



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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DEVLIN: Today is May 13, 2009 and I am here in Skopje, Macedonia with Giorgio Butini. Giorgio, thanks for joining me.

BUTINI: Thanks.

DEVLIN: I was wondering if we could start, maybe you could just describe your background with policing issues here in Macedonia because as I gather it you have quite a bit of experience in the country.

BUTINI: *I am a professional police officer of the state police in Italy. My rank is equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel. I started my experience in the country back in 2003 during the Italian presidency in Brussels. When the issue of taking over the EU (European Union) military mission Concordia with an EU police mission switching from within the second pillar, switching from military tools to civilian tools came up. So in Brussels there was the decision to set up a planning teams which was quite, let's say limited composed of seven experts from the different member states which started working in Brussels first and then deployed in Skopje.*

As a result of the planning team activity, PROXIMA (European Union Police Mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) was launched on December 15, 2003 with an authorized strength of 180 police officers and the deployment in the former crisis area, and Skopje. Later since the joint action had authorized only one-year mission with possible extension, there was an extension of the mission with countrywide deployment. So the deployment of PROXIMA 2, 2004-2005 was extended to all the country, not only to the former crisis area. The mandate of the mission was lets say, would say a standard one, to monitor, mentor and advise local police officers to bring up police standards up to the international ones.

I would say that the panorama of the international organizations and the situations I found here was let's say extremely interesting and challenging from I would say a theoretical point of view. Because I also train, this is specific topic, at CEPOL, the European Police Academy, where there is a course on crisis management to people at my level. Prospective candidates for key positions in EU missions. I use always the example of Macedonia as one of the best ones because there has been a crisis, then let's say a first military tool and the second pillar previously even a NATO tool with Essential Harvest, then Concordia.

Then within the college authorized in Brussels as there was already the idea to switch from a military tool within the second pillar to the civilian one. So there was a switch from a military to a civilian tool under the second pillar. In between the European Commission was already here, let's say a bit before the set off of the crisis and had already lets say started moving the first steps towards the creation of an overarching policy for the police reform.

In 2002, I think, the European Commission Justice and Home Affairs team was sent here to help the authorities to draft the police reform strategy. The team was made up of experts drawn from member states, from the Commission, the Council, as usual. So as to cover all the different aspects. Also because the European Union police missions are yes, under the single pillar, but for the budgetary say related issues are let's say follow the rules of the Commission. So there is always in the fact-finding missions, an expert of the Commission looking after these kinds of issues.

So I would say the Commission had already started let's say helping the local authorities under the—always the polar star of local ownership which means local authorities must absolutely be fully involved and take more and more the ownership of the product of the reform.

So let's say there was the European Commission and let's say taking the long-term perspective because the police reform strategy it is clear, it is always like this. This takes a timeframe which, depending on the local situation can be three to five, six or seven years, depending on let's say the situation. This is the different. While the Council under the second pillar was, I would say, addressing the immediate needs of the local police first in the former crisis area, secondly countrywide to bring up local standards of policing to let's say intermediate ones. But, at the same time, there was also the presence of OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) spillover mission here in Skopje dealing with let's say training or providing, at the very beginning, training directly. Then providing train the trainers activity at the police academy. Then looking after also the premises of the police academy in Idrizovo.

Inside this there was also a presence over the US embassy here, let's say providing support in many different aspects but I would say at the very beginning I saw a lot of interest, correctly so, in internal control, start shaping some kind of units also to, let's say, have a link with confidence building. A link with let's say, with the ethnicity, multi-ethnicity, fashion of the new police service. Sorry, [Indecipherable] control, community policing, and also the start following a bit of the nascent organization of the central police services here at the Ministry of Interior in some selected areas, to start tackling more efficiency organized crime.

Then also other embassies involved, like of the member states or European countries, but not, let's say, belonging to the trade union ranging from Norway to UK, France, just to mention the most active ones. Turkey a bit later but also, Switzerland also was, let's say, active. So let's say all these are let's say international organizations here, not to mention international organizations for migration, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), a lot of people involved, more or less in policing.

The massive presence of all these organizations here, well, let's say, a needle-situation were to also develop a way of let's say addressing a post crisis situation because the coordination is always, let's say, among international organizations, is always, let's say requested, it is always listed but not very often is it let's say achieved at the practical level. The efforts in these regards are always, let's say needed. In this regard, opening a small presence I would say it is really impressive how much in a post crisis situation all the international organizations are represented. At least in my field of experience, are open and transparent to each other.

So if you ask something, an information or a meeting or what you are doing, what kind of funding are you providing for me, for who, whatever, there is always the highest degree of openness.

DEVLIN: In the course of your experience, have there been organized coordinated bodies—?

BUTINI: Yes, yes.

DEVLIN: Could you talk a little bit about that?

