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NOTE

from : Belgian delegation

to : Police Cooperation Working Party

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Subject : Security at meetings of the European Council and other comparable events

- International cooperation at the Laeken European Council (in the light of the conclusions of 13 July 2001, 10916/01 JAI 82)

1. General

The Laeken European Council on 14 and 15 December 2001 was the occasion for a number of demonstrations, police figures for which indicate:

- 13/12 : 75 000 participants (organised by the unions),
43 arrests (3 Belgians, 40 foreigners, 42 administrative, 1 judicial);
- 14/12 : 12 000 participants (D14) with a "hard core" of 150 to 200,
49 arrests (18 Belgians, 31 foreigners, 40 administrative, 9 judicial);
- 15/12 : 1 200 to 1 400 participants (D14; 5 000 participants according to the organisers)
1 300 participants (anarchist movement)
1 000 participants (street party)
71 arrests (24 Belgians, 47 foreigners, 70 administrative, 1 judicial).

Over the entire period, the breakdown of arrests by nationality was: 45 Belgians, 46 French, 27 Germans, 18 Dutch, 8 Greeks, 5 Poles, 4 English, 2 Irish, 2 Australians, 2 Luxembourgers, 2 Italians, 1 Swiss and 1 Slovak.

2. Police cooperation

There follows a point-by-point rundown on each of the police cooperation aspects dealt with in the JAI 82 conclusions.

2.1. National contact point in each Member State for the collection, analysis and exchange of relevant information

The flow of information *before and after* the Laeken Summit was organised by divisions of the Federal Police Force, i.e. the Directorate-General for Operational Support and the Directorate-General of the Administrative Police. In practice, the Directorate-General for Operational Support functioned as sole entry point, with the information then being passed to the Combined Federal Information Unit (GFIC), closely linked to the Directorate-General of the Administrative Police. The Information Unit was set up for the duration of the Belgian Presidency.

There was relatively little fax traffic before and after the event. Many countries replied that they had no information relating to nationals of theirs travelling to Belgium for the summit. Information from countries which did know of demonstrators travelling varied from the very limited to the full and detailed (e.g. France); some countries' information included material that could also be retrieved from the Internet (e.g. Germany). There were sometimes problems in interpreting the information because there was no indication of the method of information gathering used in the countries concerned or of the sources consulted (no analysis of the accuracy or source).

During the Laeken Summit, international information channels were handled by the liaison officers.

2.2. Setting up of a pool of liaison officers (before, during and after the event)

Via the Directorate-General for Operational Support, forms were sent out requesting information concerning the event, and the Member States were asked to send liaison officers. The officers who travelled to Belgium used the same channels of communication to supply their particulars, but in most cases did not belong to the services to which the Directorate-General for Operational Support had supplied information *before* the event. Once the liaison officers were in place at the GFIC *during* the summit, they became the sole channel for information.

Eleven countries sent a liaison officer to the Laeken Summit. The EU countries which did not do so were Finland, Austria and Portugal. The liaison officers themselves had little or no operational information *before* the event. The liaison function materialised only *during* the summit. However often the wish was expressed that the liaison officers should organise the intelligence effort in their own countries before the event and ensure follow-up afterwards, it is not clear whether that actually happened.

The officers were not present on the ground but were regularly briefed by the GFIC on the course of events. They watched a lot of helicopter footage, which was projected in their building. They were also able to surf the Internet. Some consulted their national sites on anti-globalisation issues, which our own information units have difficulty in accessing because of the language problem. Any additional information found was entered in the GFIC logbook.

The liaison officers had a lot to do in connection with arrests. They notified the relevant services in their countries of arrests and checked whether the persons arrested were known there. Inquiries from foreign authorities such as embassies or consulates, however, went straight to the Directorate-General of Administrative Police. It would have been useful for those authorities, too, to be able to contact their liaison officers directly by phone.

The question is whether the presence of the liaison officers was necessary given the role which they played in the GFIC, or which they could have played if the turn of events had been different. Basically, officers can log on to the Internet sites from their own countries and, provided there are good communications, can themselves pass on the names of those arrested. The difference, therefore, probably lies in the obvious fact that when the officers are in the country hosting a summit they are working on that alone. If they remain at home, their availability is probably less certain.

