

The Rotterdam Charter

Policing for a multi-ethnic society

Drawn up at the Rotterdam Conference 30 May to 1 June 1996

Policing for a multi-ethnic society

The first draft of this charter was prepared by the steering committee for the Conference 'Policing for a multi-ethnic society; principles, practice and partnership' held on May 30th to June 1st 1996 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

During the conference, a group of approximately 120 participants, consisting of police officers, representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and officials from local, national and European authorities, discussed and revised the earlier draft of this Charter.

In its present form, the Charter serves several purposes. Most important, it can be used to discuss the present situations in different European countries, while stressing the need for partnerships between the police, NGOs and local authorities. In addition, this Charter represents the steering committee's aim to encourage further development of general principles for police practice in a changing Europe.

The Mayor of Rotterdam

Rotterdam, 16.10.1997

*"Those insensitive to the Signals of their Time
shall be surpassed by History"*

This quotation of Michael Gorbachev, one-time president of the former Soviet Union, signals one of the most crucial revolutions in recent history; it was the beginning of a new era in which the old hostile images were weakened, and world views that had been considered to be incompatible became eligible for dialogue.

Gorbachev's quotation is not only meaningful to ideological revolutions world-wide: the observation applies equally to processes of change in the micro-cosm of local society.

One of the most striking processes of change in our time is the fact that urban societies, in particular, are becoming increasingly multi-cultural.

Citizens and institutions are faced with the challenge of handling new ways of orientation in a society that is constantly changing as regards its ethnic and cultural composition.

In this process the police play a special role. The police are guardians of the principle of equality, and must take action in potential conflict situations in a professional, timely and objective manner. In view of their crucial role in preventing and solving conflicts, the police, above all, should dedicate themselves to maintaining credibility and legitimacy towards all citizens in society. And because the police operate in the 'shopping window of society', highly visible for action against racism and discrimination is called for.

The police cannot do this on their own. They are dependent on co-operation and coalition with other organisations.

This is the key theme of the 'Rotterdam Charter; Policing for a multi-ethnic society'. The Charter does not provide a standard formula for action, but it contains an agenda of themes requiring the attention of our modern urbanized societies, if they do not wish to be surpassed by history.

The City of Rotterdam is proud to trigger this discussion by means of the Charter. This stimulus is the result of a conference which was held in Rotterdam in 1996 and to which 120 experts from 17 countries contributed. Rotterdam aims not only to initiate the debate, but is also seeking to establish an ongoing dialogue and exchange by means of supporting the Foundation "Policing for a multi-ethnic society", which will distribute and promote the Charter internationally.

The City Council of Rotterdam, however, does not regard this as the exclusive responsibility of the municipal authorities; with regard to this theme, in particular, the principle of partnership is essential. Urban authorities, police, justice and anti-discrimination organisations must all accept their obligations to work together in developing this policy. This is not only expressed in the contents of the Charter's message; one can also infer this from the composition of the group of initiators.

Rotterdam is proud to sign the Charter, in coalition,

the Mayor of Rotterdam,

dr. A. Peper

the Public Prosecutor,

mr L.A.J.M. de Wit

the Chief Constable Regional Police Force Rotterdam Rijnmond,

B.A. Lutken

the Chair of RADAR,

mr J.W. Cuperus

**INTRODUCTION FOR THE ROTTERDAM CHARTER:
'POLICING FOR A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY'**
Dr Robin Oakley

A European Challenge

Europe, over the last half century, has been transformed in many ways - demographic, economic, social and political. These changes have produced major challenges to established institutions throughout Europe, including the police.

One significant change has been the increased prominence of cultural diversity and ethnic tensions. There have been a variety of causes of this development. Firstly, there have been changes in population composition resulting from the settlement of migrant workers and refugees in almost all countries. Secondly there have been economic factors, which initially encouraged labour migrants. Subsequently, economic recession has given rise to tensions as indigenous groups have sought to protect their access to employment and housing. Thirdly there have been political factors. These include the rise of nationalist movements of the extreme right, and the increased political assertiveness of established national minorities - especially in Eastern Europe following the collapse of communist regimes.