BUTINI: *Yes, for instance, during PROXIMA, the first year of PROXIMA the European Commission delegation, because at that time the European Commission delegation and the European Union Special Representative were not united as it is now with a double-hatted situation where let's say two representatives anyway. European Commission delegation which was, as mentioned before, following and triggering the police reform strategy in the long term, promoted the so-called police experts meeting group, the police expert group meeting. It was a meeting taking place, I think, every week or so, I don't remember.*

The idea was to get together all the EU actors in the field at least, which means the European Commission, EUSR, PROXIMA and some EU-funded projects already here, to get them together and to coordinate let's say by knowing who was doing what. There was also, let's say, very often there was invitation of some leading figures of the Ministry of the Interior dealing with a specific aspect of either the police reform strategy or something, invited in the second part of the meeting to discuss, let's say, directly, issues of a technical level, not a political one.

This was, I would say, a normal attempt to coordinate efforts among the EU family. Nonetheless, always, I remember during the planning phase of the PROXIMA but also after, regular meetings with OSCE for instance, with US embassy, ICITAP (International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program). There were more or less regular meetings and so on. In this regard, the good faith of trying. The problem is that sometimes, what is lacking is the real overview of the situation because, for example, now that I have made experience in crisis management with the Council and United Nations in Kosovo, and now that I have the experience of the European Commission from policing point of view, which means also to a certain extent programming. I can see that at the Commission, also according to the Civilian Headline Goals 2008 document, really the vision of years, three to five-years vision.

So the Commission knows it wants to invest money in selected areas, fields. But usually doesn't know exactly what are the real needs, how to, let's say, translate fields of where to invest into real projects. Sometimes there is a need there to contract experts to come and go field to make an assessment and then to have a better idea what to invest. While your missions for instance have, usually the police officers are deployed, have really the insight of what are the let's say most pressing needs of the local police officers. But they have no idea how to address these needs.

I remember one of the biggest frustrations in PROXIMA was we knew what they needed, let's say to address operational shortcomings in the next six months or one year, but we had no capacity of spending because of the crisis management rules. We had very limited capacity of spending. There is possibility to fund one or two days seminar, to fund some limited, but very limited in budget, projects. But there is no capacity to buy equipment. So let's say—.

DEVLIN: *So is that because the money wasn't there or because the money hadn't been directed to—?*

BUTINI: *The money for, let's say, upgrading this system of the police in terms of the equipment, the logistics, training, long-term specialized training, are located within the Commission which follows rules which are quite let's say strict. While the crisis management head of the European Union has direct let's say access to local and field needs, but doesn't have, due to it's quite response nature, the capacity to spend. So, the issue is how to make these two heads get together*

and know each other. And from EUPM (European Union Police Mission) in Bosnia which was the first EU mission launched to PROXIMA, a great deal of experience has been made in this regard by the European Union and I would say the reason now, much more, is the knowledge and understanding that these two components of this, the overall EU policy must be getting together.

This is so true that if we see in the Civilian Headline Goals of 2008 of the European Union, there is one of the wishes, it is also one of the requirements, is that, the instruments of the Commission must always be coordinated with the instruments of the crisis management or second pillar in order to have a coordinated approach to a crisis. This makes sense, of course, but also the European Union has had to learn from its own experiences. So all-in-all, here was not bad at all. I think that it could have been better, but it is not always possible.

DEVLIN: So can you think of—does any particular episode come to mind where the people who had tactical operational knowledge identified a need but the funding couldn't be found for that?

BUTINI: *I don't remember specific things, but I do remember for example that when we started discussing the necessity to have for police, setting the organizational staffing level and say principles of the Bureau for Public Security here which is under the Minister of Interior, along with the Bureau for Counter Intelligence. There were a lot of discussions, experts, drafts from the local authorities, and in late 2004, beginning of 2005, I don't remember exactly, there was a request from the European Commission to provide input to the draft made by the local authorities. So we had a section of legal international, legal advisor, including local legal advisor and we worked on this along with the European Commission, with PROXIMA. So this was very good.*

So the European Commission, knowing that had at the time limited capacity from legal point of view to comment on the law, also asked the PROXIMA mission, which had a legal component to provide the support. So, I remember this because of what the law was and is very much important and for us at PROXIMA it took us quite a lot of resources to address this request for the European Commission delegation.

You know the issue was at that time here, the European Commission delegation had not, until last year, December 31st, operational capacity in programming because here there was a European Agency for Reconstruction which was leading the operational capacity in programming, funding and checking along with the local authorities and in the framework of the bulletin were planning indicators of the European Commission what to buy.

So the European Agency for Reconstruction was, according to its status, an independent agency. So there was, of course, closer cooperation with the Commission here, but I do remember that the program managers of the European Agency for Reconstruction were calling us in specific areas, especially the political section, to which I belong, to come and share our technical findings with them in order to find, to tailor made, as much as possible the programming of the agency towards the local authorities. I do remember several meetings with the program managers. So this was another actor I would say working here.

DEVLIN: In terms of this police experts work that you mentioned, how long did that stay in place for? Is it still in place?

