who have the capacity to tackle the most damaging form of racism and xenophobia, i.e. racially- or xenophobically-motivated violence. Such violence - whether actual or threatened - has the most severe impact on the security and well-being of minority ethnic communities, and is the gravest threat to the viability of our democratic multi-ethnic society in Europe. On account of their unique capacity to tackle this problem, and their responsibility in many states for tackling discrimination more generally, the police are in effect our guardians against acts of bigotry and ethnic chauvinism. As the Conference organisers have expressed it in their briefing document sent out to all of us, the police are crucial ‘gatekeepers’ for ethnic integration and equality throughout Europe.

To address all these four challenges, and in particular to overcome minority lack of confidence and to combat racism in its many forms, a positive and proactive response by police to racial and ethnic issues is essential. For this reason, the title of our Conference - “Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Europe”, with its emphasis on the word “for” - is of the utmost importance. We cannot afford simply to regard policing as a neutral activity which maintains a status quo. Policing needs to be conceived, and implemented, as an active task which - amongst its many other functions - involves a commitment to help realise multi-ethnic and egalitarian goals. This commitment requires change both internally and externally, as the list of our workshop topics demonstrates.

The underlying premise of our Conference here today is that this goal of “Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society” cannot possibly be achieved by the police alone. It can only be achieved through the building of partnerships. In the remainder of my presentation, I want to focus on this particular theme of partnership: of partnership between the police and the communities which they serve - and in particular of police partnerships with NGOs (non-governmental organisations) as the formally organised bodies which can directly represent community interests. I want to suggest that, especially when the subject is racial and ethnic issues, the development of partnerships with NGOs is not merely important, but an essential pre-condition for successful performance of the police role in a democratic multi-ethnic society.

What therefore should we understand by ‘partnership’, and what are the benefits which partnerships can bring?

The Idea of Partnership

Partnership, I would like to suggest, is about three things. It is about 'valuing each other', it is about 'sharing', and it is about 'equal power'. Let us approach the question by first identifying what partnership is not.

If partnership is at one end of a continuum, at the other end is the idea of 'control'. Traditionally the role of the police has been thought of as predominantly a repressive one, involving the idea of 'control' over the public at large. Control may indeed be appropriate behaviour by the police when it is applied to the criminal actions of individuals, but it is entirely inappropriate when it constitutes the form of relationship between police and minority groups as a whole. As I have already noted, it is the structured tendency for the police to be felt by minorities to be in a relationship of dominance over them that is one of the principal challenges that brings us to this Conference today. Given that it involves the exclusion of all three key elements of respect, equality and sharing, 'control' must be seen as the very antithesis of 'partnership'.

It is increasingly acknowledged that for police to be able to carry out their constitutional role effectively, policing must be based on 'consent'. At the practical level, this has typically led police to take steps to improve their 'public image', and to take more care to explain the reasons for actions which they undertake. However, whilst securing 'consent' is an important ingredient of effective policing in a democracy, such an exercise may involve little more than influencing public opinion to legitimate continuing police 'control'. Introducing genuine measures to secure 'consent', therefore, may constitute moving in the direction of 'partnership'. But this does not necessarily guarantee that any of the three key ingredients of partnership will actually be present.

Throughout Europe, the concept of policing as a 'public service' has begun to be increasingly accepted in recent years. Appreciation across Europe that 'consent' is needed to policing as a 'public service' has typically led to mechanisms being introduced for 'consultation' by police with communities and their representatives, so that police can hear of community needs and demands and also of opinions on how their services are being carried out. However, whilst this is likely to involve an increase in the element of 'valuing each other', the elements of 'sharing' and 'equal power' are not inherent in 'consultation' as such. 'Consultation' alone still permits the service-provider to maintain complete power to decide what action to take subsequently, and to take this decision in isolation. It is very important, therefore, that the ideas of 'partnership' and 'consultation' should not be confused.

