

POLICE ORGANIZATION IN THE NETHERLANDS¹

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Introduction

The police, like any other state institution, changes over time in accordance with social changes. With the development of society, the organization of the police develops, which must go in accordance with the changes in laws, social and interpersonal relations. Of course, the position of the police within the state organization differs from state to state and is usually aligned with social order. Each country reforms its police system according to the changing circumstances within their societies. Nevertheless, certain reforms of the police organization are taking place within almost all countries, because these are changes that are happening on a wider scale. It is about the transformation of interpersonal relations and values that are a consequence of the passage of time and the challenges faced by modern states.

Nowadays, the first phase of police reform requires new regulations, management and independent analysis of functioning. The second phase of the reform is focused on the functioning of the police, not on its organization. The functioning of the police goes beyond the fight against crime and implies a wider action, which is what citizens expect from the police. The question arises as to how the police and its functioning should adapt to the challenges imposed by modern times. Those challenges that affect the functioning of the police concern the high expectations of citizens, budget cuts and new forms of criminal activities. In modern democratic states, there is a connection between the police and the government. In the past, the police made decisions independently or acted on the orders of the central authorities. Parliament is an institution that has created a new level of governance that oversees the police in the exercise of their powers. A democratic system of governance directly influences central authorities to allow local police more autonomy in action. Determining the way to finance the police is not only an economic issue, but it also determines the area of police work, along with the definition of jurisdiction in the law. If we take a look at the near future, it can be anticipated that the police will be subject to more economic pressure in terms of reducing the budget. However, at the moment, the police are not ready for such financial cuts, considering the level and forms of crime (Greenhalgh & Gibbs, 2014: 5-9).

The modern transformation of the organization and the role of the police is the result, as can be seen, of the advancement in the legislation of modern states that is aligned with the new challenges of the fight against crime. Also, the need for wider autonomy of lower levels of government is reflected in the police organization through demands for wider powers of local police that are in line with local problems. Given the fact that the police do not generate profit in their work, efforts are being made to ensure that the organization and operation of the police does not require large investments and does not burden the state budget beyond the established limits. Today, the economic aspects of modern police organization may be the biggest problem, because criminal activities are constantly transforming and spreading to new social areas. A special problem are new security threats that may have an inter-

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national character, among which terrorism has a primary place. This means that the police are faced with greater efforts, while on the other hand they insist on limiting costs and investments (Ристовић, 2015: 101-104).

When looking at the change in the role of the police in previous decades, it can be said that the police's competences have been supplemented by tasks that citizens expect from them. Of course, the most important role remained the fight against crime. Identifying the perpetrators and arresting them is part of the conventional fight against crime. Public order and peace are other roles of the police, which includes the prevention of civil unrest. This includes regular maintenance of public order and peace, which has always been part of police work. The third role is the protection of human lives and the protection of citizens. It should be emphasized that the transformation in the exercise of the responsibilities of the modern police is a response due to the threats that it carries with it, for example, terrorism. This phenomenon threatens many national and international interests of the state, which requires the use of significant police capacities. That is why one of the most important areas of police activity is the fight against terrorism. The balance of police action has shifted towards concrete response after the incident has occurred, instead of preventive action. In the post-war period, one of the most important roles of the police was solving everyday problems of citizens that were mostly related to security, but which were not the result of criminal acts. Understanding this role of the police, which represents social control, is important to understand today's public demands regarding the functioning of the police. The police are not the only entity that operates in the field of social control, but it is one of the most important, because it operates in different social milieus and has the apparatus of force at its disposal. In certain countries, such as the Great Britain, the activities that burdened the police the most, regardless of the constant growth of police officers, were most pronounced in the areas of social protection and public order. As a result, protection activities became a big burden for police officers, which expanded their competences beyond the areas that were established as their basic ones. For example, the protection of citizens has been extended to the area of the Internet. Offensive and potentially violent behaviour on the Internet falls within the area in which the police respond in the event of a report. Today, the police are regularly present at sports events, but it seems that the police officers are not present to prevent possible fan riots, but to manage the event in terms of security. The constant expansion of police responsibilities in the 21st century to new areas is a consequence of the pressure on previous generations of police officers who were not sufficiently trained and prepared for a significant expansion of their activities (Greenhalgh & Gibbs, 2014: 30-34).