BUTINI: *No. No because first of all we had the personal reunion of the EUSR and the Commission back in 2005, I think, late in 2005 when Ambassador Fouere arrived. He was already double-hatted. Second of all in December 2005, PROXIMA too ended, replaced by a 30-person small mission, just to bridge the beginning of the European Commission funded projects here. And fourth of all, there was no need because the European Commission had opened before the position of police advisor for a national detached expert to which I applied and I was taken. I was also, I think, taken due to my experience I had already developed on the ground.*

So there was at a certain point here also the presence of the international community started phasing down or scaling down a bit because there was a process of streamlining also the number of the international organizations. So in 2005, PROXIMA was no longer needed because it was invited by the local government in 2003. The European Commission had already started through the European Agency for Reconstruction presence of projects monitoring implementation of the development of the police reform, but projects funded by European Commission, European Agency for Reconstruction, present here with no uniforms, no weapons, no cars with police special, whatever.

So there was already the program to switch again from civilian tools under the second pillar to projects, financed and led under the first pillar of the Commission. So also these police experts coordination meeting were no longer needed. Also because the Commission were taking more and more the lead of the police reform process towards the local authorities.

DEVLIN: So there are, nevertheless there are several organizations working on police issues at the moment—

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: OSCE, ICITAP, there's no formalized coordinating body at the moment that would manage this?

BUTINI: *I would say that—okay, the formalization is let's say, the mandates of the organization by default on one hand. On the other hand there is technical coordination among, I would say, at my level, with the police advisors or the head of the unit in these international organizations dealing with police. Plus, at the political level there is the principal meeting, or the head of missions meeting where issues of interest are commonly discussed, weekly, or bi-weekly. So there are in the different layers, there are, coordination at the political and technical level.*

Usually if there is an issue of interest for me relevant for the police reform strategy which is what I follow the most, I usually exchange immediately an e-mail with the head of the police development unit here at OSCE always, with now our EU-funded project on the police reform and with the police attaché at the US Embassy. Sometimes depending on the situation with the attaché of the UK and/or French Embassy because they have been active in policing matters here. I see which way the wind is blowing. If I see that there is an issue which might have a political implication, I bring it up. I bring it up to my ambassador here. Maybe they will discuss it commonly. The same more or less I do with OSCE, US Embassy, so there is this kind of sharing of issues.

DEVLIN: So it sounds like coordination, it is not too much of a problem for you?

BUTINI: No, because I told you, first of all, there is a very high degree of transparency. Second of all there are also from human point of view, maybe lacking but there are no let's say problems. We share documents. We say this can be—has to stay with you problem. Third of all, although we follow, probably different things, European Union, OSCE, another big player is the American Embassy. Let's say very much open is interesting for me to see if OSCE has the same interest in something and if they see maybe a political dimension of this. Then if I see this, I go to my ambassador and say, this is this technical issue which might cover a political dimension. I have already spoken with OSCE, US Embassy, whatever. They see this from different—from the same angle.

So I say, without, of course without committing other people, I would expect that they will inform at least their political hierarchy and this is a way for the ambassador to know that at the principal meeting, there is a need, or there is an interest in opening a small discussion on one topic which is relevant for us. But your, NATO they do the same from their perspective.

DEVLIN: Now a large part of the story of policing here in Macedonia since 2001 is this idea of the redeployment of police into former crisis areas.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: And the joint patrols. Could you talk about a little bit about your experience in regards to that process?

BUTINI: Yes, when PROXIMA was deployed in December 2003, but let's say the real deployment started late January 2004, the police had already started re-entering villages over the former crisis area with OSCE, joint patrols. So it was a really big enterprise of OSCE accompanying police back to villages. At the same time OSCE was training, making some crash training to ethnic Albanian police officers who are a group that I think like 1000 or 500, I don't remember, but quite a lot for a three-month course, if I'm not mistaken. Then they were all deployed in the former crisis area as a confidence-building measure.

We started having joint patrols with PROXIMA around February 2004 which is still PROXIMA 1 which means deployment only in the former crisis area plus Skopje and I do not remember big problems really because police was already more or less allowed access to all the country. There were no no-go areas for the police. There were some areas where the police were a bit reluctant to enter, we're speaking about 2004, the beginning of 2004, due to the issue of the crisis and the need to go slowly with the confidence building. But this was done mainly by OSCE.

We were more technical-oriented for the police. Of course, when you address the issue of standard policing indirectly you address also the issue of confidence building because a professional police officer is a police officer which builds confidence usually. But this is a long-term approach. OSCE was more, let's say, the institutional figure guaranteeing the normal policing and the presence of the policing in the former crisis area of the village.

DEVLIN: Do you recall why OSCE was judged to be the appropriate body to carry this out?

BUTINI: I have no idea honestly.

DEVLIN: Now you mentioned that even when PROXIMA was involved in these joint patrols there were still some sensitive areas

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: The redeployment. Do you recall were there policies put in place to phase redeployment in such as patrols in these areas being unarmed or having a higher proportion of ethnic Albanians or was it just a matter of police just didn't go there that often, as often as they went to other villages?

