



**SECURITY.TOGETHER
in Austria**

Security Partnership – SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria

Police organisations are required to present sustainable concepts or security initiatives, on the one hand to reduce crime rates, and on the other hand to increase the sense of security among the population. Intensifying citizen participation in the meaning of “community policing” means walking on an internationally proven path police organisations have taken to successfully counteract crime developments and any decreasing sense of security. In the context that security can only be a task involving society as a whole, interested citizens, government and private institutions, and civil society ought to be able to participate in such initiatives in the framework of communal partnerships, and to jointly shape security concepts.

Such a guiding principle is also reflected in the security partnership in the framework of the initiative “SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria”. Major focus is placed upon institutionalising the dialogue between citizens and the police on a local level, and upon contributing towards jointly shaping public security in one’s immediate environment. In this sense, building trust and jointly developing solutions for local and regional security issues have to be considered cornerstones of such security partnership.

A new feature of the efforts in the area of “community policing” is, that in addition to crime prevention, new structures and work processes are being integrated into daily police work for implementing the security partnership „SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria“. In this context, new internal and external organisational police structures will be established to guarantee sustainable exercise of people- oriented police work.

The following central stakeholders will be redefined and together form the so-called **Security Forum**:

- **Security Officers**
- **Security Coordinators**
- **Security Partners** and
- **Security Municipal Councillors**

Security Officers and Security Coordinators within the police

Appointing such central stakeholders shall guarantee standardised processes from citizens through private and public organisations to police stations. These structures shall also create clear internal and external police responsibilities. Within the police organisation, so-called **Security Officers** are deployed at police stations, and **Security Coordinators** are deployed at city or district police command posts, as interface towards the population and civil society. In this context, it is a matter of resolving regional issues of security relevance, which not necessarily fall within the exclusive responsibility of the police. The security officers shall address such issues, which are presented to them by the security partners, and under active guidance by the police, the specific issue shall be analysed (such as sense of insecurity in a dark park, in which people are molested by youths under the influence of alcohol), the problem shall be defined and a process of resolving the problem shall be agreed upon with all stakeholders involved. For instance, working groups shall be initiated to develop a solution for the issue, together with the security partners and with representatives of all competent private and public entities, such as the local authority or the youth welfare institution. In this context, the police are responsible for providing cooperation from, exchange by and coordination of all parties involved. During this work process, a result binding for all stakeholders shall be achieved and implemented by those responsible. In addition to proven methods of communication, such as panel discussions, meetings in person or establishing platforms, also social media, such as Facebook, shall be made use of as key element of the community policing project in Austria.

The **Security Coordinators** function as central interface between the police and the population. Moreover, they are also active within the police organisation as coordinators between police stations and **Security Officers**, avoiding any possible duplication of efforts and optimising synergy effects offered by individual security partnerships. So they shall establish contact with people and local authorities, participate in public discussions and events and coordinate project-related activities in their district. Their regional expertise and their contacts are used to better coordinate and implement special crime prevention measures in their district. The employment of special Security Coordinators and the corresponding creation of special job descriptions for this area of activity must be considered a commitment by the police to embed people-oriented police work in the meaning of “community policing” within their organisational structure.

Security Partners

In general, citizen participation means voluntary and gratuitous participation by citizens in policy-forming and decision-making processes. The security partnership “SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria” offers everybody the possibility to voluntarily participate as so-called **Security Partner** in preventive activities, on the basis of transparent information and by target-group related cooperation. Security Partners in this sense mean private individuals interested in participating and co-developing security concepts, who therefore as so-called “sensors” stand up for security-related concerns of the populace or advocate social issues. Everyone, who cooperates with the police to resolve security issues, may therefore consider him/herself as Security Partner. Furthermore, by supporting exchange between such stakeholders, Security Partners function as interface between the people and the police, and between other private or public organisations involved. Another objective is reaching groups of people who normally have only few contacts or no contacts at all with the police, or with other private and public organisations and their information. Regular contacts and exchange of information ought to create a base of trust between the police and civil society. **Security Partners** can therefore serve as multipliers, pointing out security-related concerns to the police, and in particular to the so-called **Security Officer**, and voluntarily passing on the information they receive about preventive measures to their fellow citizens. During their voluntary work, which among others includes active participation in citizen participation projects, the Security Partners shall receive no instructions whatsoever from authorities, nor carry out any legal acts, as the police, as the public security organs, are still in charge of “preventing dangerous attacks upon life, health, freedom and property”. Yet offering information events for interested citizens, and passing on the information contained therein to other persons shall be permissible. If Security Partners submit information about criminal offences to the police, the principle of ex officio crime shall prevail, however. This approach respects the principle that the police have a monopoly on the use of force, but no security monopoly. Definite no-goes are creating parallel structures, intimidating people and establishing private group patrols, as well as promoting denunciation.

The Security Municipal Councillor

Specific Security Municipal Councillors shall be appointed as interfaces between the locally responsible police stations and the respective municipalities,. Concrete implementation, however, depends on regional circumstances. In principle, it is planned that they shall be selected either by the mayor or by the Municipal Council.

Security Partnership „SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria“: Professional Development of the Police Force

To make sure that attitude or understanding for people-oriented police work or for the security partnership „SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria“ will be sustainably accepted by the entire organisation and implemented in daily police work, both short-term and long-term training measures shall be undertaken. Such measures shall cover principles of “community policing” and of prevention work by the criminal police, provide strategies of communication, moderation, conflict solving and corruption prevention, and impart legal knowledge. These training sessions shall be terminated by the end of 2017. Moreover, the contents of such training sessions, and specifically the concrete operational

implementation results shall be integrated in all basic training and further education measures offered by the Security Academy, the central educational facility of the Ministry of the Interior.

The security partnership “SECURITY.TOGETHER in Austria” is closely related to police repression and prevention work. For many years, both approaches have been integral parts of the combat against crime in Austria. Only this set of measures - police repression, crime prevention and security partnership may produce a positive sense of security and positively influence behavioural dispositions in people. This is also in keeping with the self-image of the Ministry of the Interior or the police, who consider themselves the largest service enterprise for ensuring that people in Austria live together in an orderly fashion and governed by the rule of law, thus making an important contribution towards maintaining social peace in Austria.