The Development of the Modern Form of Police in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, during the second half of the 20th century, there was an intense debate regarding the police system. The most important topic of debate was about the parameters within the system. Other important topics were related to the size and strength of the police, as well as the division between state and municipal police. The purpose of the debate was to increase the efficiency of the police, which did not happen in that period due to conflicting interests, among which the interests of local authorities were expressed. The most important reasons for the reform during the 1990s were riots and an increase in crime. Another reason was the transformation of crime, which meant the emergence of organized criminal groups that operated on an international level. Additional factors that influenced the transformation of the police were: greater flow of information, development of communication technologies, development of people's mobility, reduction of social connection, as well as the increasingly pronounced international character of many phenomena. Consideration of the possibility of reform was focused on the problems caused by the insufficiency of the police system,



poor coordination, inefficiency and the inability of this system to fight organized and international crime. That is why the efforts were focused on the development of a larger and better police administration. The main goals of the reform in this period were to reduce the distance between citizens and the police, which included strengthening the care of the police towards citizens and stable democratic control. In the last years of the 20th century, the debate was focused, on the one hand, on the quality of organization and the efficiency of police tasks, and on the other hand, on management and democratic control. Personal relationships had a lot of influence on the functioning of the police, because when they were disturbed, the disturbance in the work of the police was also noticeable. This refers primarily to the influence of personal and informal relations between the administration, the judiciary and the police. That is why the debate on police reform got a new direction, which was about centralization or decentralization. Various arguments were presented for one or another principle of police organization, but there were no concrete results in that period (Cachet & Marks, 2009: 97-99).

The first significant changes to the police system in the Netherlands took place in 1993. The system in which there were national and local police forces was reformed into a system in which, in addition to the national police force, there are 25 regional police forces. The opportunity for this major change appeared in 1989, when the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations were specially formed in the Netherlands. The new regional police system was formed on the basis of a compromise between different political entities, the two aforementioned ministries, the mayor and certain judicial bodies. The management of each police region is performed by the police commissioner, the chief public prosecutor and the mayor of the largest city in the region. Operational affairs in the region are the responsibility of the police commissioner, while the administration of the regional police forces is the responsibility of the mayor of the largest city in the region. Based on these competencies of police commissioners and mayors in the management and functioning of the regional police, these two officers have become the most important actors in the new regional police system. The new system was set up and organized so that the principle of decentralization is one of the basic principles in the functioning of the police. During the 1980s and 1990s, concern about the increase in crime gradually grew. An important moment was in 1984 when the Petty Crime Committee informed the Dutch public about the country's crime rate war. Research in that period showed that the citizens of the Netherlands wanted the police to focus more on major crimes. In addition, one of the attitudes in that period was that the police were burdened with tasks that essentially did not fall under their jurisdiction. Therefore, it was necessary for the police to focus on their core tasks related to responding to criminal acts, maintaining public order and protecting the rule of law (Schaap, 2018: 229-232).

The regional police system was based on the Law on Police from 1993. With that legal act, 148 municipal police and 17 national police districts were merged into 25 regional police forces with one support unit at the national level. Regional police forces varied in size, which depended on the region's population, housing density and crime rate. The tasks of the police officers were: effective enforcement of the law and providing assistance to citizens who need this assistance. The stated basic tasks include the maintenance of public order, the implementation of the legal order and the performance of work for judicial authorities. Most of the regional police forces are further divided according to the territorial and functional principle, i.e., into several districts and departments. Departments were specialized in a particular type of police work that was carried out using teams, such as arrest, infiltration and criminal investigation support teams. Some of these departments also functioned at the interregional level. This regional system of police organization was based on the form of decentralization that exists in the Netherlands. Relatedly, within the Dutch decentralized political system the need for police protection went hand in hand with the need for protection from the police. More specifically, in the Netherlands there has always been opposition to the establishment of a strong police organization with strong