BUTINI: *Honestly I do not remember but for instance I do remember the issue of (Agim) Krasniqi in Kondovo. I do remember in 2000—I think it was 2005, yes. His threats to bomb Skopje with mortars and this and that, and then the subsequent also action of the Ministry of Interior. Kondovo was, and is, predominantly or let's say exclusively ethnic Albanian area and in that case I do remember that the police applied special care in patrolling the area, not to trigger an incident. Let's say, not wanted. So the police, I remember the police, for the majority of the time over the tense situation was anyway, getting across the village because also there was another international actor, I forgot to mention very much important was European Union Monitoring Mission, (EUMM). Mostly drawn from military people, very much important from intelligence, human intelligence gathering, useful for deciding, the overall policing of the situation.*

DEVLIN: So is that a face-saving measure for both sides?

BUTINI: *Yes. But then, when the situation escalated, the Minister of Interior, at that time was Mjailovski, an independent from the SDSM-DUI coalition government took action under the police operational complex one was carried out. There was, I think, one person killed, two arrested, one of whom was wounded quite seriously, reaffirming the authority of the state in the village.*

DEVLIN: So this idea that the police would make kind of a show of force in Kondovo without actually doing anything too great, were there international advisors in that police group that would drive through the village or the international advisors stayed near by I think you said.

BUTINI: *As far as I remember they were staying, they were, usually in the village, in Kodovo very often. Let's say basically every day. OSCE also had, after this police operation, even a more confidence-building project this was after. But as I say again, that was to monitor carefully the situation and to prevent the possible, unwanted by both sides, incident. But this was viewed by both say actors to affirm the right under the commitment to patrol and to enter the city. And the other one not to have police operation while the internationals were there. So I think it is a typical situation. Anyway, at a certain point the issue escalated to a level where they took action.*

DEVLIN: You mentioned that it was under PROXIMA 1 that these joint patrols happened at this point.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: So this is joint patrols in the former conflict areas and in Skopje itself.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: Was that the entirety of Skopje or was it the Albanian majority areas of the city?

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- BUTINI:** *It was, as far as I remember it was the whole area. There were no specific targets.*
- DEVLIN:** Just on the details of these joint patrols, would PROXIMA officers ride with the patrols in their cars or was it two separate—?
- BUTINI:** *No, two separate cars.*
- DEVLIN:** Two separate cars.
- BUTINI:** *There would be a Macedonian police force and then a PROXIMA car.*
- DEVLIN:** You mentioned briefly that after the Kondovo incident there was a small OSCE confidence building function.
- BUTINI:** Yes.
- DEVLIN:** Can you talk about that?
- BUTINI:** *Honestly, I don't remember exactly what was at the real aim of it but I do remember that immediately after, in order to reduce tensions with the villagers, whatever, OSCE had a small project there. I think that maybe it was an infrastructural one to solve one small problem of the village like pipe-ing or something, or waste disposal. I don't remember, but I think it was something infrastructural.*
- DEVLIN:** By the point PROXIMA was involved in joint patrols, had the joint patrol model already been expanded to all of the former crisis areas, or was it still in the process of expansion?
- BUTINI:** *Because the issue is that under PROXIMA 2 we changed a bit the approach of the mission. There was a change of approach and we switched to a more program-oriented approach in PROXIMA 2. This had started already in late PROXIMA 1. But in PROXIMA 2 we had a program-oriented approach, which means that we developed according to the mandate of the mission a set of areas where we wanted to improve the standards of the police. Then for each program different actions. There was also the organization of the mission was with the program directives of each field and people leading the specific actions with milestones, the usual stuff.*
- We had a program in uniform police, organized crime, border police, I think internal control, yes, and maybe there was a fifth one but I don't remember. Within uniform police there was, for instance, monitoring, training, facilitating, the international cooperation of the special unit. So we are speaking about the rapid deployment unit, the one—those are headquartered right in [Indecipherable 39:02] and the special task unit. The special task unit is the one dealing with hostage taking and these kinds of issues.*
- Alpha units are taking after but they are a floating issue because the Alpha units have underlined quite a lot to the local authorities, are out from the police reform strategy. So this is a body invented by Minister Mihajlovski to address a real need. It was a street criminality growing especially in Skopje, also in the south part of Skopje with a lot of armed robberies, burglaries, and the top of this unit, let's say curbed this street criminality wave in a very short period of time.*
- DEVLIN:** So this is a SWAT-type unit of tactical—?

BUTINI: *They work in plainclothes but also with machine guns with civilian cars. They have proven to be very effective but the issue is that after the—immediately after tackling the issue of this wave of robberies, whatever, they started being employed also for the execution of the national arrest warrants. Because as always local police policemen who were drawn and deployed in the same area where they have grown up, born, whatever, had some difficulties in executing some arrest warrants. So this unit was better paid, better trained, highly motivated. So they started executing the arrests, not only in the former crisis area but Prilep where there was the issue of the Lions. So it was the paramilitary group of the Macedonians, some of who had been incorporated in the police and some not.*

They were also protecting, to be incorporated. But anyway, there was a necessity to arrest some people, linked to this former lions, a group of people who are still in the mind of some Macedonians for their role in the crisis from the Macedonian side. And the other unit that took the burden to arrest them now. So in Prilep which is a really, an area from which a lot of former paramilitary people of Lions came from. But after, the international community started receiving more and more complaints for excessive use of force.

