

Integrated concept for the training of trainers within police cooperation of the EU Member States

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Abstract

This paper presents some outcomes of the EU-funded Twinning Light Project “Setting up the SIRENE Office: Strengthening capacities of SIRENE operators and end users of the Schengen Information System II (CRO SIRENE)”. This international assistance and support project was conducted throughout 2016 by the Lithuanian Police in cooperation with the beneficiary administration, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia. This paper familiarises readers with the system and integral parts of the qualification improvement process assessed in the Project. The mechanism for the preparation of instructors within public administration bodies in the EU Member States could be seen as an integral process, whereby selected staff members receive initial subject-matter training, deepen their knowledge in advanced subject-matter training, participate in andragogic training sessions, practice their training skills during live training activities, have the possibility to compare working procedures in other EU Member States, and exchange best practices as well as make use of specific tailor-made methodological tools. The creation of new pedagogic standards is relevant in a way that by standardizing process of preparing police instructors, main integral educational tools are identified and applied (i.e. optimal proportion between the form and content of training is determined, training participants are involved into training evaluation process, methodical recommendations for instructors are prepared etc.). Pedagogic standards, which was developed, practically tested and presented by the authors of the research could contribute to the better commitment and ownership of the beneficiary organizations with regard police training under the EU Internal Security Strategy. Furthermore, it could be applied also in other EU Member States by organizing training activities and shaping international network of police instructors.

Keywords: Schengen Area, Second Generation Schengen Information System (SIS II), Supplementary Information Request at National Entry (SIRENE), training of trainers, trainer, instructor.

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Introduction

This paper presents the findings of research conducted within the EU-funded, Twinning Light Project entitled “Setting up the SIRENE Office: Strengthening capacities of SIRENE operators and end users of the Schengen Information System II (CRO SIRENE)” (hereinafter referred to as “the Project”). As the following narrative explains, the Project supported the preparation of training programmes, training materials formed by theory and practice, study visits, and workshops with the aim of developing active, operational national SIRENE offices. The offices’ central function is to coordinate cross-border information exchange using the Schengen Information System (hereinafter referred to as “SIS II”). Therefore, they are significant elements in the EU Internal Security Strategy. The main goal of this research was the analysis and presentation of the integrated training of trainers’ concept as the contemporary pedagogic standard, which enables sustainable improvement of knowledge of employees of a police organization.

We propose the adoption of a systematic approach towards understanding of the integrated training of trainers’ system. Namely, it should comprise of initial subject-matter training, advanced subject-matter training, and andragogic training, practicing training skills while assisting other trainers, comparison of working procedures in other EU Member States and exchange of best practices as well as of using specific tailor-made methodological tools. It is understood that implementation of integral training of trainers’ scheme will facilitate long-term results and sustainability in developing and maintaining internal training system within public administration body.

Relevance of the research

We argue that the achievement of the key priorities of the EU Internal Security Strategy (Conclusions of the Council on the Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020, 2015) is dependent on the qualifications and professional skills of the employees of Member States’ law enforcement agencies who are tasked with the important duty of delivering on those priorities. Only the development of their competence by consistent, reliable, and diverse methods can deliver the levels of professionalism and expertise that staff need to perform their duties effectively not just in their homeland but also in the context of international cooperation (Navickienė *et al.* 2016). We argue that the effective training of trainers, capable of instilling that

knowledge and expertise in staff is an essential precursor to the professional development of staff. The implementation of the key priorities of the EU Internal Security Strategy is fully dependent on the qualification and skills of the personnel of law enforcement community. Only by developing the competence of police employees by consistent, reliable, and diverse methods, can one ensure the appropriate level of professionalism in officers and adequate preparation for their operation in the homelands and in the context of international cooperation.

The training of police trainers should therefore be understood as a dynamic process of developing instructor’s competences and skills not by classical monotonic training methods, but involving complex practices. In that regard, we argue that new (or at least modified) forms of training, substantiated by empirical experience should be used more broadly. Nowadays, scholars pay much more attention to the content of the training of trainers and the impact of complexity on policing (Paulet *et al.* 2017). However, that is not yet reflected broadly enough in the police training literature. It has been noted that police officers have to have integrated knowledge and capabilities (for example; forensic and technical knowledge, relevant to the investigation of modern hardware, software and wider information technologies (Freiling & Zoubek, 2017). Vrij *et al.* (2015) and Freiling and Zoubek (2017) have argued persuasively that complex training is a significant factor in the preparation of skilled and effective police instructors.

That reflects the increasing complexity of the social world and of the tasks that police staff are required to undertake. In the modern era, the acronym ‘VUCA’ is used to characterise the kinds of challenges that professionals increasingly face. The term was coined by the US Military in the 1990s but it quickly found its way into the business community. It describes the experiences of many people who struggle with decision-making because of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that is associated with modern workplaces. The term seems particularly relevant to police decision-making, an activity that often is undertaken in environments characterised by high risk and high stress.

