

APRIL 2014



CORRUPTION AT THE SERBIAN BORDER POLICE

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INTRODUCTION

The topic of corruption in the border police is important because Serbia is a transit country which borders four EU member-states. The consequences are multifold. The goal of many criminal groups is to conquer the market of the European Union, whose economy is improving after several years of economic crisis (Balcerowicz 2013, 3). Serbia is a part of the Balkan route, which is well-known to criminal groups. Also, a common feature of a vast majority of migrants is that they illegally cross several international borders to reach Serbia and enter this country in the same way. In the process, they use the services of organized groups of smugglers who charge them a high price in order to help them to cross the border and to secure accommodation in transit countries (Center for the Protection of and Assistance to Asylum-Seekers 2013, 9). One also needs to add to this a strong intensity of international traffic in Serbia, particularly during the summer period, which is favorable for „petty“ corruption. All this helps to strengthen corruption pressure on the Serbian Border Police.

This analysis is part of the project “Networking and Capacity Building for More Effective Migration Policy in Serbia”, implemented by Group 484 with support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade and in partnership with the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights and the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy. Translation of this analysis has been provided by the U.S. Department of Justice Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training Program (OPDAT) to Serbia, funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The content of the analysis is the sole responsibility of its author.

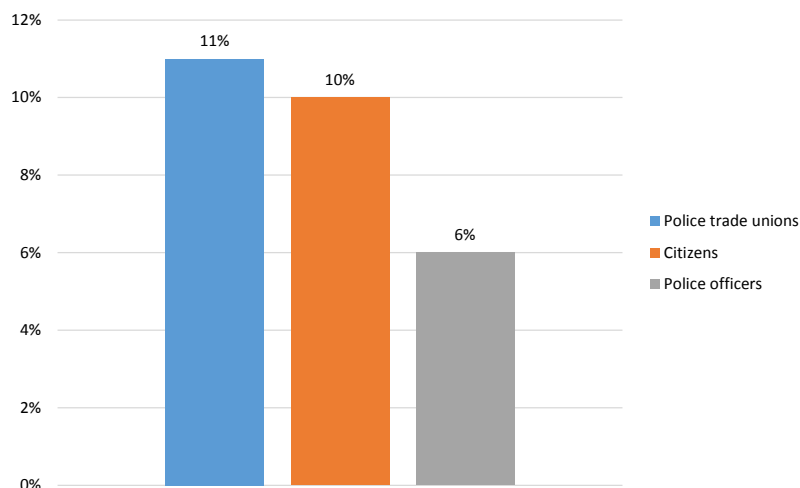
The main goal of this study is to assess corruption in the Serbian Border Police. Data has been collected on the basis of answers of the Border Police Directorate (UGP) and Internal Affairs Sector of the Police (SUKP) to a questionnaire which was made by the Centre for the Study of Democracy¹ and modified by the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy. In addition to this, a focus group was made up of representatives of these two organizational parts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mol), and four interviews were conducted with police employees and representatives of civil society organizations.

The opinions of citizens, police employees and police trade union members on the level of corruption at the Serbian Border Police were analyzed in the first part of the text. After that, an assessment of corruption at the Serbian Border Police was presented. Then, anti-corruption mechanisms currently used by the Serbian Border Police Directorate were analyzed.

PERCEPTION

The opinions of police trade union members (11%) and citizens (10%) on the corruption in the border police are „stricter“ in comparison with the opinions of the polled police officers (6%) (Graph 1) (Petrović, Đorđević / Savković 2013; Đorđević 2013; Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2012).² Still, the perception of corruption in the border police is much lower (three to six times lower) than that at the traffic police, which, according to the opinion of police trade union members, citizens and police employees, represents the most corrupt part of the police force.