DEVLIN: By the Alpha unit?

BUTINI: *By the Alpha unit. Especially concerning the Roma people and there were some cases where there were some doubts they raised about their professionalism, chain of command, training. Let's say the parabola of the Alpha unit basically ended last year during the political elections. During the pre-electoral campaign and during the first day of the political elections, Alpha unit stationed in the former crisis area, speaking about Tetovo and Gostivar where considered, supporting one faction, taking, let's say active roll in the political elections favoring, sometimes making intimidation threats. As a result Minister of the Interior (Gordana) Jankulovska decided to temporarily disband all of the Alpha unit except the one headquartered in Skopje which had not been involved in serious allegations and this is basically almost at the end of the parabola of the Alpha unit.*

DEVLIN: So Alpha was set up in response to this wave of crime.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: Do you remember what point in time it was?

BUTINI: *It was a decree of the Minister of Interior Mihajlovski we are speaking about as the SDSM-DUI government, so it is—and it was, I think it was like March, April, 2004.*

DEVLIN: When the unit was set up, was it, in terms of ethnic composition, was it predominantly—?

BUTINI: *No, the ethnical composition was from the very beginning respected. As far as I know, we have never detected any kinds of problems within the police among ethnic Albanians or ethnic Macedonians or any other ethnicity. Plus, you know, in a unit such as Alpha, whether you have an additional allowance, you have better food, better equipment, you work in plainclothes basically first time in the history of police in Macedonia, so it is more western-oriented way. You have availability*

of cars. It is mostly young people selected and trained specifically. There is high degree of motivation. Usually there are no problems from this point of view.

DEVLIN: So when there were these allegations of political involvement by the Alpha group in the Tetovo area, which political party were they supposedly acting in favor of?

BUTINI: *The DPA (Democratic Party of Albanians).*

DEVLIN: Okay, so it is the Albanian party there. There are a lot of interesting things that come up. In terms of the rapid deployment unit, special task unit, these were, as I understand it, the crisis in Macedonia police special units were heavily involved in most of the actions there.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: So what was the approach to—was the approach to retraining? Was there a need for retraining? Was there a need for a public image program? What was the approach to dealing with this legacy of really military-style operations on the part of these police units?

BUTINI: *I fully agree with you and it is confirmed by history that in the country crisis erupted with the misuse or nonproper use of special units targeting a criminal issue. So deficiencies in planning, intelligence gathering, execution, use of force, liaising sometimes with the public prosecutor afterwards. All these things were part of the problems during the crisis when special units were intervening in a certain, well-defined situation.*

So when the—immediately after the crisis, special attention was put immediately in deconstructing the special unit. So there was from immediately it was paid attention to the selection process, the training process, the international cooperation activity. Because the more you know your neighbors and those member states special units, the more you understand that there is a standard in which you are requested to work. So there were also visits to the Serbian Police Special Unit, to the Greek one, to a certain extent, I don't remember, plus there were trainers, specific trainers, from France, bilateral projects. There were bilateral projects from UK targeting special units. Plus, PROXIMA had, in the first year and in the second year, two and then three experts coming from member states and dealing with special units.

It was good but with the special unit stop. Being trained with them, showing new contemporary methods of training, selection, types of weapons. At the same time these EU experts from PROXIMA. From the two member states having bilateral projects we were requested by European Agency for Reconstruction to give inside knowledge for the buying of new, totally new equipment for the police, for the special units. So the special units were among the first ones to be fully re-equipped.

DEVLIN: Do you recall any of the specific knowledge gaps or skill gaps that these trainers encountered when they first started working with these groups? What were the priorities that needed to be worked on?

BUTINI: *Along with the approach in this case is by default a multifaceted one. Because at the same time you have to pay attention to the selection because you needed to select people with the requirements that you would like to have to train a good candidate. Then you need to set up a new curricula for training or to amend the curricula for training. I would say that you needed to de-militarize the minds of*

people because usually special units are anywhere in the world a bit closer to the military mentality. They live in the barracks, they do this specific training. But, nonetheless, there is the need to instigate a civilian approach in the special units.

DEVLIN: How does one even attempt to do that?

BUTINI: No, no, it has been done. For instance, at the very beginning, the rapid deployment unit was working usually with typical military camouflage fatigues. We made it a point, jointly, or should we say with the embassies, that unless there was a specific operation in the countryside where we don't have anything to object, maybe these are for the safety of the personnel, but usually in urban environment or for normal training issues, we wanted, we advised the local authorities to have the typical blue uniform. So they did after, I think, a couple of years. But they did it. It was a budgetary issue. The same for the color of the cars.