powers led by the central authorities. In that period, responsibilities regarding the police were divided between the central and local levels. At the central level, the most important role was played by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Minister of Justice and Security, while at the local level, the most important were the mayors, whose competence included the maintenance of public order. In accordance with the aforementioned legal act, the Minister of the Interior was responsible for allocating the police budget, and the management of the police force was performed at the central level. Operational management of regional police forces was mainly directed at the regional level, and these forces independently determined the ways in which they performed their duties. The mayor of the largest city in the region also had the role of manager of the regional police, which meant that he had a major role in its management and administration. The main task of the head of the regional police was day-to-day management of the police. The mayor, the chief of police and the public prosecutor were the main subjects who, through consultation, decided on the implementation of the tasks of the regional police. The Manager of the National Police Services Agency (Korps landelijke politiediensten – KLPD) and 25 regional police managers made up the Board of Regional Police Force Managers. This Committee did not have a formal status, but nevertheless met every six weeks and made decisions that had an impact on the functioning of the police. Regional police chiefs and the head of the KLPD participated in the Council of Police Chiefs, but this body also had only a formal status. The KLPD has one important role, which is to advise the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations on police policy. The aforementioned Council provides support to KLPD in performing that advisory role (Cachet & Marks, 2009: 93-96).

A new transformation of the police took place in 2013 when the system with regional polices was replaced by unified Dutch police at the national level. This established a layered structure in which the central place was occupied by the management team at the national level, which manages policies and priorities in police work. The police system is divided into 10 regional units which are divided into 43 districts, and these district units into 168 basic teams that directly implement the use of force in case of need. This transformation of the police received political support and without any opposition the proposal for its implementation was adopted in 2012. One of the reasons for the re-transformation of the police was dissatisfaction with the previous regional system, and insufficient efficiency, ineffectiveness and weak cooperation between the regional police were highlighted as the main problems. However, in the background of the transformation of the police there were political reasons and the interests of various subjects. In the first place, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations had the greatest influence. However, there was a merger of the police department of the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations with the Ministry of Justice and Security. Thus, the advocates of the centralization of the police system, primarily from the previous Ministry of Justice and Security, gained strength and influence. The establishment of the national police system was primarily the result of a political process. In shaping the new police system, many ideas of interested actors who dealt with police issues were adopted, which included representatives of political parties, which satisfied different interests. The key strategic interest in the formation of the national police was to increase thereby the trust of citizens and strengthen the legitimacy of the police. The stated goals were to be achieved through: strengthening cooperation with local authorities, having greater authority among citizens, better provision of services to citizens and better attitudes towards victims of criminal acts. The strategy of strengthening the trust of Dutch citizens in their police is aimed at standardizing the services provided by the police. The idea behind this strategy is that the police should establish a relationship with citizens in the same way that large companies relate to their customers. This would present the police as a reliable entity that citizens can rely on. It should be noted that the primary goal of the transformation of the Dutch Police in 2013 was not to strengthen citizens' trust in the police, but had several different goals. The basis for strengthening citizens' trust was the or-