Graph 1: Percentage of citizens, police trade unions and officers who believe thin the border police is corrupt

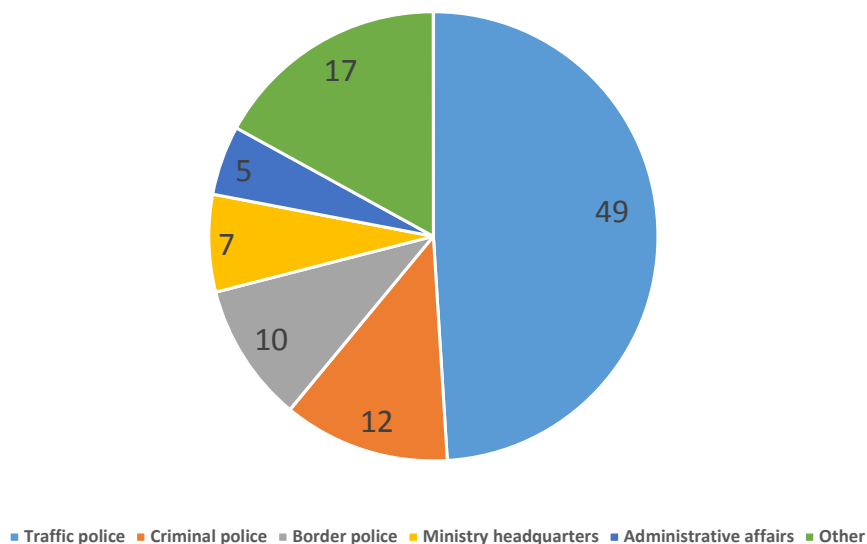


¹ The Bulgarian Center for the Study of Democracy, with the assistance of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX) has published the first comprehensive report on corruption in border police services of the EU member-states, in which types of corruption and anti-corruption measures aimed at reducing this phenomenon in the border police have been analyzed. Available at: <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=16109>.

² Findings were obtained on the basis of a public opinion poll conducted by the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, conducted in April 2013, interviews with police trade union members conducted in May 2013, and poll of police officers in the realization of the SUKP.

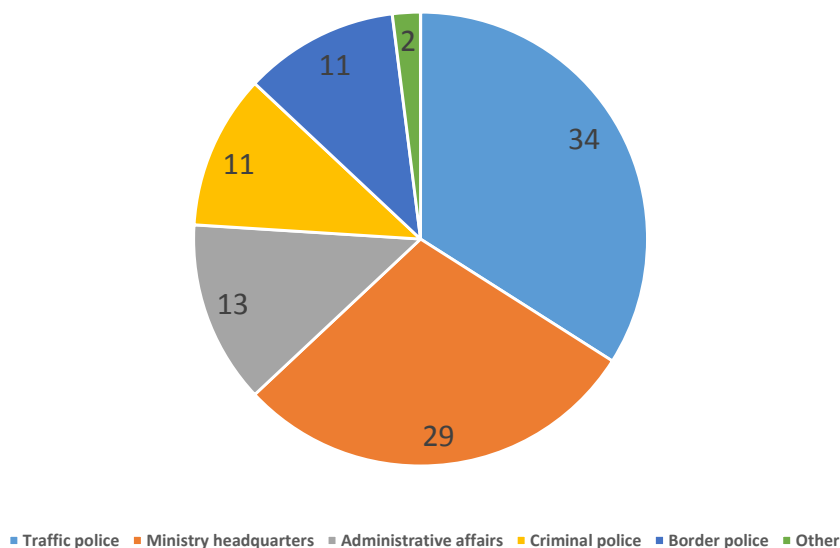
Serbian citizens believe that corruption is most commonly present in the traffic, criminal and border police (Petrović, Đorđević / Savković 2013, 14). The conclusion is that the parts of the police force with the most frequent contacts with citizens have been evaluated the worst (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Citizens' opinion on the most corrupt parts of the Interior Ministry



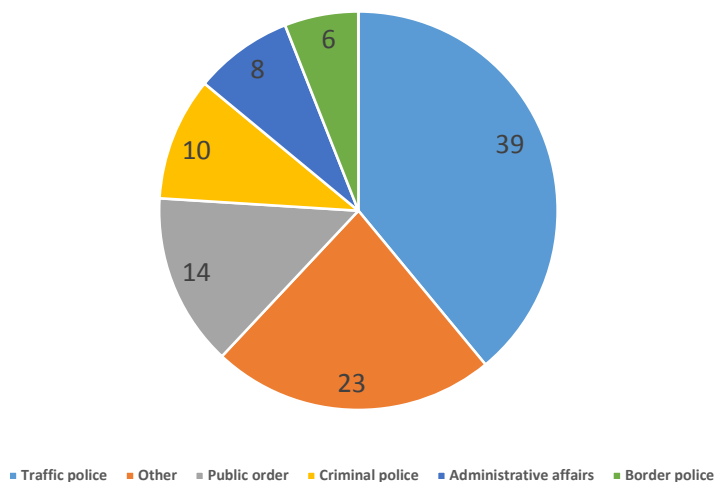
For police trade union members, the Serbian Border Police is less corrupt than the staff at the Ministry headquarters, traffic police, criminal police and those in charge of issuing personal documents (Graph 3) (Đorđević 2013, 62).

