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POLICE HIGHER EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA

The article strives to disclose the higher police education at the Faculty of Public Security of the University named after Mykolas Komeris in Lithuania. The trends and developments in higher police education in Lithuania have generally confirmed the principal

challenges identified in the Bologna Declaration - they standardize and integrate the Lithuanian education into the European Higher Education Area.

How can higher education assist the police? This process can occur in the social work, by working with them to design, develop, deliver and evaluate full-fledged philosophies of the police education. On this basis, all university programs focus on basic educational skills. In management of the higher education in particular, they rely on the development, or at least the articulation of normative and interrelated models of society and its police and on the identification of empirically justifiable dispositions for practice and methods for teaching. This paper is part of a larger study made by the University for police managers and is presenting the preliminary findings of the study.

The police, their actions, behavior, attitudes and a host of other factors are under constant public security. In an effort to modernize and professionalize policing, it is becoming increasingly common for police today to obtain formal university qualifications. Both police managers and academics had generally favorable views towards university education for police. The main goal of police in the Republic of Lithuania is serving to the people and ensuring the safe living of residents, seeking to be the active guarantors of people's safety and not only the registrars of criminal facts. Police is one of the biggest public institutions constantly maintaining the contact with residents and working for the sake of the whole society. This confers an exceptional position of it in the state. Police takes the most important role in the state governance due to versatile activities related to all areas of social life. Police maintains public order, fights and prevents the crime. Its activities are related to law observance but at the same time police, as a public institution, is under the influence of various political forces, on which depends the leverages of state governance. Although university education is not the only component required for police to obtain professional status, it is an essential part of the professionalization process, without which police will never obtain professional status.

The discussions pertaining to police professionalization and the application of professional status to police remain ongoing in

Lithuania. The only police training facility which provides higher police education in Lithuania is the University named after Mykolas Komeris Faculty of Public Security in Kaunas. Police, which organizational unit the Faculty of Public Security is, broadly understood public interest, manifesting itself in implementation of tasks related to public order and safety. While using complex knowledge they aim to develop logical and analytical capabilities of a future police officer. Consequently, a police officer has to be trained as independent and competent personality, who can make decisions in the stressful conditions of enlarged risk. The educational program may be carried out only in the field of study which is a part of the defined list of the higher education fields of study.

According to recommendations of the Bologna Declaration, the Bachelor study programs are oriented at acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge based on the current state of science and art and at mastering their use at performing a profession or in the follow-up Master study. The Bachelor's degree has become an obligatory requirement for proceeding to the Master's level. We defined police education as a process of imparting or acquiring general or particular police-related knowledge that leads to obtaining a certain degree - bachelor's degree, master's degree. We defined police training as a process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills necessary for police work. University education enables a person to the critical evaluation of material. It provides a theoretical framework by which practical application is derived. Police educators neither need to be reactionary or revolutionary nor to support the status quo. They also need not to wait for an ideal police institution to emerge before they can feel comfortable contributing to policing.

Similar dynamics is observed for changes which take place in the area of human resources, teaching facilities and organizational structure. A particularly strong stimulus in this respect was the integration of higher police education into the system of general education and the incorporation of the latter in implementation of the Bologna Process. The role of university education in police organizations was also viewed from a variety of perspectives in the areas of police culture, competencies and promotions.

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