ganization of the Dutch Police as a service-based system. This would establish a relatively centralized institution that is distant from citizens, but with the insistence that distance is not a negative characteristic and does not represent a problematic concept. However, the distance from the citizens was not allowed to be complete, so the existence of one so-called neighbourhood policeman per 5000 citizens was foreseen. The problem in this way of Dutch police organising was the closing of police stations or their replacement by “support points” which were actually much smaller police stations. However, the problem with the “support points” was that they were not open to the public. The closing of stations and their replacement was one of the consequences of budget restrictions, although the idea was to direct police officers to a more efficient way of working. The logic behind this approach, based on the functioning of economic entities, was that more efficient functioning leads to better contact with customers, that is, with citizens. The emphasis was on cheaper and more flexible functioning, which was to be achieved by the technical modernization of the police in accordance with modern trends. In other words, the police and police officers should start using social networks, tablets and smartphones. The problem was that not everyone uses social networks, and especially not senior citizens, which limited the number of citizens who can immediately and without difficulty get in touch with the police. Reporting a criminal act in face-to-face contact between citizens and police officers is the most reliable way, which has now become a secondary way, so a dilemma has arisen regarding the efficiency of the new system. After this transformation of the police system, there was a decrease in the awareness of police officers about local problems, and their direct involvement in solving those problems also decreased (Schaap, 2018: 234-241).

Contemporary Organization and Functioning of the Police in the Netherlands

At the moment, the police force in the Netherlands has 65,000 people. Of that number, 51,000 are police officers, while the other 14,000 are employees who perform tasks important for smooth functioning of the police service (About the Netherlands police, <https://www.politie.nl/en/information/about-the-netherlands-police.html>). The Dutch police is made up of a Central Unit, 10 regional units and a Police Service Centre. The Police Command has five members and a Support Division, called the Commissioner’s Staff. The head of the police in the Netherlands is the Commissioner, and the Minister of Justice and Security is responsible for the functioning of the police in accordance with the regulations. On the other hand, the Security and Justice Inspectorate is competent to ensure that the performance of police work is performed in an adequate manner. The central unit has its original duties, and along with them it provides support in the work of the regional units. The original duties of the Central Unit include: (1) command of major operations, (2) fight against organized crime of various types, (3) support in the fight against other forms of crime, (4) forensic analysis, (5) deployment of mounted police and sniffer dogs, (6) securing and protecting members of the Royal Household, (7) securing and protecting important persons, (8) highway, water, air and rail policing, and (9) combating violence and terrorism. The last duty falls under the jurisdiction of the Department for Special Interventions. As for the regional units, each of them is headed by a Chief Constable. Each regional unit is divided into districts, and each of the districts is divided into Frontline Teams. The duties of these teams include the provision of basic police services at the municipal level, and the goal of their work is to ensure the safety of everyday life in the city and region. Their daily tasks include patrolling, responding to calls for help, advising citizens, solving traffic issues, investigating, issuing official reports and sharing information. Management of finances, human resources, communications and information and communication technologies falls under the jurisdiction of KLPD (Organisation of the Dutch police, <https://www.government.nl/topics/police/organisation-of-the-dutch-police>).



Each police region decides on its own management. The regional police have broad powers in the implementation of their competences, as well as in defining priorities in their work. For example, the police region independently decides on its funding, organization, officers, facilities it uses, and the like. The mayor of the largest municipality in the region performs the role of police manager and is in constant contact with the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The administrative centre of the regional police is also located in the largest municipality in the region, which is otherwise called the central police station. The most important decisions regarding the work of the regional police are made by the executive power of the region, which consists of all mayors of municipalities and the chief public prosecutor. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is responsible for managing 10 police regions. In the Netherlands, it is the practice that no one has exclusive authority over the police and that authority must be shared between two ministers. In the current case, on the one side there are the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Minister of Justice and Security, while on the other side there are the municipal and regional authorities (Policing in the Netherlands, 2004: 10-11).

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations provides an annual budget for the police which is shared between the regional police, the KLPD and the Police Training and Knowledge Centre. This budget is intended for the financing of officers and equipment and is distributed among the police forces proportionally. Various factors affect the amount of funding allocated to a regional police force, one of the most important being the size and composition of the population in the region. The amount of funds allocated to the regional police is divided into general purpose funds and special purpose funds. The ways and conditions of using general-purpose funds are not defined, so each regional police can use these funds according to their needs. The only thing that is respected are the guidelines for using the police budget, which are established at the central level. On the other hand, special purpose funds must be used for the realization of the tasks for which they were allocated. Such funds are allocated, for example, to finance special teams investigating smuggling or drug trafficking (Policing in the Netherlands, 2004: 13).