This greater prominence of cultural and ethnic diversity reflects global trends as we approach the new millennium. It is a potential source of great enrichment for Europe. However, if our institutions do not respond appropriately and in accordance with democratic principles, it is also a source of danger. If minorities continue to be subject to oppressive or unequal treatment, the fabric of society is threatened. Individuals suffer; ethnic conflicts and violence erupt; and the framework of civil society may be severely damaged.

In this world of ethnic and cultural diversity, the role of the police is crucial. With their special responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in society, the police are essential guardians of our social framework. They are also the most visible of the agencies which perform a civic role. This has two major implications.

First of all, the police must always act - and be seen to act - with unquestionable fairness towards all groups, and with clear respect for ethnic and cultural difference. Because of their high visibility, police must accept that they need to act as a 'role-model' for all public agencies in promoting fundamental rights.

Secondly, if minorities are to overcome these threats and play their full part, the police must strive to use their special and unique powers in support of multi-ethnic ideals. They need to use the law to its fullest extent to combat acts motivated by racism and xenophobia. The police also need to work in a proactive manner to prevent such actions, and to assist ethnic and social integration.

In recent years, police performance has often been seen to fall far short of these ideals, especially by those in minority ethnic communities. There is a major legacy of lack of confidence and mistrust in the police among the minorities in Europe, which police must now overcome.

For all the above reasons, a passive response to these changes on the part of police will not be enough. An active lead is required, in the form of 'Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society'.

The Creation of the Charter

The Rotterdam Charter is an initiative which has grown out of the partnership between the Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police, Rotterdam City Council, and RADAR - the anti-discrimination organisation for Rotterdam. This three-way partnership reflects their view that the necessary changes in policing cannot be achieved by the police alone. Everywhere the police have the primary responsibility for dealing with these matters. But for success, they are dependent also on the co-operation both of the civic authorities, and of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are concerned with ethnic issues.

The City of Rotterdam deserves full credit for bringing forward this initiative. But it is no accident that the initiative should have been born in this great European port. From the Middle Ages onwards, Rotterdam has been an increasingly important centre for international trade, and today it is the largest and most rapidly expanding port on

the continent. In consequence, Rotterdam has a long history of the intermingling of peoples, and during the last few decades it has become one of the most multi-ethnic cities in Europe.

Appreciating the importance of this issue and its Europe-wide significance, Rotterdam - and in particular RADAR, its anti-discrimination agency - determined to take a lead in raising the profile of multi-ethnic issues in policing across the continent. Wisely, they appreciated that steps forward had already been taken by police and their partner agencies in a number of countries. They recognised that the most effective approach would be to bring together this experience, and build on it. Their purpose was not only to focus on the principles of multi-ethnic policing, but also on the actions which could and should be taken to implement these principles in everyday police practice.

With the support of a multi-national steering group, a working conference on 'Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society: Principles, Practice, Partnerships' was held in Rotterdam on 30 May - 1 June 1996. The Conference was attended by more than 120 delegates, representing 17 countries. The delegates were drawn relatively evenly from police, civic authorities and NGOs. The aims of the Conference were threefold: to share experiences so as to disseminate successful projects, to establish an international network of experts in this field, and to produce a 'Charter' of principles and practical guidelines for promotion Europe-wide.

What was especially remarkable about the conference was the seriousness and high level of commitment of all those who attended it. All participants had been selected as persons who were already active in this field, and who therefore had experience to contribute. The conference first received reports of existing projects in a variety of countries. Participants then reviewed a draft version of the Charter, and proposed alterations and additions to it. Representatives from NGOs were at times critical of the police and were usually forthright in their views of what needed to be done. However, the atmosphere of the Conference was always co-operative and constructive. In this respect, it was a successful demonstration of principle of 'partnership' which the organisers wished to promote.

From Words to Action

The Charter itself is a document which identifies the kinds of actions which need to be taken if, across Europe, 'policing for a multi-ethnic society' is to become a reality. It covers such topics as training on ethnic issues, the recruitment and retention of minority officers, the implementation of relevant law, partnerships with minority ethnic communities, and the management of ethnic crime statistics. What is unique is that it provides an overview of the whole range of activities which need to be introduced.