'Partnership' therefore is the opposite of 'control', and is more than merely obtaining 'consent' or undertaking 'consultation' with the public or particular communities. To provide public service effectively therefore requires not only that agencies value and respect all sections of that public, but that they also work together as equal partners to achieve that goal.

Partnerships may of course vary in the extent of 'sharing' that is involved. They may involve no more than a simple agreement to cooperate according to some agreed protocol but without any shared responsibility for each other's results. On the other hand, partnerships may involve joint action with fully shared responsibility for the work undertaken as well as for the results. Neither of these would be partnerships, however, if one of the parties to the arrangement remained in control. Partnerships must be arrangements which are entered into freely and on an equal basis by the partners involved.

The following definition aims to incorporate the key elements of ‘partnership’ and may be found useful in the course of our discussions:

Partnership: an agreed arrangement entered into freely for working together on a equal basis to achieve shared goals.

Working towards establishing partnerships in this sense between police and NGOs on racial and ethnic issues is both urgent and challenging - for reasons which have already been given above. To learn how such partnerships between police and NGOs on ethnic and racial issues can be successfully built up, it is important to identify examples of where this has already been done in particular European states, and to identify lessons which can be applied elsewhere.

Examples of the Partnership Approach in Europe

No systematic survey of examples specifically of partnership arrangements between police and NGOs on racial and ethnic issues has been undertaken across Europe. Therefore I would like to draw primarily on my own experience of undertaking surveys and other work on behalf on the Council of Europe, firstly with regard to police training, and secondly to tackling racist and xenophobic violence. I am sure that further examples on these and other subjects will be presented during the workshops tomorrow.

(a) Police Training

Firstly then, as regards police training, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of European countries, and undertook a questionnaire survey of European police training establishments on behalf of the Council of Europe. This led to a Meeting of Experts on the subject of “Police Training Concerning Migrants and Ethnic Relations” in Strasbourg, and subsequently to the publication of a substantial booklet providing practical guidance on this subject, together with examples of projects in different countries.

I must state immediately that my experience of police training in different countries has not revealed many well-developed examples of police partnerships with NGOs in the way I have defined this term earlier. On the other hand, there is no doubt that in recent years, police training institutes are increasingly introducing racial and ethnic issues into their training curricula, although many NGOs feel they are not yet doing so as speedily, comprehensively and effectively as the NGOs would wish.

Where NGOs and representatives of minority groups have been involved in police training, the most common arrangement is for a speaker to be invited to give a talk or ‘lecture’ to a group of students on a course. Quite apart from the limited educational benefit an isolated talk may have, such an arrangement may be very far from being a ‘partnership’. The arrangement is usually entirely under police control, and the visiting speaker often has little knowledge of the context in which he or she is contributing, and learns nothing of how the contribution was received and whether it proved effective. Unless such talks form part of a wider programme of work on the subject, they are unlikely to affect the attitudes or behaviour of officers, and if they are not well-received they might even damage rather than improve police-minority relations.

The second most common arrangement is for police trainees to make ‘community visits’. For example, in Berlin, the community relations department of the police arranges for trainees to visit a major mosque which is also a community centre. In Britain, it is usual for recruits to

make similar visits to ethnic minority community centres during the local stage of their initial training. Such 'community visits' move closer towards the idea of a partnership arrangement. This remains weak, however, if the NGO concerned acts merely as a host for a brief 'inspection', after which the visitors leave and there is no subsequent contact. The element of partnership is stronger if there is opportunity for discussion and exchange of views on matters of mutual interest and concern, and if the NGO is actively involved in the planning of the event and is in control throughout the visit. Even where this is the case, however, the NGO may have little knowledge or influence over how such visits fit into the wider training curriculum, and over how the experience can be translated into more positive attitudes and skills for working with minority communities.