Police units themselves decide on their management at the operational level, while the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is responsible for managing the police in a general sense. The policy of police management is jointly decided by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Minister of Justice and Security. More specifically, it decides on the goals that the police should achieve in their actions, such as law enforcement, preservation of public order, wider surveillance and greater police efficiency. The number of police officers is not the same in every region and varies from region to region. The size of the police force in a region depends on the number of people living there. Regardless of whether it is urban or rural region, the number of police officers is determined according to the number of inhabitants. Police units carry out operational tasks in the local communities themselves, i.e., as close as possible to the citizens. The majority of police officers work within basic police units that directly fulfil their tasks. An important part of police work is the prevention of criminal acts. That is why police officers are in regular contact with institutions, citizens' associations, business entities and other interested parties. Basic police units' function and perform their duties from one or more police stations. Regular duties of basic police units include: (1) patrolling, (2) providing emergency police assistance, (3) receiving reports of violations, (4) maintaining contact with institutions, civic associations and business entities, (5) mediating disputes, (6) conducting investigations, (7) preventing criminal acts, (8) regulating traffic, (9) enforcing laws on environmental protection and (10) supervising the implementation of certain legal acts important to local communities. For the maintenance of public order, mobile units have a very important place, that is, units that are engaged in the event of unrest. Each region has at least one such unit that is ready to engage at any time. There are also units that have been formed and trained to deal with ship-related incidents. Any police officer



can be transferred to a mobile unit, but in that case, he or she must undergo adequate training for engagement in such units (Policing in the Netherlands, 2004: 13-15).

Each of the regions has units specialized in carrying out certain police duties. Arrest teams carry out arrests of suspected persons who are armed and dangerous to citizens. In addition, these teams work closely with investigation teams in certain cases. Infiltration teams provide assistance in criminal investigations. Monitoring teams also assist with criminal investigations, and most regions have their own monitoring team. Special support units are engaged in cases of kidnapping and terrorist acts. Support teams in the investigation of crimes have a special weight due to their nature and frequency. These teams are not permanently formed, but are assembled on a case-by-case basis. They are composed of police officers from the regional police. Each regional police force has specially trained detectives who deal with crimes related to sexual offenses. These are acts such as prostitution, child prostitution, pornography and child pornography. Traffic violations that are most often the subject of the regional police are speeding, running a red light, driving under the influence of alcohol, not wearing a seat belt and not wearing a helmet. In this area, the regional police analyse problems and set goals for reducing traffic violations. The operation of the regional police in the field of environmental protection, that is, in the enforcement of laws concerning environmental protection, takes place on three levels. The first level are minor offenses that can be handled by any police officer. The second level are offenses that are at an intermediate level in terms of seriousness. These violations can be independently prosecuted by investigators dealing with environmental protection in the region where the violation occurred. Serious violations in the field of environmental protection are the third and highest level of activity of the regional police. These offenses are dealt with by multidisciplinary police teams of the region, together with competent services or representatives of ministries. The action of the police in environmental protection is not the same in every region, because it depends on local conditions that differ between regions (Policing in the Netherlands, 2004: 16-17).