The Charter is therefore both a resource to generate a programme of necessary actions, and a 'check-list' against which progress can be assessed. However it is not a 'blueprint' which provides an instant solution. It is neither detailed, nor adjusted to the requirements of every European city or state. Its aim is to set out a collection of core tasks which need to be undertaken everywhere. But the priorities and the manner in which these tasks are carried out must be appropriate to the circumstances of the individual case. In each country or city, therefore, a specific and detailed programme of action should be drawn up.

How can these words be translated into action? The question needs to be answered at two levels: the professional level and the political level.

The professional level is that of establishing the specific content of the programme of action that is appropriate for a particular city or state. Three stages are involved. First of all, the ethnic composition of the population and the policing needs which arise from ethnic diversity must be identified. Secondly, the Charter should be used as a check-list to identify which specific actions are already being taken, and which are not. Where actions are already being taken, their effectiveness should be reviewed. Finally, the overall programme of action should be drawn up. This should include plans to fill the gaps which have been identified, and to strengthen existing initiatives where required.

Every programme of action must also include two other components. The first is adequate resources to carry out the work - both financial resources, and resources in kind such as expert advice and organisational support. The

second is the active involvement of persons from all of the diverse ethnic communities, and especially those from minority groups. Partnerships with appropriate non-governmental organisations will ensure this takes place.

Even the best-designed programmes of action to implement the Charter cannot succeed, however, unless there is support at the political level. Commitment from political leaders and senior police officers should take the form of a clear and well-publicised policy which mandates the police organisation to address multi-ethnic issues. Without a policy commitment, resources to implement the programme may be difficult to obtain. Also, minority community leaders and NGOs may feel compelled to withdraw their co-operation if they do not believe there is political level support.

How, then, is political commitment to the principles of the Charter to be secured? Several routes can be followed. One route, which police officers themselves can follow, is to ensure that senior police managers are fully and correctly informed about ethnic issues which affect the police. A second route is for similar briefings to be provided at political level by officers of civic authorities and by NGOs.

Information alone, however, may not be sufficient to achieve the necessary commitment, not least because of the many competing priorities and pressures affecting the police. Other means of influencing policing policy and priorities in the direction of the Charter should therefore be explored where necessary.

For example, police officers may be able to win support for the Charter from their national police unions, and also from international police associations and networks. Civic authorities likewise link into national structures, and they too can promote the Charter through European networks such as ELAINE and Eurocities. And NGOs, as independent organisations, can campaign publicly to promote the Charter, through holding meetings and organising conferences, as well as by use of the mass media. NGOs can also advocate the Charter at a European level through bodies such as the Migrants Forum, human rights groups and youth networks.

Finally, valuable support to gain commitment at the political level can be obtained by drawing on the work of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Although the Maastricht Treaty does not provide the European Union with any direct authority for policing or ethnic issues, several important reports (such as that of the Kahn Commission) deal with these matters. The Treaty of Amsterdam however opens possibilities to address anti-discrimination issues. There are also numerous other structures within the EU framework through which the issues can in practice be addressed.

The Council of Europe, by contrast, has programmes which deal with both policing and ethnic issues directly. Following the 'Vienna Declaration' by the Heads of all European States in 1993, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has developed a wide-ranging programme of work, and the Council of Europe is also active on human rights, migration and youth issues. Of immediate relevance is the Council of Europe report on 'Police Training concerning Migrants and Ethnic Relations', which gives detailed practical guidance on one of the major areas covered by the Rotterdam Charter. The Council of Europe is particularly active in Central and Eastern Europe at the present time, especially on issues relating to Roma/Gypsy communities.

Action in all the above ways is required if the vision embodied in the Charter is to be transformed into a European reality. The challenge is great, the task is urgent, and commitment and careful planning are the essential pre-conditions of success.

The City of Rotterdam regards the production of the Charter as merely its first step. It has dedicated itself to continuing to sponsor this project on a Europe-wide basis, by means that are currently being explored. Its initiative deserves Europe-wide support.

Dr Robin Oakley is an independent UK-based training and research consultant who specialises in policing and ethnic relations. He has worked in a wide range of European countries, and has prepared practical guidance documents for the Council of Europe both on police training and on tackling racist and xenophobic violence. He acted as specialist adviser to the organisers of the Rotterdam Conference.