More fully developed 'partnerships' between police and NGOs in the field of police training remain relatively uncommon, though there are signs that they are increasing. Several examples may be brought forward. For instance, here in The Netherlands, the Anne Frank Foundation established a joint project with the police, entitled TACT, to plan and deliver an extensive programme of training on minority issues during the late 1980s, and has continued to be actively involved subsequently. In Britain, in the West Yorkshire area, a group of Racial Equality Councils formed a consortium to provide training on racial issues for the West Yorkshire Police, a community-based arrangement which in one form or another has now been in operation for almost 20 years. Also in Britain, Reading Racial Equality Council has recently been developing a similar consortium of local community contributors to work on a regular basis with the national Police Staff College at Bramshill.

In Eastern Europe too, arrangements of this type have been developing. In Slovakia, the Minority Rights Group initiated a training programme jointly with the Slovakian Police, to address issues involving the Roma community. Following a survey and needs analysis, pilot workshops were successfully carried out in several areas, and preparations are now being made for widening the programme. In addition, I myself recently visited Romania to participate in a week's 'course-seminar' for senior police, government officials and representatives of minority communities, which focussed on ethnic conflicts and the role of the police. Several other similar events have been held with NGO involvement in Constanta and other locations, and a more substantial programme of local training is being planned which I am hopeful will involve partnerships with local minority communities and NGOs.

What potentially distinguishes these more developed partnership arrangements is the element of shared enterprise on an equal basis between police and NGOs. This requires joint involvement not only in the delivery, but also the design and planning of training on racial and ethnic issues for the police. Ideally, therefore, NGOs should be represented on police committees responsible for the planning of training, or on working groups specially established to address racial and ethnic issues in training.

In Britain, minority communities were represented on a national working group of this kind which was set up following the racial disturbances in the inner London area of Brixton in 1981. Subsequently, a 'Specialist Support Unit' for police training on community and race relations was established, with trainers from the minority communities and the police working jointly to assist police training schools all over Britain to address these issues. This Unit, with which I work closely as a Senior Consultant, promotes partnerships at the local level between police training establishments and Racial Equality Councils, and these include schemes for police officers to stay for several days as guests in households in minority ethnic communities.

(b) Tackling Racist & Xenophobic Violence

Racist and xenophobic violence has erupted dramatically across Europe within recent years. Some of the most horrific incidents have been reported widely in the press, but surveys have confirmed that many incidents go unreported, and that harassment of minorities in and around their homes is a regular occurrence that creates fear and may severely restrict the quality of their lives. Most (though by no means all) political leaders state that this is an unacceptable situation in a democratic multi-ethnic society, but as yet this commitment is far from being translated into a reality.

In the course of a second project which I have undertaken for the Council of Europe, I once again visited a number of European states, and conducted a survey to identify examples of good practice in dealing with racially-motivated incidents. The report based on this project, entitled “Tackling Racist and Xenophobic Violence in Europe: Review and Practical Guidance”, is due to be published shortly after this Conference, together with a collection of papers on specific projects which were presented at a Meeting of Experts held at Strasbourg.

In Europe generally, the recognition of racially-motivated violence as requiring a specific response is a relatively recent development, and the opportunity for partnership arrangements to have formed has not been great. Where partnership arrangements have been formed, these are often designed to tackle racism and xenophobia generally, or even to do so within broader strategies for dealing with crime or with social integration.

A variety of examples of these different approaches may be brought forward. In Britain, for instance, there has been a specific focus on “racial attacks and harassment”. This separation of ‘racial attacks and harassment’ from the broader phenomenon of ‘racial discrimination’ reflects the fact that under British law racial discrimination is a civil rather than a criminal offence, and is therefore not subject to investigation or prosecution by the police. Particularly since 1989, it has been government policy to encourage what is termed a “multi-agency approach” to tackling racial attacks and harassment, through the establishment of formal “multi-agency panels” at the local level. Such panels formalise the cooperation of police, local government, NGOs and other agencies on an equal basis, and create the possibility for joint actions to tackle the problem.