KLPD has several basic competencies. These responsibilities are: overseeing the most important state infrastructure such as highways, railways and waterways, conducting criminal investigations at the national level, providing expert support to regional police forces and securing the Royal Household. It should be noted that the competences of the KLPD exceed the powers of the regional police. That is why the KLPD has the role of coordinator among regional police forces in the activities of maintaining public order and in conducting criminal investigations (Das, Huberts & van Steden, 2007: 522). Pursuant to the responsibilities regarding public safety and the safety of the main infrastructure, KLPD implemented two initiatives. The first initiative strengthened the management of police affairs based on information and intelligence. It is about the development of a methodology that enables a clear description of criminal offenses in the field of traffic control, as well as their subsequent effective detection. The second implemented initiative was called Traffic Safety. As part of this initiative, topics related to the execution of criminal acts were addressed. Those topics were: (1) connecting sources of information, (2) determining the patterns of execution of criminal acts, (3) establishing intelligence software that should, on the basis of data, determine indicators of the execution of criminal acts, and (4) establishing an organizational structure for the use of information and experts. The purpose of implementing the two mentioned initiatives was that, in addition to other roles, KLPD would become a centre for the dissemination of information and knowledge that can be applied in practice (Schakel, 2013: 34). KLPD has 11 departments in its composition, namely: Traffic Police, Railway Police, Water Police, Aviation Police, Mounted Police and Police Dogs Service, Operational Support and Coordination Service, Royal and Diplomatic Protection Service, Logistics Service, National Criminal Intelligence Service, International Network Service and Specialist Investigation Applications Service.



Safety Regions in the Netherlands – Position of the Police

The Netherlands is organized as a constitutional parliamentary monarchy. The highest representative body is the Parliament, which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Citizens' representatives sit in the House of Representatives, while the Senate is made up of provincial representatives. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands exercises executive power. The composition of the Government depends on the election for the House of Representatives. Decentralization was implemented in the Netherlands, and the country's territory was administratively divided into municipalities and regions. According to the structure, local self-government can be divided into one-level, two-level and three-level. Two-level local self-government implies that in addition to the municipality, there is another higher level of local self-government that includes a larger territory and broader powers (Јазић, 2014: 79-80). This is exactly the kind of system of local self-government that exists in the Netherlands. The responsibilities of the municipality and the region are clearly determined and defined by special laws, which guarantees their autonomy. Also, a separate law clearly establishes the division of competences between the central government and lower levels of government, i.e., municipal and regional authorities.

The representative body of the municipality and its most important body is the local council. This body has a leading role in the territory of the municipality. It is in his competence to make the most important decisions related to the municipality, and he can also make by-laws. The mayor presides over the local council. The number of councillors of the local council depends on the number of inhabitants living in the territory of the municipality, so that number differs from municipality to municipality. The executive body of the municipality is the board of mayors and councillors. The competence of this body is the preparation and implementation of decisions of the local council. In addition, this board implements the policies of the central authorities that relate to the municipal level of government. Members of the board of mayors and councillors are elected from the local council, and their number varies from municipality to municipality. The chairman of the board of mayors and aldermen is, as in the case of the local council, the mayor. He is appointed by the Government, and on the proposal of the local council. Local authorities are responsible for many areas, one of which is disaster management. One of the powers of the local council is the formation of committees for the purpose of implementing their decisions, but also for the purpose of consultation with the executive authorities of the municipality. Executive municipal authorities may also establish committees.

The territory of the Netherlands is divided administratively into regions. The authorities of the region are the regional council, the executive board and the King's/Queen's Commissioner. The number of representatives in the regional council depends on the number of inhabitants living in that region. The legislative bodies in the regions are the regional councils, and their competence includes the adoption of by-laws. Regional councils are presided over by the King's or Queen's Commissioner. The executive body of the region is the executive board. His competence includes the preparation and implementation of regional council decisions. In addition, the executive board implements the policies of the central authorities at the regional level. In addition to the King's/Queen's Commissioner, the Executive Board has from three to nine members. They are appointed by the regional council. The King's or the Queen's Commissioner presides over the executive board, and is appointed by the government on the proposal of the regional council. Regional representative and executive bodies, as well as in the case of municipalities, can establish committees according to their needs (Јазић, 2016: 100-103).

Regionalization is most often understood as the formation of a new level of government within the territorial organization of a country. This process includes the formation of new institutions with adequate powers and obligations. Regions are most often divided into administrative-statistical and



political. In the first case, the central government conducts policy or collects data through these regions. In the second case, regions have democratically elected and clearly defined authorities, and may represent a local self-government unit or a federal unit (Jazvić, 2014: 155-156). In the following text, it will be seen that the safety regions in the Netherlands do not belong to one or the other group, but represent a completely new form of grouping municipalities and forming a territorial organization at a higher level.