The Rotterdam Charter

Policing for a multi-ethnic society

1 - Opening Remarks

Changing Europe and Legitimate Policing: a Question of Professionalism

1 - In the past decades, the composition of the population in Western Europe has changed radically. Postwar migration has caused many Western European countries to become multi-ethnic communities. In the east, the dissolution of the Iron Curtain has focused attention on the status of long-resident ethnic minorities in several Eastern European countries.

2 - A multi-ethnic society places special demands on the police organisation. As a result, the police must accept the need to adapt their professionalism, quality of service and their legal and wider responsibilities to the needs of a continually changing population. The goal is to provide services that are applicable and accessible to all citizens regardless of their ethnic background.

3 - In metropolitan areas especially, police forces, local authorities and NGOs are being faced with the challenges of ethnic diversity. The Charter focuses principally on cities and larger towns. Larger communities deal with cultural differences more often and are the first, though not necessarily the only ones, to develop new strategies in coping with these challenges.

The Key Role of the Police: the Challenge

4 - The Charter focuses primarily on the efforts required from the police. Although the police are certainly not the only public organisation with a responsibility in these matters, they can be considered the gatekeepers of equality, integration and cohesion in a rapidly changing society.

Especially in situations where physical force is needed, the police are an instrument for control and repression. It is therefore necessary that the police are active and reliable in carrying out their role as guardians of the anti-discrimination legislation. In other words, the police have an important responsibility in enforcing the law as well as taking preventive measures to combat racism and discrimination.

5 - Presently, there are considerable differences in legislation and policies between the European countries. In so many different circumstances, many different solutions may be possible.

Instead of proposing legislative or political changes, this Charter explores the reasons for different methods of intervention and the issues that should be debated. No proposals for new legislation or for harmonisation of legislation on a European level will be included in the Charter.

Necessity for an Integrated and Co-ordinated Approach: from Principles to Practice

6 - More than one aspect of police responsibilities will be focused on. The Charter aims at establishing a full set of instruments for an integrated and co-ordinated approach to the management of ethnic diversity in the interests of equality and social cohesion.

7 - The main objective of this Charter is to enhance organisational commitment to the issue of policing a multi-ethnic society. The first requirement is a clear mission statement for the organisation specifying its commitment to equal treatment and to combating racist and xenophobic violence. This should precede any tangible measures.

Co-operation with Others: the Added Values

8 - Racism and racial discrimination constitute a serious threat to the development of a harmonious multi-ethnic society. Co-operation between the police, NGOs and municipal authorities is especially important in recognising and monitoring these threats. In this relatively new area of policy, the police, NGOs and local authorities can benefit from each others experiences and contacts.

2 - Recruitment and Retention

1- The Police as a Mirror of Society

The composition of the population in most European cities is changing rapidly and dramatically. To establish their importance as a legitimate force in society, the police have a professional interest in reflecting the same ethnic diversity in their organisation. One of the most important means to reach this goal is recruitment.

2 - Enhancing Professional Standards

Recruitment of police officers from minority ethnic communities will have an added cultural value that will be beneficial to the police department as well as to the society as a whole. Ethnic diversity can benefit the entire organisation and as a result promote professionalism.

3 - The Changing Labour Market

In most cities, the work force has become more and more multicultural. At present, half of the labour force already consists of minorities in several large European cities. The police can therefore no longer afford to ignore the growing 'pool of talent' that minority ethnic communities represent in the job market.

4 - Recruiting Ethnic Minorities as Police Officers

In order to recruit people from minority ethnic communities, it is essential to develop good relations with ethnic minorities and to establish a positive image of police work. People of all ethnic groups should be encouraged to take an interest in becoming a police officer, regardless of their ethnic background. Where nationality is a barrier, efforts should be made to overcome this for established residents.

5 - Affirmative Action

In cases of under-representation of ethnic minorities and unproductive recruitment methods, there is a real need for special programmes and affirmative action to promote recruitment from minority ethnic communities.

6 - General Recruitment Requirements

The goal to recruit more police officers from minority ethnic communities has consequences for the general recruitment policy as well. A positive attitude towards cultural pluralism must be added to the general requirements for every police officer. Commitment to ethnic diversity also means the rejection of all forms of racism, prejudice and racially motivated behaviour by the police as professionally unacceptable.