Detailed guidance for the formation of multi-agency panels in Britain has been produced in a series of reports by the Home Office “Inter-Departmental Racial Attacks Group”, and by the Commission for Racial Equality. Several of these projects have subject to systematic research evaluation which has produced valuable insights, especially the study of the multi-agency initiative in North Plaistow in east London.

In Camden in north London, an initiative in which I myself participate is sponsored jointly by the police, the borough council, and the local Racial Equality Council. Like many such initiatives, we have a two-tier structure, with a ‘Policy Forum’ composed of chief officers of the various agencies involved, and a ‘Practitioners Panel’ which undertakes practical projects and cooperates on individual cases. In other local areas, different structures may be established, such as in Reading where there is only a single tier, and greater involvement from criminal justice agencies. In several areas a network of reporting centres has been established, many of them located in community centres. Common registration forms are used which have been agreed by all agencies, and the collation and analysis of data is also undertaken jointly.

Elsewhere in Europe, partnerships tend to be less specifically focussed on violence and harassment and more on racism and discrimination in general. In some instances, such as the small town of Brumunddal in Norway, projects have developed specifically as a response to incidents of racist or xenophobic violence, but as with the 'Brumunddal Action Plan' (now a model for wider use across Norway), their terms of reference may subsequently be drafted in broader terms, with particular emphasis on prevention. In France, likewise, following the riots involving young people of migrant origin and police which took place in the suburbs (*banlieues*) of Lyons and other cities, inter-departmental committees ('*cellules*') have been established which involve not only police but also NGOs such as ethnic associations and local anti-racist organisations as partners.

A different form of partnership, directed specifically towards cooperation in securing successful prosecutions of racially-motivated offences under the penal law, has been developed here in Rotterdam by the Rotterdam Anti-Discrimination Action Council (RADAR). Working in partnership with the Rotterdam Police and local Prosecutor's office, RADAR has helped to develop formalised arrangements designed to ensure that cases involving racial discrimination or violence can be prepared thoroughly and speedily for effective presentation in court. Of course, in a number of other countries, examples of cooperation between NGOs and police on registering and preparing cases may also be found. However, often such cooperation is undertaken simply on an 'ad hoc' basis, and without any systematic framework which reflects a joint commitment and the level of trust necessary for genuine 'partnership'.

Benefits of a Partnership Approach

What, then, are the benefits which a partnership approach can bring? From the point of view of both the police and NGOs, these are several.

First of all, in order to be able to perform their constitutional role of maintaining law and order, the police need the help of the community if they are to develop a service-oriented approach which responds to community needs. Moreover, the police are largely dependent on the community for the reporting of crime, and they need community cooperation for the investigation of crime and also for its successful prosecution (e.g. in the form of witnesses). In order to secure this cooperation they need firstly a good understanding of communities, and secondly to gain the trust of these communities.

In the case of minority ethnic communities, for reasons already explained, this understanding and trust may often be lacking. NGOs are agencies which can provide the police with the help they need in order to be able to police a multi-ethnic society effectively. Amongst other things, NGOs can assist the police with the understanding of racial issues and minority communities that they require; NGOs can assist with making contacts in and communicating with minority communities; NGOs can assist with encouraging victims in minority communities to come forward to report crimes and to provide evidence; and NGOs can assist police generally in planning and publicising their overall approach to racial and ethnic issues as they affect policing generally. NGOs can also help police by acting as monitors and evaluators of the quality of police services relating to racial issues and to ethnic minority communities.

NGOs can of course be approached on an 'ad hoc' basis to provide such assistance, but police should not expect to find the response predictable or reliable, given that NGOs have many other responsibilities and also that trust may be lacking. More formal partnerships have the benefit for

the police that realistic expectations of what NGOs can contribute can be identified and agreed, and that relationships of trust can be developed.