Graph 3: Opinions of police trade union members on the most corrupt parts of the Interior Ministry



According to the SUKP research, members of the Serbian Border Police are much less corrupt than police officers who maintain public order and peace and traffic safety (Graph 4) (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2012).

Graph 4: Police officers' opinions on the most corrupt parts of the Interior Ministry, according to a research conducted by the Internal Affairs Sector of the Police



ASSESSMENT

Parts of the border police that may be prone to corruption

The Border Police Directorate believes that there is no major risk of corruption among border police members.³ Contrary to this, the SUKP claims that there are nine parts of the Border Police Directorate, where there is a high level or risk of corruption among border police officers.⁴ It is interesting to note that a high representative of the Border Police Directorate has particularly quoted „large“ border crossings (especially those towards EU member-states) as parts of the border police where the risk of corruption is particularly high. Such opinion is in opposition to the official position of the Border Police Directorate.⁵

Corruption pressure on road border crossings

Research conducted in EU member-states indicates that there is a high risk of corruption at large road border crossings (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 62). The Serbian In-

³ Response of the Border Police Directorate to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴ These are: (1) road border crossings; (2) border crossings for cross-border transport; (3) regional center towards Hungary; (4) regional center towards Romania (north); (5) regional center towards Romania (south); (6) regional center towards Bulgaria; (7) regional center towards Macedonia; (8) officers who control trucks; (9) officers who control buses (SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014).

⁵ Finding obtained during the presentation of a representative of the Border Police Directorate, Regional Conference on the Prevention and Investigation of Border Corruption, February 27, 2014, Belgrade.

ternal Affairs Sector of the Police believes that there is a high risk of border police corruption at the border crossings for road transport and cross-border traffic.⁶ The Border Police

At the border crossings where the intensity of citizen and commodity traffic is higher, there is a greater danger of corruption among border police officers (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2014, 5).

Directorate has a different position. There is medium-level risk of corruption at road border crossings and no risk at those for cross-border traffic.⁷ The biggest problems exist during the summer season, when a large number of passengers (especially from Turkey) go through Serbia. Thus in August 2013, more than 200,000 passengers crossed the border at Horgoš at just one weekend (RTV 2013). Such a big inflow of passengers crossing the border creates crowds at border crossings, which paves the way to corruption, because passengers want to avoid long waits.⁸ This is in accordance with the assess-

ment of the SUKP and the Border Police Directorate that there is a risk of corruption of officers who protect the state border at road border crossings.⁹ Border police members at the crossings towards Hungary (Horgoš, Kelebija, Bezdán) and Romania (Vatin, Srpska Crnja) are particularly prone to corruption.¹⁰

Chances of corruption during the control of buses, trucks and passenger vehicles

The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police and the Border Police Directorate believe that there is a medium-level risk of corruption among border police officers who control passenger vehicles.¹¹ Cars are most frequently used for the smuggling of illegal migrants, which is why there is a greater chance of corruption of those border police officers who control passenger vehicles.¹² The opinions of the SUKP and UGP on the level of corruption of those police officers who control buses and trucks differ, and, therefore, it is not clear where in the control of motor vehicles the implementation of anti-corruption measures should be stepped up first. The Border Police Directorate believes that there is no risk of corruption in the control of trucks,¹³ while the SUKP believes the opposite. Also, the risk of corruption in the control of buses definitely exists, but its perceived level differs – SUKP believes that this risk is high, while the Border Police Directorate believes that this is a medium risk.¹⁴ The corruption of border police officers who control motor vehicles is more difficult because of cameras that record lanes for motor vehicles and police booths at border crossings, as well as because the scanning of passengers' passports leaves an electronic trace. This is why it is easy to find out who allowed a passenger who does not fulfill the conditions for travelling

⁶ SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁷ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁸ Interview, anonymous source, December 2013.

⁹ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

¹⁰ Interview, anonymous source, December 2013.

¹¹ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

¹² Interview, anonymous source, March 2014.