7 - Setting Appropriate Standards

It is important not to lower standards when recruiting people from minority ethnic communities. Lowering standards will work against them in more than one way. On the other hand, it may be necessary to change standards. Application forms and tests (language, psychological, history) must be evaluated for cultural bias in order to guarantee equal opportunity. In general, it will be necessary to redefine the profile of the 'police officer of the next century'.

8 - Commitment of the Organisation is Essential

In order to encourage commitment within the entire police organisation, it is important to give greater attention to recruitment. It is advisable to give personnel officers special training in selecting future colleagues with different ethnic backgrounds.

9 - A Policy Explaining the Reasons Why

Successful recruitment from specific minority ethnic communities requires a public statement of the reasons why affirmative action is necessary. It must be made clear that this kind of recruitment is not favouritism but a survival strategy for the police organisation.

10 - The Key Issue is Mutual Respect

Co-operation on the basis of mutual respect and equality is necessary. A police force will function only if people:

- work together;
- listen and talk to each other;
- trust each other;
- realise that nothing is possible without each other.

11 - Police Posting

Police officers with different ethnic backgrounds should be assigned duties in exactly the same way as any other police officer. Generally, they should not be recruited to police their own individual ethnic communities, but rather to provide police services to the entire population. Specific posting with regard to their ethnicity will increase pressure from their own community. However assignments in isolation should be avoided.

12 - Equal Career Opportunities

Proper personnel recruitment requires an open, non-prejudiced environment in which people of all ethnic groups will feel welcome to join the police force. Not only recruitment is essential, but also retaining personnel and ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities for advancement within the organisation. The police will not be able to recruit talented young people from the minorities unless they believe that they will have equal opportunities within the police organisation. The police department as a whole will profit from having positive minority role models at all levels.

13 - Clear Complaints Procedures

Police must have procedures for dealing with complaints concerning discrimination or harassment by fellow officers. A clear and purposeful complaints procedure for a disciplinary offence is very important for the general public and for minorities in particular. By dealing with racism within the police force, the police will enhance their credibility in the eyes of society.

3 - Training of Police Officers

1 - Management tool

Training is one of the most important management tools for creating a professional and multicultural police force that is able to provide services for a multicultural society.

2 - Goal-orientated Training

It is important that training is not regarded as the primary goal but rather as an integrated part of policing a multi-ethnic society. Training can assist the management to develop a clear mission statement on this issue. The management's first responsibility to establish the conditions to help facilitate the necessary changes.

3 - Training as a Tool in Creating Commitment

Obviously, police officers must be committed to the necessity of changing the monocultural character of the police force to a multicultural one on every level of the organisation. Training can be an effective tool for developing such commitment by enhancing appreciation of the police as an agent of cohesion in society. The police officer's attitude towards and commitment to these changes is crucial in determining their success.

4 - Police Training Schools must Anticipate

The change from a monocultural into a multicultural organisation is not only the responsibility of the operational police department. In order to adapt training practices to deal with the multicultural work place, police training schools must take advantage of the real life experiences of police officers.

5 - Basic Training

Basic training should also deal with issues like recognising elements of racially motivated behaviour, appreciating its importance and learning how to respond in a professional manner. This also includes possessing skills to deal with reports of racial incidents.

6 - Attitudes

Police officers must also be made aware of their own attitudes towards these issues. Training should help to ensure that officers' personal attitudes are consistent with professional ethics. There should be formal procedures to deal with any manifestations of racist attitudes by police. This professionalism will contribute to the credibility of the police in society.

7 - Cultural Differences

Because a culturally diverse society requires the police to adapt, it is essential that the entire police organisation is able to overcome any difficulties arising from cultural diversity. Barriers to intercultural understanding and

communication, both within the police organisation and while serving the community, must be challenged. In addition, training should aim at adapting existing skills and methods, so as to be able to deal professionally with situations where different cultures meet or clash.

8 - Biased and Antagonistic Thinking

Often police contacts are limited to people living in and dealing with troubled situations. The contacts are mostly initiated by the police, and in response to negative circumstances. As a result, police work usually promotes an increased risk of 'opposed and biased thinking' about minorities, which can have harmful effects. Therefore, projects which promote positive images should be encouraged. As a key institution in society, responsible for safeguarding the rights and freedom of individuals, the police must develop their skills, knowledge and competence to respond professionally to increasing diversity in society. Training should allow officers to reflect on their experiences on the job, and to remain aware of the importance of safeguarding the principle of equal treatment.