From the point of view of NGOs, the potential benefits are also considerable. Most NGOs value their independent non-governmental status: they take seriously their right to criticise public institutions where they fall short of expected standards and their duty to campaign for improvement and change. To campaign solely from the margins, however, has serious limitations. It is therefore of great benefit to NGOs if, without compromising their independence and integrity, they are able to engage directly in dialogue with the institutions concerned, and on a regular and sustained basis. My British colleague, Jonathan Stanley, in a paper prepared for the Council of Europe, refers to this method of cooperation as one of ‘constructive engagement’, meaning that it should be simultaneously positive and critical.

Hence, the formation of partnerships allows NGOs to represent their own interests and those of minority ethnic communities directly into positions of power and influence within the police and other agencies. It also assists NGOs to gain greater understanding of police organisations, and gives them the opportunity to help shape the policies and practices of these agencies on racial and ethnic issues. Then, as mutual confidence and understanding grow, and with visible signs of improved outcomes, so the willingness of NGOs to engage in cooperation and joint actions should be able to increase further. I have given examples earlier of various forms of practical cooperation which can be developed in the areas of police training and of tackling racist violence. In the latter area in particular, partnerships involving NGOs and a range of organisations are essential, since no single type of organisation can deal effectively with racist and xenophobic violence on its own.

However, partnerships between police and NGOs are essential, not just in these two areas, but in all of the areas covered by our Conference workshops if the kinds of aspirations identified in our draft Charter are to be achieved. NGOs will possess essential skills and understanding to progress all of these issues, but it is only through partnerships that they can use this potential contribution to the maximum effect in directly influencing and developing the police response.

Obstacles and How to Overcome Them

Given these potential benefits, what are the obstacles to establishing successful partnerships, and how may they be overcome?

The first obstacle to potential partnerships between police and NGOs may be an absence of commitment - or at least ‘perceived’ commitment - on the part of one or other group to the goals which the partnership is aimed to promote. A common concern on the part of NGOs is the lack of commitment to address racial and ethnic issues on the part of the leadership of the organisation. Even where this top-level commitment is clear, NGOs may be reluctant to become involved in partnership arrangements if they feel that this commitment is lacking further down the organisation. However, NGOs may be willing to become involved - at least on an interim basis - if senior management can convince them that their participation forms part of a strategy to implement the necessary change in attitudes and behaviour within the organisation.

So far as the police are concerned, there may also be concern that NGOs are not committed to joint enterprise, and there is very commonly suspicion within the police that NGOs may have ‘other agendas’. By this is usually meant a suspicion that what NGOs really wish to do is to ‘get inside’ the police and to ‘expose’ practices that are considered ‘bad’ or ‘racist’, and to perhaps

subsequently pass this information to the press. Such behaviour would be extremely short-sighted on the part of an NGO, and would undoubtedly be counter-productive if police managers are committed and sincere.. On the other hand, it must always be acknowledged that both parties will have their own interests and reasons for wishing to enter into partnerships, and that what is needed is an honest and open statement of what these interests and objectives are. Provided there is honesty and openness in this way, then mutual trust and confidence will gradually develop as a result of positive experiences of working together over time.

A second obstacle to establishing effective partnerships is lack of understanding of each other's agencies, and in particular of routine working practices and informal styles. Often there may be unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved by partners within their own agencies. There may also be considerable frustration over differences in procedures, recording practices, accountability structures, and so on. Police in particular may have unrealistic expectations of what NGOs can deliver in terms of wider minority community involvement and support. NGOs on the other hand may not appreciate the legal and bureaucratic constraints on police action. If no steps are taken to overcome such obstacles, partnership arrangements may fail to make progress, or even break down soon after they have been established.

This problem has been noted in several instances in Britain where multi-agency panels have been formed to combat racial attacks and harassment. One solution, which I recently devised for the Multi-Agency Racial Harassment Initiative in the London Borough of Brent, is to conduct multi-agency training sessions with members of the various partner agencies. These were designed first to identify the different roles and modes of operation of each agency, and subsequently to identify how agencies could complement one another and work together in cooperation. A second method of overcoming this obstacle would be to arrange for partners to spend several days in each other's agencies, 'shadowing' the work routine of officers as they go about their daily business.