¹³ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

¹⁴ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

abroad to cross the border.¹⁵ Despite the existing preventive measures, the possibility of corruption still exists. An additional reason for the chance of corruption of border police officers is the fact that the drivers of trucks, cars and buses, as well as bus passengers are those who will most likely try to corrupt border police members.¹⁶

Young border police officers are prone to corruption

According to the Border Police Directorate, a medium-level risk of corruption has been determined among young border police members.¹⁷ The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police has no information about the demographic structure of corrupt police officers, so they have not provided an answer. There are a few reasons why young border police members are prone to corruption. Primarily, they are frequently of the same or similar age as crime group members (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 65). Quite possibly, they know crime group members because they live in the same settlements near the border and go out to the same places. Young police officers lack experience, so they can easily get involved in corruption if a member of a crime group they know requests a „small“ favor or if some benefit or service, such as money or sexual services, for example, is offered (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 62). In human trafficking cases, crime groups most frequently use money or make sexual services available to police officers in order to enable the trafficking victims to cross the border.¹⁸ Unwittingly, young police officers can get involved in much more serious criminal activities. More than one-half of border police services of EU member-states have also said that young police officers are more prone to the risk of corruption (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 66).

»Green border« is particularly problematic

Most irregular migrants are trying to enter Serbia and then cross into some of the neighboring EU member-states across the so-called „green border“, most frequently during the night (Vukosavljević 2013). This is open space and therefore it is a less controlled part of the state border. Most frequently, these are meadows, fields or forests. The „green border“ was identified as a corruption risk because the MoI had not been completely ready to take over the securing of borders from the Serbian Army, which ended in 2007. Border Police Directorate representatives believe that the executive authorities in Serbia have not invested enough money to secure the border and that the MoI started doing this with insufficient funds and personnel. Human resources were taken over from the Army and local police stations, but the quality of this staff was inappropriate.¹⁹ Also, technical conditions for the

¹⁵ Finding obtained in the focus group with representatives of the Border Police Directorate and the SUKP, November 2013.

¹⁶ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

¹⁷ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

¹⁸ Interview, ASTRA, March 2014.

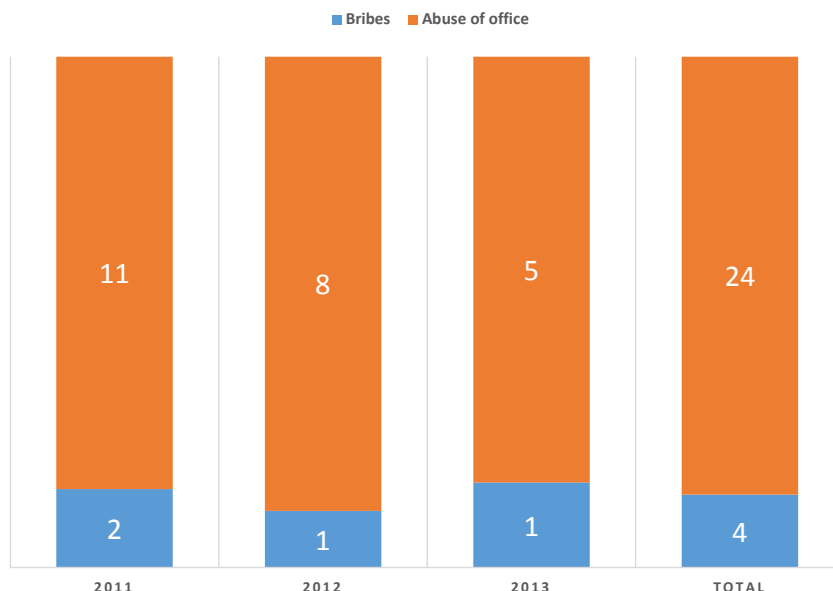
¹⁹ Finding obtained during the focus group with representatives of the Border Police Directorate and the SUKP, November 2013.

Border Police Directorate work are insufficient, especially at southern borders.²⁰ However, one cannot cross the „green border“ without knowing in advance the control timetable at this part of the border.²¹ Namely, Border Police members may inform crime groups in advance about the moment when there will be no control at the particular part of the border, so that irregular migrants can cross it without any problems. There is also a possibility that irregular migrants themselves, particularly minors, might be sent to monitor the pattern of control at a particular section of the border line and to determine the moment when it would be possible to cross the border.