DEVLIN: Now one thing that would be interesting, given these units or these types of units involvement in the crisis, was there any targeting program that you are aware of to increase Albanian representation specifically in these special units?

BUTINI: For the rapid deployment unit, which is a crowd control unit, and now we are—I do not think that there has been ever a problem with ethnic representation. We don't have it now. I do not remember any kind of complaints from ethnic Albanians about the ethnic composition of the unit. More problematic has been the special task unit where the minority ethnic representation has been always very low.

We have made also in the Progress Report several times the point that there is a need to have more mixed composition of the Special Task Unit. But, let's say, when we are confronted with the issue that though internal vacancies were issued but no application was available, or let's say the applications were so few that it didn't allow for a proper selection. It is difficult to continue to—. But, for instance, for the Kondovo police operation where in think one of the criminals was wounded and two arrested, there was the complaint, no one has ever been able to confirm it or not, that the police, according to the standards, before entering the house where the people were lying, made the usual warning, police, hands up, this and that, only in Macedonian. Why? The people were Albanians and they claim that they were not able to understand which is something difficult to believe because the age of the people was conducive to think that they knew the Macedonian language.

Anyway, it is something to be considered because from a human rights point of view you needed to be warned in a language where you can understand if here there is a minority which is 20% strong, 25% strong, by default in a unit like this one, carrying out a specific, high-risk task, it is recommendable to have somebody—.

DEVLIN: But that's not a general requirement, a Macedonian police officer by definition does not need to be able to communicate basically in Albanian?

BUTINI: No, no, it is not foreseen anywhere.

DEVLIN: Then obviously the former crisis areas are very much border areas as well.

BUTINI: Yes.

- DEVLIN: So I imagine there was this debate over who would take responsibility for the border if it is the Military of Defense responsibility, that's a very touchy, sensitive subject.
- BUTINI: Yes.
- DEVLIN: Deploying military forces in those areas. Could you talk a little bit about how that was worked out? Maybe how the Ministry of Interior—?
- BUTINI: *We, police had their own strategy, was developed—let's say the police reform strategy document was endorsed by the government, the first draft was endorsed by the government in 2003 and then amended in 2004. But along with this police reform strategy an integrated border management strategy document was agreed. This was instigated again by the European Commission because the integrated border management concept is a European Commission concept which goes for an integrated approach, a different here, but calls also for a civilian management of the board and not military one.*
- So in 2001, 2005, they take over from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Interior to all the borders was completed. Started, I think, like one year before, I don't remember, handing over the responsibility from Minister of Defense to the Ministry of Interior at the Greek border and then following the anti-clockwise system, ended with the Albanian border in September 2005. With these processes, some stuff from the Minister of Defense who used that to patrol the Greek border, was transferred to the Minister of Interior. This was initially retrained with a crash course and then retrained again and again and again, until now, because the European Commission requested this retraining.*
- So, for the process of handing over the responsibility of the border from MOD (Minister of Defense) to MOI (Minister of Interior), no problem.*
- DEVLIN: Now, one thing that comes to mind, when you do redeploy the joint patrols to the crisis areas, obviously some of the joint patrol are ethnic Macedonians.
- BUTINI: Yes.
- DEVLIN: And local community at that point have pretty negative view of a Macedonian-dominated police force. Do you have any recollection of how the Macedonian members of these joint patrols were selected or—?
- BUTINI: *I do not know because this was an overall activity carried out by OSCE. But I do remember that OSCE was, let's say, preparing the ground in advance, speaking with the local communities, explaining, starting the local patrols with OSCE presence, then accompanied them. This process was in parallel with the selection and the training of the new ethnic Albanian cadets who were later immediately deployed in the former crisis area. I don't remember any kind of let's say big issue in this regard. Probably it was more of a personal one for some police officers concerned about coming back to some villages. But I do not remember let's say the Minister of Interior speaking with ethnic Albanian police officers at high level, middle level, any kind of concerns.*
- DEVLIN: Now one thing, after the conflict there was this idea of a force or a portion of the force was being rebuilt, restaffed, bringing Albanians in especially. But also there was this idea of what would be the fate of ethnic Macedonians who had been involved in groups such as the lions.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: Could you talk a bit about your experience and awareness of that process, what the debate was over the appropriate place for these people who had been involved in the conflict and may want to enter the police force afterwards?

BUTINI: *The issue of the staffing level of the Minister of Interior has been always present in the mind of European Union. I'd say less in the mind and thoughts of PROXIMA, whatever, because it was not an emerging issue. Anyway, judging from the data provided by the Minister of the Interior you can see from immediately before the conflict the staffing level was not very high; then it rose up quite dramatically in a couple of years and reached the peak I think in 2001 or so with I think 12,000 or 13,000 whatever. Now we stand more or less at 10,000 depending on how you judge the staffing level, whether you include all the civilians of the cabinet of the Minister of the Interior or so, but let's say you are thinking more or less about the official statistics 8500 police officers plus the rest of the people belonging to the bureau for counter intelligence and the cabinet.*

They are still, from a normal policing point of view and taking into consideration the normal ratio we have in Europe which is one police officer more or less every 300 citizens, they are still overstaffed. This issue was also the result of the fact that during the crisis there were some paramilitary groups, Lions, especially coming from Prilep or Bitola area. As it happens always after a crisis, some of them were incorporated into the police, others not. But also in Tetovo I do remember that some people belonging to the reservists, ethnic Albanians are now—this reminds me of another thing which is linked with the deployment of the people.