A third obstacle is the genuine concerns that staff of each agencies may have about the possible risks involved in partnership. One such concern centres around the issue of confidentiality. Both the police and NGOs will have obligations to their clients to maintain the confidentiality of information disclosed to them. This is an important issue which can only be resolved on the one hand by formulating clear criteria as to what information may or may not be formally exchanged between agencies, and secondly by building up a sufficient level of mutual trust that will allow further confidential sharing of information within a small 'joint action' group. For example, London's Metropolitan Police have recently prepared detailed guidance for their staff on the sharing of information on racially-motivated incidents with other agencies.

A second genuine concern, which arises specifically for NGOs, is that engagement in partnerships may compromise (or be perceived to compromise) the NGO's independence and integrity. This independence is the *raison d'être* of NGOs, and for their credibility, NGOs must be able to guarantee it to those to whom they are accountable. In the case of NGOs concerned with racial and ethnic issues, this accountability is above all to minority ethnic communities. Given the structural and historical factors affecting police-minority relations which were referred to earlier, there is likely to be special sensitivity on involvement with the police amongst NGOs, which it is essential that police and other agencies appreciate. Often this may cause NGOs to be slower or more reluctant to enter into full partnerships with public agencies that the latter might wish or expect.

One final obstacle must not be overlooked, and this obstacle is the availability of resources to develop partnerships of this kind. Resources are almost invariably in short supply, and if partnerships with NGOs are seen by police organisations as of marginal relevance, the chance of obtaining adequate resources will be remote. For this reason it is essential for NGOs to press for police organisations to take a strategic view of the benefits of the partnership approach, so that both resources and provision for evaluation are built into programmes from the start.

It is also essential for police organisations to appreciate the very limited material resources possessed by most NGOs. An effective partnership arrangement between police and NGOs is therefore likely to involve sufficient financial and material resources being provided from the police side. The NGOs' contribution will consist primarily of the commitment, understanding and skills which NGOs can uniquely bring.

Conclusion

To conclude, therefore, I have suggested that the formation of partnerships between police and NGOs can bring major benefits for policing in a multi-cultural society, and I have set out examples of such partnerships from different countries in Europe. By 'partnerships' I have meant formal arrangements entered into freely for working together on an equal basis to achieve common goals.

I have also identified some of the obstacles to successful partnerships between police and NGOs which can arise, and have suggested how these may be overcome. Perhaps the most important lesson which has been learnt from past experience is that successful partnerships between police and NGOs take time to become established, because mutual trust and understanding need to be built up gradually and with care. I know that this is the firm view of both the police and RADAR here in Rotterdam. Their experience shows that successful partnerships cannot be created overnight. Partnership must be developed step by step, initially through dialogue and exchange of views, and subsequently through increasing cooperation, though always with a clear strategic understanding of the eventual goal.

I want to finish, however, by stressing that the building of partnerships is not simply an option which we can afford to choose or ignore at will. Partnerships are a necessity if we are serious about developing "policing for a multi-ethnic Europe" as a method of achieving our egalitarian goal. For our increasingly multi-ethnic society to be successful, minorities must be able to participate in all its spheres on an equal basis and to do so with confidence and without fear. The role of the police in ensuring this is crucial, above all because of their key role in the fight against the racism and xenophobia which has erupted in our midst.

Without partnerships, I believe the police will find it hard to appreciate the nature and depth of the challenge, and will not be able to win the trust and cooperation of minority communities that is essential for them to carry out their crucial role. With successful partnerships, past histories and other obstacles can gradually be overcome, and police and NGOs can work together to help build a multi-ethnic Europe in which persons of all ethnic origins can feel equal, respected and secure.

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