Types of corruption in the border police

Five main types of corruption have been determined in the Serbian Border Police: (1) providing police information to crime group members; (2) abusing police authority for the purpose of obtaining a profit; (3) enabling persons who are not allowed to cross the state border to cross it; (4) participating in the illegal cigarette trafficking; (5) involvement in the smuggling of irregular migrants and human trafficking. All these acts of corruption do not have the same intensity. Rather than that, they occur frequently or occasionally, or border police members might be suspected of involvement in such activities, but they have still not been detected. The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police filed the largest number of criminal complaints against border police officers for the abuse of office (Graph 5). In 2013, one case of conspiracy to commit crimes has been registered.

Graph 5: Number of criminal complaints which the Internal Affairs Sector filed against border police officers



²⁰ Interview, anonymous source, March 2014; Interview, ASTRA, March 2014.

²¹ Interview, anonymous source, March 2014.

Providing information to crime group members

Serbian Border Police members occasionally provide information to crime groups.²² This act of corruption represents a major violation of official duty, because a police officer is using his status of a police officer for unofficial purposes.²³ After checking police informa-

At the Rujan border crossing towards Macedonia, a case was reported of a border police officer who was providing information to a group of smugglers of goods about the position and movement of the border police (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2014, 6).

tion, a police officer can notify crime group members that there is nothing about them at police databases, so that they can cross the border without any problems. A border police officer may give information to crime groups about the times and places of border controls, so that they can avoid the control in time and cross the border unobserved. A much more serious situation is when a police officer gives confidential information to crime group members, because this affects the final outcome of the investigation. Such practice has been detected in nine EU member-states which occasionally detect the involvement of Border Police members in the unlawful provision of information to crime groups (Centre for Study

of Democracy 2012, 54). Serbian border police officers most frequently give crime groups information from the Border Police Directorate information systems.²⁴ Crime groups will most likely try to corrupt border police officers in order to be able to carry out their activities without impediments.²⁵

Abuse of office for the purpose of gaining a profit

The Border Police Directorate occasionally identifies some members who use their official capacity to get the property of persons in detention, irregular migrants, asylum-seek-

A deputy commander at the Đerdap border crossing allowed his staff to take 4.5 tons of coal owned by the Mol and to use it for their personal needs (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2014, 5).

ers from Serbia, members of crime groups, assets owned by the Mol,²⁶ or sometimes even victims of human trafficking.²⁷ Most frequently, these cases involve the theft of money, personal belongings or cargo from motor vehicles. It is interesting to note that the SUKP has never acted in connection with such practice of border police members.²⁸ This means either that the border police Directorate does not notify SUKP about the abuse of police authority for the purpose of gaining a profit, or that it wants to solve the relevant forms of „petty“ corruption within its organizational unit. Such practice has

²² Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

²³ Art. 157, Law on Police, Official Gazette No. 101/2005, 63/2009 – CC decision and 92/2011.

²⁴ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

²⁵ SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

²⁶ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

²⁷ Interview, ASTRA, March 2014.

²⁸ SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

also been detected in eight EU member-states occasionally, and in two frequently (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 57). Irregular migrants who pass through Serbia say that border police officers who work at border crossing with Hungary request and take money from them in order to give them a better treatment²⁹ – to let them across the border, to give them better conditions in detention or in order not to arrest them.

Crossing of the border is allowed despite prohibition

At the Mokranje border crossing towards Bulgaria and Kelebija towards Hungary, border police officers were reported for corruption because they allowed persons transporting technical goods for sale to cross the border without impediments (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2014, 5).

Especially worrying is the occasional practice of border police officers in Serbia to allow persons who have been prohibited to cross the state border because of arrest warrants, or probation, or parole, to cross the border.³⁰ The consequences of this practice may be serious, because they may jeopardize the police investigation. It is much more difficult to reach a suspect after he/she crosses the state border, because then a complex procedure of mutual legal assistance must be initiated. Also, this act of corruption may easily represent a criminal form of protection of persons involved in economic crime, if it is found out that the relevant

border police officer and the crime group had an agreement before the state border was crossed. Border police officers are suspected of accepting bribes or sexual services in order to ensure an unimpeded crossing of the state border, but such cases have not been detected yet.³¹

Involvement in cigarette smuggling

A deputy commander at the Đerdap border crossing enabled a person carrying cigarettes from Serbia to EU member-states to cross the border without undergoing control in exchange for money (Internal Affairs Sector of the Police 2014, 6).