According to the first idea, the safety regions in the Netherlands were supposed to be established during 2009, but it happened one year later. More specifically, these regions were established on February 11, 2010 with the adoption of the Safety Regions Act. In the meantime, the aforementioned Law was amended, so its revision was definitively completed on January 1, 2013.

Fire service, disaster and crisis management and medical assistance fall under the jurisdiction of municipal executive bodies. Tasks and powers related to the aforementioned services of the municipality are transferred to the safety regions. The mayor remains in charge of the fire service and retains the authority to issue orders if there is a danger. That is why the mayor can, regardless of the establishment of a safety region, issue orders to organizations that are not under his authority under regular circumstances, but participate in an emergency situation.

Joint regulations on the establishment of a public body designated as a safety region are drawn up by the executive bodies of the municipalities located in the territory of that region. These regulations are the legal basis for the functioning of each safety region. Thus, each of the municipalities located on the territory of the safety region assumes its share of responsibility for the administration, organization and management of that region. It is the duty of every safety region to have a prepared professional organization that can effectively manage the crisis in the event of an emergency. Given the association of adequate municipal services in the safety region, better conditions are created for an effective response to an emergency situation, as well as for its elimination. This is especially pronounced in the case of emergency situations that have a large scale. Accordingly, the competent administrative authority of the safety region shall adopt a coherent policy for all emergency services.

The most important body of each safety region is the governing board. This body is composed of the mayors of all municipalities participating in the safety region, and decisions are made by majority vote. One of the mayors is elected to the position of chairman of the management board of the safety region. The Steering Committee of the Safety Region coordinates its activities with many participating countries. Therefore, in certain cases, partner organizations and subjects are invited to participate in the meetings of the management board. The tasks of the Safety Region Steering Committee relate to fire service, medical assistance, firefighting and emergency preparedness, supply, acquisition and distribution of equipment, risk counselling and information provision. At least once every four years, the management board of the safety region adopts an activity plan, which is coordinated with the tasks of the safety region. In addition, the activity plan is determined based on the existing and possible risks on the territory of the safety region. During the making of this plan, the management board consults with the participating municipalities. Once a year, consultations on risks in the region are held between the board of directors and entities that can be engaged in emergency situations. In addition to the activity plan, the management board of the safety region adopts a crisis plan once every four years. This plan in each potential risk situation must contain a clear description of the organization, competencies, tasks, powers and responsibilities related to the management of an emergency situation or similar crisis. In this plan, the measures that will be taken by the municipalities are determined, and the facilities that the municipal authorities will provide are also determined. Within the crisis plan, one part is dedicated to agreements with other entities that will be involved in a potential emergency



situation. In the Netherlands there is also a Security Council made up of individuals who chair safety regions. The Council functions as a national platform for safety regions, but also as their consultative body (Јазић, 2019: 240-243).

In safety regions, police, firefighters, municipal authorities and emergency medical services conduct activities together in the event of an emergency. Services whose task is to act in emergency situations are established and organized at the regional level. These services work closely with municipal authorities in firefighting, disaster response, crisis management, emergency medical services (EMS) and law enforcement. In the area of crisis management and response to disasters, the police have certain tasks. Investigating offenses, regulating traffic and regulating the movement of people are included in the tasks performed by the police. Together with other emergency services, police officers prepare and practice emergency procedures (Policing in the Netherlands, 2009: 9). Each safety region has a control room from which representatives of emergency services such as fire, police and ambulance work together. Each of the control rooms has a unified call reception system for all emergency services. This ensures that every emergency situation is recorded, as well as that every emergency service has insight into it. This system is significant, because it automatically shows how many people should participate in reporting the situation, as well as what actions need to be taken further. In the Netherlands, there is a unified digital mobile communication system for all emergency services called C2000. This system brings together the fire service, EMS and police, which includes the KLPD as well as the Royal Military and Border Police. This system provides excellent call quality, complete coverage of the territory and high call capacity significantly contributes to the stability of communication between emergency services. C2000 represents a reliable and fast network, which is based on the Tetra system. The importance of the role of the police in the organization and functioning of safety regions can be seen in the fact that the Dutch Centre for Police Cooperation is responsible for the management and maintenance of the described communication systems (Policing in the Netherlands, 2009: 24).