Immediately after the crisis some ethnic Albanian police officers belonging to the reserves of the police which was not activated during the crisis, were activated immediately after to address the first immediate needs of policing the former crisis area. And then they have been extended the contract one or two years. In 2004 they started being phased out, or scaled down, and sent back to the reserves with no money compensation. They made two or three roadblocks in Tetovo I remember. In PROXIMA we were monitoring it but with no big issues. Lions were the same, made one manifestation in front of the Ministry of Interior like in 2004.

This kind of let's say fringe component of a police force in the immediate aftermath of a crisis are, I would say quite normal and the management of the Ministry of the Interior was regarded as being quite reasonable, no big problems from this.

DEVLIN: Has anything been offered to these, either the Albanian reservists or the Macedonian paramilitaries?

BUTINI: *I do remember that some of the Lions were incorporated, often sometimes some accepted to be taken in the police. For the ethnic Albanian reservists, honestly I do not know but I think, I'm not sure, that after the expiration of their contract under the reservist framework, they were just sent back.*

DEVLIN: Do you have any sense of the process of which members of the Lions were allowed into the—?

BUTINI: No, no.

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- DEVLIN: In terms of individuals who may have actually taken part in the conflict on the Albanian side, was there any program or any debate over that as to whether or how they might be incorporated into the police?
- BUTINI: *I think that some of the leading figures of the former combatants, the Albanian side, didn't have any need to be incorporated into the police because they entered directly into politics and joined some important positions politically, in the government, in the municipalities.*
- DEVLIN: Now those Albanian who were brought into the police force in this bid to raise Albanian representations, were they deployed only in ethnic Albanian-majority areas or were they deployed elsewhere?
- BUTINI: *If we speak about the first deployment of ethnic Albanian cadets, police officers, they were deployed only in the former crisis area.*
- DEVLIN: And today, what does their deployment pattern look like?
- BUTINI: *Today, we speak about Tetovo, the 50% of the staff of the police is ethnic Albanian.*
- DEVLIN: And let's say somewhere like Prilep, predominantly Macedonian?
- BUTINI: *Some ethnic Albanian police officers, because there is, also, more presence of ethnic Albanians. But whatever, the normal policy is to have multi-ethnic presence of the police wherever there is a multi-ethnic environment. So, it is the same for the police officers with Roma ethnicity are present when there is a Roma community. This makes sense from many points of view.*
- DEVLIN: When they first were looking to scale up Albanian representation, I imagine one challenge is reconciling the need to raise numbers with the need to keep a professional, qualified force in place.
- BUTINI: Yes.
- DEVLIN: Can you talk about how that was managed? Do you know if there were tests or educational requirements that were applied to these Albanian recruits? Were Albanian candidates suggested by their community and put forward?
- BUTINI: *The first, I would say, influx of ethnic Albanian police officers, I don't remember, maybe there were 1000 or 500, I don't remember, to be immediately deployed in the former crisis area were selected quite rapidly with the help of OSCE for sure. I don't know if there were other international organizations. Immediately there was, let's say, the understanding that the old degrees of the police academy had to be reestablished, new curricula developed. OSCE took the lead there as well as the European Union with the European Agency for Reconstruction funded some projects to rehabilitate the structure. Then over the years we had also a project lasting two years to help the police academy to draft new curricula in line with the best European standard.*
- But to go back to your question say about selection procedure, I have no idea, honestly.*
- DEVLIN: Then, so, I imagine even today there must be this challenge of raising Albanian representation, especially at the managerial level and finding people who are qualified, who have experience to meet that.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: Could you talk about maybe some of those human resource issues that the Macedonian police force is confronting?

BUTINI: Yes, the issue of ethnic representation in the Ministry of Interior is according to accepted standards from a quantitative point of view. From a qualitative point of view there are still some gaps which should be covered in the near future. We are thinking about managerial positions. With the exception of some areas, like the regional commander in Tetovo who is ethnic Albanian, it is one of the eight regional commanders. Some positions in the Ministry of the Interior, the presence of ethnic Albanians in mid to high level managerial positions is still under the standard. This is due to some factors.

First of all there is a legal issue which is the law on police sets the organizational, the organization of the units of the police, and the requirements are to cover the leading positions in terms of years of active service and requirements, educational background and blah, blah, blah. What happens? From one side there was a need to set some requirements according to let's say best international standards. So to cover the position of station commander, let's say, you can imagine that more or less five years of experience in the police plus some educational background is needed. So this was clear from the very beginning that to have a professional police you needed to have some entry requirements in line with the normal standard.