The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police believes that border police officers are very much involved in the illegal trade in cigarettes.³² On the contrary, the Border Police Directorate has never established that any of its members have participated in this criminal activity.³³ Currently, it is impossible to explain exactly why these two organizational units of the MoI have such opposing opinions. The first possibility is that the SUKP has not appropriately assessed the involvement of border police officers in the illegal trade in cigarettes and tobacco. The second possibility is that the border police Di-

rectorate does not want to detect the involvement of some of its members in this criminal activity. However, it is a fact that the illegal trade in cigarettes has become a major impe-

²⁹ Interview, anonymous source, March 2014.

³⁰ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

³¹ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

³² SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

³³ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

tus of corruption in the border police in the EU(Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 52). In Serbia, the intensity of illegal trade in cigarettes and tobacco has increased since the beginning of 2013. Also, according to some assessments, about 4,000 tons of tobacco is outside the regular market flows in Serbia (B92 2013). Consequently, special attention should be paid to the possible involvement of border police members in the smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco.

Organized crime and migrations

An analysis of judgments in human trafficking cases in Serbia has established that at least two police officers who are not necessarily border police members are involved in each human trafficking case (Interview, ASTRA, March 2014).

The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police has still not detected any such cases, but believes with certainty that border police officers are involved in the smuggling of irregular migrants and human trafficking.³⁴ The relevant information is most frequently obtained from irregular migrants who have been returned to Serbia from other countries. This means that border police members secure or assist the illegal entry of migrants into another state for the purpose of gaining material or financial profit.³⁵ In human trafficking, the involvement of border police officers may be passive – by ignoring or tolerating the trafficking process, or active, through their

direct participation in trafficking (Programme against Corruption and Organised Crime in South-eastern Europe 2002, 6). The border crossing towards Hungary is especially problematic, because it represents the main section of the West Balkan route towards the EU. There are crime groups near Subotica that help irregular migrants from Africa, Asia and the Middle East to cross the border with Hungary. The activity of these crime groups results in a high degree of corruption risk of border police officers in the Regional Center towards Hungary.³⁶ The fact that irregular migrants themselves will most likely try directly to corrupt border police members speaks in favor of the existence of possibility that border police officers might be corrupt.³⁷ Since March 2013, an increasing number of irregular migrants have been using the border crossing with Montenegro to enter Serbia.³⁸

SUPPRESSION

There is no plan of suppression of corruption in the border police

The Border Police Directorate has neither made any anti-corruption plans nor a comprehensive analysis of corruption risk in the border police. The Border Police Directorate is

³⁴ Finding obtained during the focus group with representatives of the Border Police Directorate and the SUKP, November 2013.

³⁵ Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Official Gazette of the FRY – International Treaties, No. 6/2001

³⁶ Interview, anonymous source, December 2013.

³⁷ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

³⁸ Interview, anonymous source, March 2014.

implementing anti-corruption measures on the basis of the Action Plan for the implementation of the 2013 National Anti-Corruption Strategy.³⁹ The problem is that the Action Plan does not envision specific measures for reducing corruption in the border police. Instead, the measures refer to the strengthening of the SUKP ability to fight corruption in the police. This may result in less corruption in the border police, but this result is not certain. The only measure in the Action Plan which can result in the limited reduction of corruption in the border police is the introduction of video surveillance at the customs offices at border crossings (Government of the Republic of Serbia 2013, 12). The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police believes that the border police Directorate is responsible for drafting a plan and analysis of corruption in the border police. The current SUKP capacity is insufficient for making such a risk analysis.⁴⁰ However, it is interesting to note that the border police Directorate is still making some analyses on the basis of intensity of traffic at border crossings, through which it determines corruption risks in the border police.⁴¹ Such documents have limitations because they deal with just one corruption risk – letting people cross the state border – and do not result in a comprehensive reduction of corruption in the border police. Analyses of corruption risk in the border police are made in eight EU member-states regularly, and occasionally in as many members (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 97).