Research methods

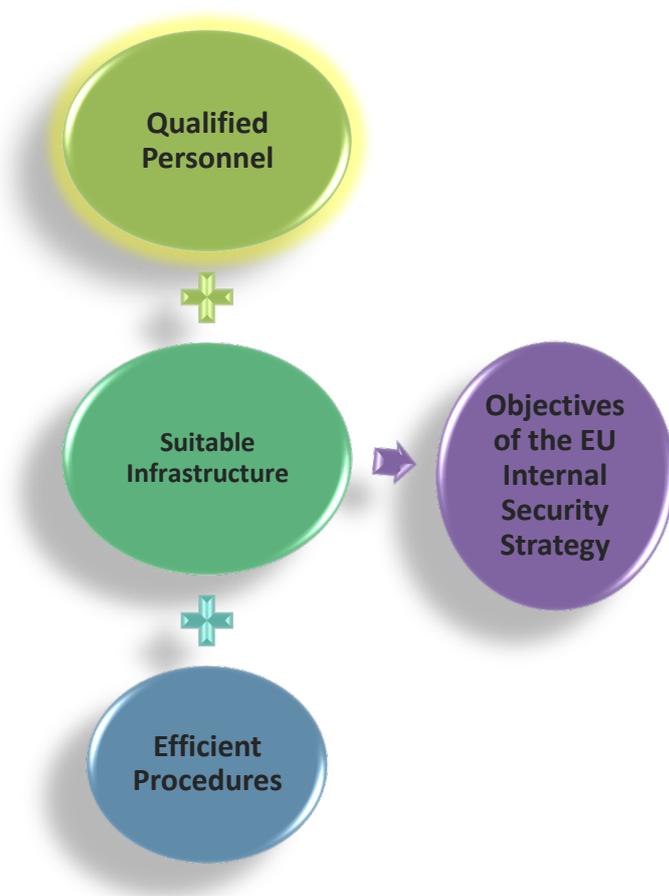
In this publication, the following academic and empirical research methods have been used: descriptive-comparative, analytical-critical, content and non-fiction analysis.

The Project

Within the Project, a substantial proportion of activities was related to the organization and delivery of training. One activity within the Project’s work plan was directly dedicated to the preparation of trainers. From the authors’ point of view that was not enough and we proposed an integrated approach to the training of trainers. The idea found support within the beneficiary administration and in close cooperation was

put to practice. The involvement of the beneficiary administration in systematic and demanding approach towards preparation of trainers facilitated the sustainability in outcomes of international aid instruments. We went on to explore the extent to which the competence levels of law enforcement personnel could be raised by applying complex methods involving theoretical and practical training, internships, simulations and testing.

Figure 1 – Achieving the objectives of the EU ISS



Integrated approach to the concept on training of trainers

The Project supports the view that professionalism within the police organizations is achieved through complex training, where knowledge from different areas are combined and the synthesis of that knowledge is embedded and verified by developing and applying targeted practical situations during training events. *Inter alia*, various innovative administrative, technical tools and technologies are broadly developed and

introduced in policing. Therefore, it is seen that in the new concept on training of trainers the classical emphasis on learning in classrooms is shifted to innovative and integral forms of training so that the complex approach to training of trainers would dominate. New forms of training are implemented: imitation and decision making in practical situations related to policing; case studies; role-plays etc. In this way, practical training reinforces trainees’ relations with their surrounding social environments, allowing them later to synchro-

nize available knowledge and apply their learned behaviours in practice. That is even more important in case of the qualification of police officers. According to researchers such as Steve Tong (2016), besides traditional police capabilities, police officers need additional capabilities to capitalise on various new technological developments.

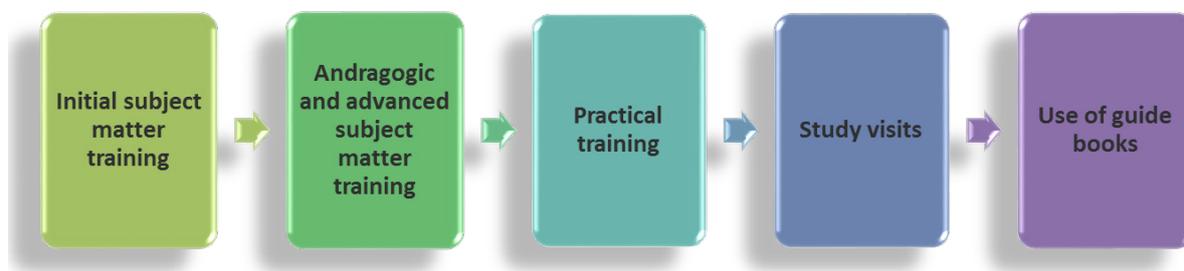
The concept of preparing the modern instructor inevitably has to change and involve more training events of practical nature into the training of trainers. This is important for the instructor in the future to be capable of acting in the role of a lecturer in a more involving, interesting and purposeful way to the trainees. Sofie de Kimpe (2016) argues that innovation in police training depends upon pedagogical science and greater expertise in the process of police training and education. Pedagogic knowledge, applied to police training, should allow for more consistent and systemic forms of proficiency, which ultimately will allow trainers and students to master training material. We argue that it is an essential feature in the training of trainers because only systemic and coherent understanding of training material allows police officers to be capable of smooth and focused delivery of information while acting as instructors. During the course of developing the new integrated concept of the training of trainers, the authors took into consideration global trends, modern training principles and practices. Two stages could be identified in the organization of training within the Project:

1. Three training programmes were developed for the training;
2. Implementation of integrated training of trainers.

Firstly, training programmes were prepared according to the needs identified by the beneficiary administration. The first training programme was formulated to identify existing professional level of police officers employed at the central unit responsible for international information exchange and to do a refreshment of their competences and skills. The second training programme aimed to form new advanced professional competences and to present the peculiarities of specific skills related to work with the SIS II, main challenges, problems, and solutions for the efficient operation at the central information exchange unit. Furthermore, the second training programme also included the basics of andragogy, different learning methods, and management of training as main principles of efficient implementation of organizing training activities. Whereas, the third training programme was developed solely for police practitioners in the field and is focused mostly on strengthening of their practical skills in daily work. It could be said that the creation of every training programme was followed by identifying target group and was based on principle to include development of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Secondly, the implementation of the concept on the integrated training of trainers was formed from inter-dependently correlating elements. These purposeful elements mean that the implementation process starts with initial subject matter training as a reference point to refresh existing knowledge and end with the creation of methodological tools for the future tasks for instructors. The authors propose a systematic approach towards the understating of integrated training of trainers.

Figure 2 – Elements of the integrated concept on the training of trainers



The elements of the integrated concept shown in Figure 2 could be further elaborated as follows:

- **Initial subject-matter training** – is the basic professional information necessary for daily work under specific functions;
- **Andragogic and advanced subject matter training** – advanced professional information for

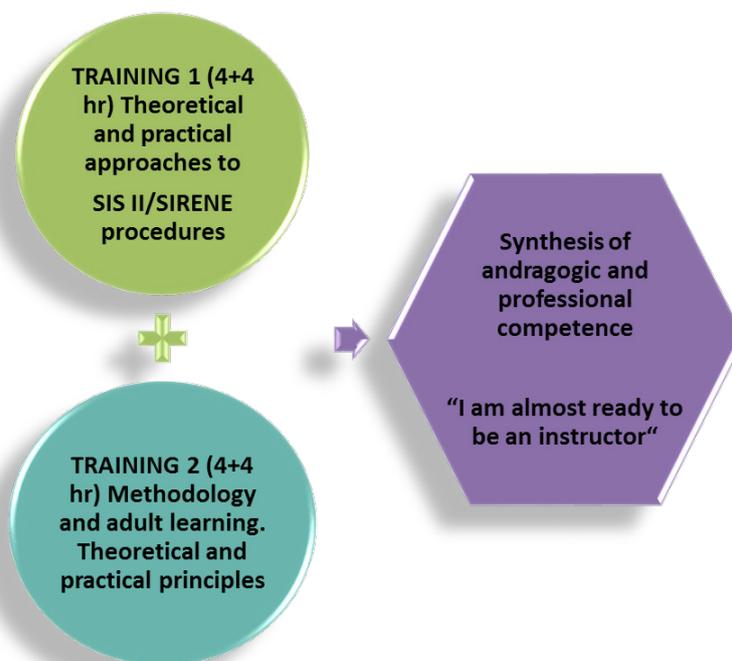
operation under more complex conditions/situations at work and information related to theoretical and practical training delivery skills;

- **Practical training** – practicing instructors’ training skills through assistance to experienced trainers during training activities to other officers;
- **Study visits** – visits dedicated for comparison of working procedures existing in other EU Member States and exchange of best practices or internships;
- **Use of guidebooks** – utility of specific tailor-made methodological tools by instructors during their practice as trainers.

We argue that the implementation of the integrated training of trainers’ scheme will facilitate long-term results and sustainability in developing and maintaining internal training system within police organization or other public administration body.

During the realization of each element of integrated training of trainers, the balance between theoretical and practical knowledge is set. For example, while organizing first to third elements of the integrated training of trainers, the proportion of time allocated for theoretical and practical sessions was equal and amounted to 4 hours of theory and 4 hours of practical exercises (role-play, simulation, case analysis etc.) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 – “Andragogic and advanced subject matter training” in detail



Conclusions

The proposed conceptual shift in the training of trainers was practically tested by the authors of the research in the project. It is supposed that the new scheme will contribute to the greater commitment and the ownership of the beneficiary organizations with regard to achieving the objectives of the EU Internal Security Strategy. The concept of preparing contemporary instructor inevitably is changing by involving to the

training of trainers more targeted practical training in the area of andragogy. All that makes instructor capable to perform as a trainer sharing his or her professional knowledge to the trainees.

Having regard to the identified aspects of the training of trainers’ mechanism, it could be said that the process for the preparation of instructors within police organisations (or other public administration bodies in the EU Member States) needs to be perceived as an

integrated process, a new pedagogic standard, whereby selected staff members receive initial subject-matter training, andragogic and advanced subject matter training, practice their training skills, have the possibil-

ity to compare working procedures in other EU Member States and exchange best practices as well as make use of specific tailor-made methodological tools.

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