Within the framework of crisis and disaster management, each emergency service has clearly defined tasks. The police are responsible for: maintaining public order, regulating traffic, identifying victims, conducting criminal investigations in order to find the cause of the emergency situation, and executing administrative measures (Legal Aspects of International Disaster Response in Dutch Emergencies and Crisis Situations, 2010: 22). In addition to the above duties, police tasks during an emergency include clearing the area, conducting evacuation, closing and securing the area, as well as giving instructions.

Conclusion

The organization of the police in the Netherlands has undergone significant changes over the past half a century. Competent institutions were looking for the best solution that would enable more efficient organization and work of the police. A good aspect of these transformations is the adaptation of the police organization to changes in society, as well as to new threats to the safety of citizens. The most important aspect is the adaptation of the functioning of the police to the needs of citizens, that is, the development of its organization in the direction of shaping the police as a service that should serve citizens. In the Netherlands, the authority over the police is divided between several state entities, which speaks of the democracy of the political system in this country. In terms of democracy, the participation of local government representatives in the functioning of the police and in making decisions about its management should also be emphasized. Local authorities, knowing the best needs of their citizens, can directly influence the work of the police in a way that will best suit the needs of the citizens. The participation of local authorities in their work is also important for the police, be-



cause they can easily gain insight into the daily needs of citizens and potential security threats that exist at the local level. Contact with local authorities, that is, citizens, brings another advantage for the police, which is the possibility of more effective preventive action, which strengthens security and eliminates potential dangers at the very start. The division of responsibilities over the police and the participation of local authorities in the functioning of the police also achieves effective control over the implementation of police responsibilities, which prevents or significantly complicates potential abuses. Consequently, citizens are protected from the appearance of arbitrariness and they exercise control over the police indirectly through democratically elected authorities. From the aspect of control, it is also important that the local authorities participate in the work of the police, because they are the closest to the citizens. It is a significant fact that unnecessary costs are avoided in the work of the police, and the money saved is directed to the training of police officers and the purchase of new equipment. This avoids spending funds on the existence of parts of the system that do not contribute to more efficient police work, but only burden the budget intended for the police. As we saw in the text, the police organization in the Netherlands is divided into regions, which brings with it certain advantages. For example, it enables the adaptation of police work to the needs that differ from region to region. The way of functioning and the number of police officers is adapted to each region, because a different number of citizens live in each region. In addition to the regional police, the existence and functioning of the KLPD has an important place. This ensures the functioning of the police in the Netherlands as a whole, because otherwise there would be a danger that each of the regional police forces would start functioning independently, without paying attention to the common interests of all citizens in the area of security. In addition, without a central police organization, it could happen that the jobs of the regional police forces overlap, which would reduce the efficiency of police work and increase unnecessary costs. By exercising jurisdiction in safety regions, the organization of the police in the Netherlands has demonstrated a willingness to act in situations that have a wider scope, as well as the ability to act effectively at a level that is higher than the local level. Since safety regions are not political regions, but rather regions established to respond to emergency situations, regional police forces in the Netherlands are prepared to act in situations involving activities that differ significantly from their regular activities. It is another indicator that after effective reforms, the police organization is well thought out and set up. It can be concluded that the organization of the police in the Netherlands has a modern character, because it has characteristics that are present in democratic societies. One of the examples is adaptation to the existing decentralization, which is a sign that it is a democratically founded institution.

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