Fight against corruption in the border police depends mostly on anonymous messages

The reduction of corruption in the border police mostly depends on anonymous messages. This also applies to six EU member-states (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 116). The Internal Affairs Sector of the Police most frequently initiates investigations after obtaining anonymous reports.⁴² The Border Police Directorate believes that this is the way in which acts of corruption committed by border police officers are most frequently detected.⁴³ In most EU member-states, the fight against corruption depends on citizens' complaints or is initiated when the corruption of a border police member is suspected during an investigation (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 116). Investigations against border police members are rarely initiated in Serbia on the basis of such anti-corruption mechanisms.⁴⁴ An even bigger problem is that investigations of corruption in the border police are never initiated through mechanisms such as risk analyses and preventive or regular controls of the SUKP.⁴⁵

³⁹ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴⁰ Finding obtained during the work of the focus group with representatives of the Border Police Directorate and SUKP, November 2013.

⁴¹ Finding obtained during the presentation of a representative of the Border Police Directorate, Regional Conference on the Prevention and Investigation of Border Corruption, February 27, 2014, Belgrade.

⁴² SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴³ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴⁴ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴⁵ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

Prevention of corruption is not in the focus

In the prevention of corruption, the Border Police Directorate mostly relies on the work of SUKP and its reports that analyze corruption risks. SUKP rarely makes such reports.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the Border Police Directorate has still not used preventive mechanisms against corruption, such as: (1) assessment of the risk of corruption of individuals or organizational units of the Border Police Directorate; (2) assessment of efficiency of operative procedures aimed at reducing corruption; (3) development of a corrupt police officer profile; (4) reports of the Internal Audit Service which is in charge of assessing the management of public finance at the MoI; (5) monitoring the examination of Border Police Directorate members, on the basis of which additional information can be found out about the acts of corruption of border police members; (6) random checks of workplaces in the border police Directorate or integrity tests.⁴⁷

Operative measures hold the most important place in the fight against corruption

The Border Police Directorate mostly relies on operative and technical measures that prevent corruption in specific situations. These are mostly random rotations of border police members on their daily duties, because this reduces the likelihood of development of rapport with persons who offer corruption. However, this measure is applied only occasionally.⁴⁸ Also, a border police officer can very easily change his/her shift, because most of the time make arrangements on this with their colleagues.⁴⁹ When there is rotation, a border police officer does not know how long he will be performing a particular duty and at which moment this will happen. Thus, for example, members of crime groups encounter difficulties in developing rapport with border police officers, because they do not know at which time a particular officer will be on duty. This measure, coupled with limiting the use/carrying of cell phones, which the Serbian Border Police Directorate does not implement at all, may be a very useful tool in the resolution of serious criminal activities (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 100). At this point, it is not certain whether the Border Police Directorate controls the private lives of border police members, including their living standards and personal contacts. In its official response, the Border Police Directorate says that this measure has never been used for detecting corruption among border police officers. However, some data can serve as a basis for a completely different conclusion. Namely, the so-called „visual“ control, where the assets of border police officers are checked, is implemented in practice, especially in the cases when police officers drive expensive cars or live

⁴⁶ SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴⁷ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014; SUKP response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

⁴⁸ Finding obtained during the presentation of a representative of the Border Police Directorate, Regional Conference on the Prevention and Investigation of Border Corruption, February 27, 2014, Belgrade.

⁴⁹ Interview, anonymous source, March 2014.

in luxuriously furnished houses, which indicates that there is a discrepancy between their assets and salaries.⁵⁰

In order to reduce corruption, heads' salaries need to be 120,000 RSD

Currently, the average salary in the border police Directorate for employees at lower positions is 45,000 RSD. The initial salary is five thousand dinars lower. Border Police heads receive a slightly higher salary, which amounts to 70,000 dinars. However, these salaries are insufficient for reducing corruption; instead, the salary needs to be about 60% higher than the existing, according to the assessment of the Border Police Directorate. For employees at lower positions, the desired salary would be 80,000 dinars, while for the heads it would amount to 120,000 dinars.⁵¹ Most border police services of EU member-states also believe that higher salaries are needed for reducing corruption. Thus, in Estonia, the desired salary should be 20% higher, in Greece 111% higher, while in Romania 174% higher and in Bulgaria 197% higher (Centre for Study of Democracy 2012, 68). The ratio between the desired and existing salaries increases in the southeast European EU member-states, which is understandable because of their lower economic standard in comparison with Western Europe. The difference between the existing and desired salary is important because it reflects the monetary value for which border police officers are prepared to abuse their office.