On the other hand, there has been always the understanding that if you are an ethnic Albanian police officer who has entered even with the first wave of cadets in 2001 with the crash course of three months, in 2005, when there was the first massive, let's say process of covering the positions at the Ministry of Interior police services, of course you don't have the requirements. So by default you stay out of leading positions. So you have these conflicting needs. On one side professionalism which calls for clear requirements, on the other side representation which calls for let's say having a transitional period of time. Among the two needs what one was professionalism.

So let's say to sacrifice for the moment a bit of the representation in mid to high-level positions of ethnic Albanians for professionalism. I think there is the hope that with the massive training carried out [interruption end of file one].

DEVLIN: Sorry, we were talking about—.

BUTINI: That's okay. We do hope that in the near future let's say more and more ethnic Albanian police officers will meet the requirements set in the law on police and will be more and more considered for positions. We will see what will happen in the future.

DEVLIN: So if the decision has come down on the side of professionalism, that would seem to imply that the police force does have standard job descriptions, job requirements, publicly successful.

BUTINI: Yes.

DEVLIN: Those are being met?

BUTINI: Pardon?

DEVLIN: They are being met, these—.

BUTINI: Okay, the police reform strategy called for many different things, law on police, adoption of let's say, in all the organizational to so-called Systematisation Act of the Ministry of Interior which is the authorized staffing level for each organizational unit. So there is the breakdown. For each position, job descriptions are being developed. Back to 2005 the international community, I remember, yes, it was a German project funded by the European Union but also the European Commission, US Embassy, OSCE, we monitored it from the very beginning the selection process of station commanders and regional commanders. Also the standardized set of questions, how the selection process was set up, the board of the selection. So there was, I would say, always a monitoring of the overall process.

DEVLIN: It is interesting though because all these places were not put in place in order to reform the police; they were put in place to solve a political problem, that was the initial impetus. So looking at it from that point of view, one would think that if the initial go was a political problem, then one would expect that political parties must also be pretty involved in this process. One would think that if it is to really satisfactory Albanian political grievances, that Albanian political parties may take a close interest in their suggestions as to who should be in these positions. Has that been a challenge here in Macedonia?

BUTINI: No, honestly, I always, say noticed at least at my level, a good let's say understanding from any party that a professional police service would be a guarantee of neutrality. Of course there have been say cases of politicization. There is still an issue of politicization of the police which will be addressed with an upcoming law which is debated as we speak in the parliament. But, on the other hand, there is a growing understanding, both, also within the police service, that police must be really neutral. For a while this is a small mantra repeated for the use of the international community, but then it enters in the mind of people.

If you look, let's say, at the mid management level of the Ministry of Interior, countrywide, it is a relatively young one. So let's say most of the people with police background, they came back to former Yugoslavia times with communist background, are either out of the police service or in non-leading positions. Now there is I would say almost a new generation of mid-level managers who have between ten and twenty, twenty-five years of active service.

There is the understanding in this regard, from the side of the political party, one of the lessons learned was also, from the political elections last year, that if you try to politicize police, this might go back against you because then there was, the issue was so big, the use of some fringe units of the police for political purposes, that came back against the political party.

DEVLIN: Now I know we have to end at some point unfortunately but I was wondering, to wrap up, is there something when you look back at your experience here in Macedonia, that stands out as a real success, a tactic or a project that really did work well here. Or, alternatively is there something that, looking at things now, with the benefit of hindsight you would have done differently maybe?

BUTINI: You mean what went well and what went wrong?

DEVLIN: Yes, a highlight either way would be great, a lesson learned, good or bad.

BUTINI: *I think what really counts is good planning from the outset of, not the mission, from the interest on a specific country. The planning must address let's say emerging needs, let's say, encompassing them into a big view. Because, let's say, different actors are playing different games. Not necessarily against each other, doesn't bring to a good outcome. Usually they lead to an outcome, very expensive and not very much useful in terms of sustainability. So from my point of view what really counts is good planning and pragmatic planning which calls for people already deployed there with in-depth knowledge of the local situation to strengthen the planning.*

The planning must be, as usual, a political commitment which calls also for budgetary sustainability of the commitment and also which is usually very much under estimated is for people with capacity and willingness to stay for at least three years. Because when you see people coming let's say six months, unless they are targeting very much specific issues, such as setting up secure link with Interpol which is okay, but if we are speaking about normal advisors, there is a need for at least three years because really the first six months it is just, the first year, you start understanding and then most of the people leave.

DEVLIN: Yes.

BUTINI: *Then the local authorities repeat always what is true, it is, let's say, your previous colleague told us like this, now you are telling us like that, so what is it? Because you are German or Italian—. So there must be also this—.*

From another point of view I think specifically referring to this country then probably what should have been done better was the, yes, bad, the selection of the personnel to be deployed, to avoid the conflicting messages.

DEVLIN: Thanks so much Giorgio for taking the time.

BUTINI: *I hope I mostly addressed your needs.*

DEVLIN: Yes.