9 - Partnerships in Training

The police need to involve NGOs and/or people from minority ethnic communities in training programmes, as they are also the recipients of police services. In addition, they should be involved in programmes which train the instructors on aspects of cultural diversity.

4 - It's a good Law, but it's poorly implemented

1- The Importance of effective Implementation

Anti-discrimination legislation is an important tool in providing ethnic minorities with equal treatment and a safe environment. However even in countries with extensive laws against racism and discrimination, there is a wide gap between theory and practice, between legislation and law enforcement.

2 - Effective Use of Law enhances Police Credibility

Naturally, the credibility of the police in combatting racism and discrimination depends largely on the way they enforce the law. Police officers must be made aware of the importance of obtaining evidence of discrimination, if the law is to be used effectively. Commitment to combatting racial discrimination on the part of the police should involve the entire organisation. Senior police officers can play an essential role in introducing the correct culture within the organisation.

3 - Specific Attention and specific Skills

For reasons of professionalism and legitimacy, the attention of the police to racist incidents and their ability to deal with these matters must be optimised. Special (basic and in-service) programmes should be developed for stimulating awareness of racial issues and for recognising discrimination in specific situations. Every police officer should have the skills to deal with these situations and the knowledge to tackle discrimination within the legal guidelines.

4 - Appointment of Co-ordinating Officers

The appointment of co-ordinating officers with special responsibility for racial incidents may intensify commitment within the police department. However the existence of specialist officers must never become an excuse for others not to act in cases of racial discrimination.

5 - Multi-Agency Coalitions

The police should seek professional expertise when dealing with discrimination issues and should take part in multi-agency coalitions. This also includes participating in partnerships with local authorities, minority community leaders and NGOs in order to gain and exchange information on racial incidents.

6 - Transparent Procedures

Racial incidents reported to the police must be treated carefully. Victims must be heard and helped. Procedures should be transparent, especially for victims.

7 - Recording and Monitoring as a major Police Responsibility

Recording and monitoring racial incidents is of the utmost importance. The police have an important responsibility for recording and - in co-operation with others - gathering information.

8 - Reflection on Causes of Under-reporting

Under-reporting of racial discrimination and racial incidents is a widespread phenomenon. The police should take into consideration the extent and causes of under-reporting when presenting statistics concerning racial discrimination.

9 - Specific Measures to encourage Reporting

The police, NGOs and local authorities should consider specific measures to encourage the public to report racial incidents. To that effect, the following measures may be considered:

- programmes to stimulate awareness;
- specific measures for building up confidence and trust;
- adequate internal procedures on how to deal with reports concerning discrimination.

10 - Generally accepted Definitions

Effective registration of reports requires a clear definition of a racial incident.

At present, statistics on racial incidents differ greatly between different agencies such as NGOs and the police. To overcome this, European authorities should try to create generally accepted definitions that may be used for registering such incidents. A practical working definition should be developed and approved in co-operation with representatives of minority ethnic communities.

11 - Monitoring- and Data Collection Instruments

The police should encourage the development of monitoring and data collection instruments. These instruments will identify emerging trends and serve as a basis for an integrated, strategic approach as well as for identifying missing information.

12 - Establishment of Co-ordinating Unit

Regular analysis of data concerning racial incidents should take place, on several levels and with several objectives in mind. It would be advisable to assign a co-ordination unit within the police department to monitor and report on trends and developments.

13 - Comparable Data

Data should be collected in a form which is comparable, in order to exchange information and perform comparative studies of neighbourhoods, cities and even countries.

14 - Exchange of Information should be stimulated

Specialised methods of gathering information should be developed. The exchange of information between intelligence agencies, police and anti-racism organisations, concerning organised racist activities, should be stimulated.

15 - Reporting should have a follow-up

Reporting is not a goal in itself. There must be a guarantee that reports are followed by specific actions. Clear procedures will optimise chances for success and discourage under-reporting.

5 - Building Bridges between Ethnic Minorities and the Police

1 - Promoting Trust and Co-operation

Building bridges between ethnic minorities and the police provides a professional challenge. It is an important part of the service-oriented approach of the police in a democratic society and is essential in promoting trust and co-operation.