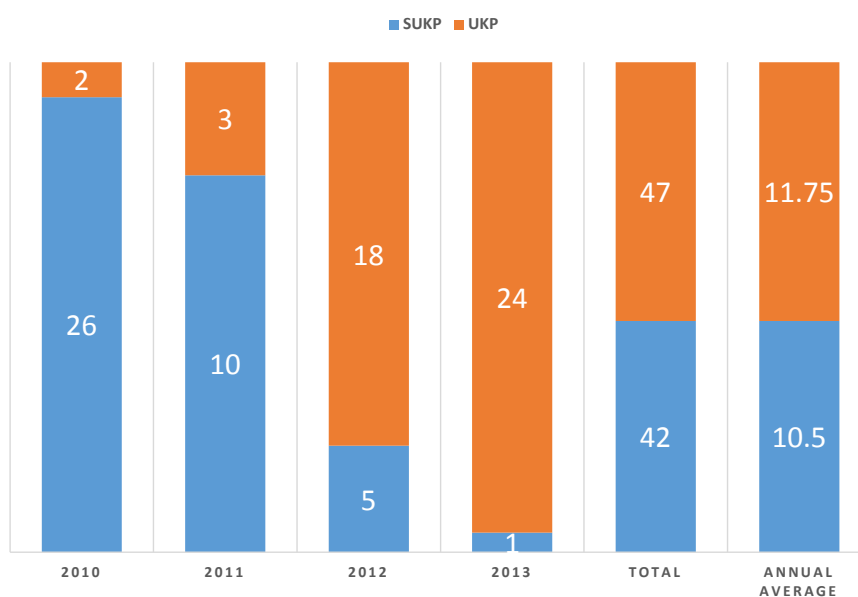
Results of the fight against corruption in the border police

A total of 89 criminal complaints were filed against border police officers between 2010 and late 2013. Two organizational units of the MoI are in charge of conducting investigations against border police members: the Criminal Police Directorate and the Internal Affairs Sector. The number of criminal complaints which SUKP filed against border police members dropped in the period between 2010 and late 2013. The Criminal Police Directorate (UKP) has since 2010 filed 11 criminal complaints against border police members and this number has been increasing each year (Graph 6). Currently, the UKP is more efficient in the investigation of corruption in the border police. The biggest difference was observed in 2013, when SUKP managed to file just one criminal complaint, while the UKP filed a total of 24, which also represents the largest number of their complaints since 2010. There are two dilemmas in view of the fact that UKP has stepped up its work on the resolution of crimes committed by border police members. First of all, border police officers' acts of corruption are more complex, because the UKP is requested to investigate them and its capacity is much stronger than that of the SUKP. Also, the operational capacity of the SUKP for investigating cases of corruption that involve border police officers is weaker than that of the UKP in view of its insufficient financial, material and human resources.

⁵⁰ Finding obtained during the presentation of a representative of the Border Police Directorate, Regional Conference on the Prevention and Investigation of Border Corruption, February 27, 2014, Belgrade.

⁵¹ Border Police Directorate response to the BCBP questionnaire, January 2014.

Graph 6: Criminal complaints against border police officers between 2010 and late 2013



CONCLUSION

More than 80 criminal complaints against corrupt border police officers filed in the past four years indicate that a problem does exist. The situation becomes additionally complicated as a result of an increase of transit of irregular migrants through Serbia every year. Their goal is to reach EU member-states. There also exists a strong corruption pressure on the border crossings with EU member-states as a result of a greater intensity of commodity and road transport. Also, the human and material resources of the Border Police Directorate are modest and the opportunities of corruption faced by border police officers are numerous – from „just” letting passenger vehicles go during the summer season, through the provision of information to organized crime groups on the place and time of border controls, to the involvement in different criminal activities, such as the smuggling of cigarettes. All this calls for a more serious approach to the fight against corruption in the border police: more frequent rotation of duty, electronic surveillance of employees, better security checks of new border police officers, constant surveillance and control of work, clearer analysis of risk of corruption and strengthening of preventive mechanisms of the fight against corruption.

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Author: Saša Đorđević

Publisher: Belgrade Centre for Security Policy

Editor: Predrag Petrović

Reviewers: Siniša Volarević, Katarina Đokić

Translation: Vera Gojković

Design and layout: Saša Đorđević

April 2014