If, then, we accept that the presence of liaison officers was perhaps not necessary, but certainly useful, we must still answer the ever-recurring question of who are the best people to send. It has to be said that the different judicial and police frameworks within which the liaison officers work do not make circulating information any easier. The distinction between administrative and judicial police or between public order, crime or terrorism is not the same everywhere. The liaison officers themselves come from a variety of police departments and intelligence units. That naturally affects the type of information to which they have access, which is often less than strategic. The fact is that liaison officers must have a very good knowledge of their own organisation, and know which department to contact with which questions; in turn, they must also be known in their organisation and empowered to obtain information relevant to the summit with all speed. Ideally, it should be possible to call on the same officers for all summits

2.3. Use of officers able to identify persons or groups likely to pose a threat to public order and security, provided by the Member States

For this purpose, various police departments sent their own officers. The techniques which they used were not always in line with public order policing as practised in Belgium. It is therefore important that in future clear arrangements being made and a degree of harmonisation achieved.

Spotting anti-globalisation troublemakers is a much more complex matter than spotting football hooligans, for example. Anti-globalisation protesters have a different type of internal organisation and their spokesmen are not necessarily leaders of specific groups. The police have a very limited number of contacts to talk to and these are people who are not necessarily able to exert much influence on the course of events.

2.4. Permanent monitoring of operational procedures

As well as liaison officials, other international visitors came to observe the summit. What feedback they supplied to their own police departments or to the Task Force, we do not know. What is clear, though, is that in many cases they came to observe events in Belgium with a very specific purpose: the Spaniards and the Danes because their countries were next in line for the Presidency, the Swedes because of their bad experience with the Göteborg Summit.

Here it should be emphasised that a variety of officers came for the summit, and it was not always clear whether they were observers, spotters, etc. With a view to future summits, it seems desirable that when delegations check in with the Directorate-General for Operational Support they indicate exactly why and in what capacity they are there, so that there is no possibility of misunderstanding.

2.5. Preparation of a joint analysis of violent disturbances, offences and groups

Given the ambiguities surrounding the previous point and the fact that there was no structured international follow-up to the operation, there is also no question of any joint analysis of violent disturbances. It is clear here that it would have been more appropriate to analyse the reasons for the *absence* of actual violent disturbances and serious offences; that would have been at least as relevant for every police department called on to organise a summit.

Belgium did, indeed, take the initiative on 10 September 2001 of holding a meeting designed to alert liaison officers to their intended role and make clear what was expected as regards cooperation in terms of national contact points and exchange of officers. The exercise was not 100% successful as those attending the meeting were not necessarily the liaison officers.

2.6. Organisation of targeted training by the EPC, including exchange of best practice

The EPC (European Police College) is a network in which training is organised by one Member State but is open to officers from other Member States. It will shortly be organising crowd control training in France, in the framework of JAI 82.

3. Resolutions and recommendations

With a view to future summits, a number of recommendations on police cooperation can consequently be made:

- 3.1. When information is supplied, it would be useful if, as far as possible, the sources on which it is based (police sources, public sources, etc.) could also be indicated.

- 3.2. When the various delegations from other countries arrive in the organising country, they should, to avoid any possible confusion, indicate the purpose of their visit (observer, spotter, liaison officer, etc.).
- 3.3. It is unnecessary for all EU Member States to send liaison officers. A selection should be made on the basis of advance information. That specific type of cooperation should be sought from those countries from which large groups are expected to travel.
- 3.4. A liaison official must above all have a thorough knowledge of his own organisation and of the departments and people in it. He must also be empowered to obtain the necessary information as quickly as possible.
- 3.5. The function of liaison officer should not be confined to the actual duration of the event. There must be cooperation before and after the event, if they are to be proactive and provide follow-up.
- 3.6. In the context of international police cooperation, it might be appropriate to consider developing a system of tracing and tailing risk groups. Past and present work in the Police Cooperation Working Party could also be taken into account here.
- 3.7. Finally, there is also the question of the non-police information that the various services in the different Member States can supply. How, for example, can the cooperation of Foreign Ministries and their representatives abroad be sought and obtained? That might be a role for embassy liaison officers.
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