2 - Open and good Communication is a professional Need

Almost every government agency needs good relations and open communication with all segments and groups within society to function properly. For the police, these conditions are of the utmost importance in guaranteeing

that citizens will co-operate in preventing as well as in tracking down crime. Moreover, it is essential for the police to obtain a picture of the actual needs of citizens and to promote constructive relations with and between the various groups within society.

3 - Overcoming antagonistic Thinking

In order to promote trust, the police must actively seek feedback from minority ethnic communities on the effectiveness and relevance of policies and programmes. This means breaking through antagonistic thinking on both sides and creating a constructive working relationship between the police, NGOs and community organisations. All parties involved can benefit from public-private partnerships like these. Such steps need to be considered especially in situations where tensions between police and minority ethnic communities are manifest. 'Client-panels' and 'round tables', which can bring together antagonistic groups, have proven to be of use in situations like these.

4 - Promoting Credibility

The police must actively seek opportunities to promote their credibility in fighting racism. First of all, this means the acknowledgement of racism and its existence. Secondly, active involvement of the police in external activities against racism should be promoted. Lastly, the police should take initiatives in establishing formal agreements with other agencies to co-operate to fight racism.

5 - Liaison Officers

Difficult or failing communication between police and minorities constitutes a specific problem that in turn requires special attention and solutions. There have been good experiences with programmes which strengthen ties between police and minority ethnic communities, e.g. appointment of liaison officers for minority communities.

6 - A Network of Professionals

While co-operating with local authorities, the police must develop and maintain a network of professionals from the minority ethnic communities, such as clergy, health professionals and social workers, who can provide assistance in times of crisis.

6 - Migrant Participation in Crime versus Police Participation in Criminalising Migrants

1 - Avoiding the Perpetuating of Stereotypes

The police should acknowledge that inaccurate reporting and stereotyping by the media has a harmful effect on community relations. Therefore particular care must be taken by police in interactions with the press to avoid perpetuating stereotypes in descriptions of minority ethnic communities.

2 - The Risk of Stigmatisation needs to be recognized

The danger of merely focusing on the crime rate in minority ethnic communities needs to be addressed. One must question whether such a focus is necessary and what its purpose is. There is a risk of stigmatisation of the whole ethnic community. Also, criminalised stereotypes are likely to be given publicity in the popular press and other mass media.

3 - Statistics never speak for themselves

A blunt presentation of ethnic crime statistics should be avoided. Statistics never speak for themselves and are open to misinterpretation. At most, statistics report what happened, but they cannot explain why things happen. To answer this question additional qualitative research is needed.

4 - Understanding Crime Rates

The police have a responsibility of understanding crime rates of specific groups in society, in order to focus attention on underlying problems which may require wider or preventive action. They should also encourage other organisations to take responsibility for preventing or intervening early in situations which could be damaging for community relations.

5 - Distinguish between organised and non-organised Crime

Criminal organisations organise on an international scale. Crime statistics concerning organised crime should be clearly separated from data relating to 'regular' local crime statistics.

6 - Multiple uses of Statistics

Statistics can be used to monitor ethnic crime patterns, but can also be used to monitor whether the police are treating ethnic minorities fairly and equally. By monitoring the number of questionings or arrests of different ethnic groups, police can check whether they are not treating one group more harshly than another. By using statistics this way and ensuring that all segments of the public are being treated equally, the police gain respect and trust from minority ethnic communities.

7 - A Code of Conduct for ethnically related crime Reports

A code of conduct for the police, which indicates when references to national or ethnic origin of a crime suspect or convict are relevant, should be introduced. The police should be aware of possible effects of making such references in different contexts, e.g. when using radio communication channels.

8 - Code of Practice for Press-releases

Police authorities are encouraged to create a code of practice for press officers to avoid stereotyping in press releases. In some countries, journalists have agreed on such codes of practice.

9 - Need to consult and co-operate with NGOs

The police should consult and work in co-operation with NGOs and minority ethnic communities in order to present and disseminate ethnic-related statistics in the best way possible. During these consultations the police should also seek information which creates a better understanding of cultural differences and which prevents these differences from becoming criminalised.

10 - Responsibility to comment on stigmatising Measures

The police should feel free to point out possible stigmatising effects of certain measures taken or proposed by politicians which are to be carried out by the police.

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