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Psychological and Spiritual Service of the Police of the Czech Republic

Psychologická a duchovní služba Policie České republiky

Abstract

The paper deals with the psychological and spiritual service of the Police of the Czech Republic and other security forces. The introductory part is dedicated to the demands of police work, stress factors affecting the performance of the profession, and their consequences. The main part focuses on the possibilities of using the provided psychological services in the form of crisis helpline, crisis intervention, or peer support. The practical part includes a sociological survey and subsequent interpretation in the field of possibilities of using psychological support, support of the police chaplain, and information about the general awareness of their availability for both police officers and employees of the security forces.

Keywords: Police of the Czech Republic, psychological service, spiritual service, stress, toxic environment, peer support, crisis intervention, crisis helpline, psychological service, Christian Police Association, police chaplain, international comparison.

Abstrakt

Článek se zabývá psychologickou a duchovní službou u Policie České republiky a jiných bezpečnostních složek. Úvodní část je věnována náročnosti policejní práce, stresovým faktorům ovlivňujícím výkon profese a jejich následkům. Hlavní část je zaměřena na možnosti využití poskytovaných psychologických služeb formou linky pomoci v krizi, krizové intervence či kolegiální podpory. Praktická část zahrnuje sociologický průzkum a následnou interpretaci v oblasti možností využití psychologické podpory či podpory policejního kaplana a informace o obecném

povědomí jejich dostupnosti jak pro policisty, tak i pro zaměstnance bezpečnostních složek.

Klíčová slova: Policie České republiky, psychologická služba, duchovní služba, stres, toxické prostředí, kolegiální podpora, krizová intervence, linka pomoci v krizi, psychologická služba, Křesťanská policejní asociace, policejní kaplan, mezinárodní komparace.

With more and more demands being placed on the workforce, and also with the development of technology, situations arise where an individual has to manage the work of several people, where this irreplaceable work then interferes with their private life. In the working environment and working conditions typical for the police service, stressful stimuli are more frequently encountered; they are felt, handled, and reacted to differently by each individual, with responses to these stimuli dependent on the intensity of their effect. A life full of stress can put people under extraordinary strain. When we say stress, most of us think of unpleasant feelings, anxiety, fear, or panic. Simply put, we perceive stress negatively as something scary, but we know from experience that there are different kinds of stress.¹

Police work is specific not only in that it is oriented towards the needs of a person, acting towards another person, but it is also focused on addressing their needs and providing support and assistance. Thus, it is demanding on the psyche in that almost all features of risky professions are combined in its character, manner, content of duties, and demands on professional readiness, physical fitness, and especially on mental resilience. The above areas cannot be seen as unrelated. In order to exercise their profession, a police officer needs to have a developed knowledge of the legal norms that regulate their activities, i.e. the scope of their powers and duties, as well as knowledge of the norms in the field of criminal law, civil law, and a number of other legal fields, and they also need sufficient knowledge of the conditions to apply these norms.²

Stress in police officers can be defined as stress related to the exercise of their profession, which brings specific excessive pressure associated with emotional and physical strain, but can also arise from a less stressful situation, e.g. in a demanding situation in terms of communication, when dealing with a burdensome kind of complainant. Based on the above stress factors, these situations should also be categorised according to the frequency of stressful situations.

Police psychologists cite the following as specific situations in which stress usually arises in police officers:

- Use of a firearm against a person – so-called post-shooting trauma,
- Deployment of intervention units in unclear situations.

¹ Stress (= tension, pressure, strain) is a functional state of a living organism when exposed to extraordinary conditions (stressors). These are divided into physical, psychological, social, traumatic. These are the burdensome attributes in one's life that cause negative stress in the long run. Stress resistance is purely individual.

² Zákon č. 361/2003 Sb., o služebním poměru příslušníků bezpečnostních sborů, ve znění pozdějších předpisů, § 11a (posudek psychologa na osobnostní rozvoj policisty ve zkušební době dle čl. 17 a, PPP č. 231/2016).

- Negotiating with the perpetrator holding a hostage – so-called post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Situations threatening the life and health of the officers involved.
- Emergency situations involving contact with death (death of a child, death of a loved one, tragic circumstances of a case, traffic accidents, domestic violence).
- Keeping the file agenda.
- Inadequate remuneration and unsatisfactory workplace relations.³

Long-term underestimated stress, stereotype, lack of rest, etc. in conjunction with other risk factors can result in the development of the burnout syndrome.⁴

The reactions that follow in the organism during stressful situations do not differ in most people, they are similar and develop; in the initial stages, the body experiences alarm (distress) from negative experiences, followed by adaptation to a particular stressful situation (hypostress) and exhaustion, where a certain level of stress exceeds a person's tolerance level (hyperstress); the opposite is eustress, which is a pleasant or joyful burden.⁵

Sources of stress in many different forms are called stressors, which are burdensome attributes in a person's life that cause stress over a long period of time. We can further allocate these stressors in terms of the magnitude of the burden, either to mini-stressors⁶ or macro-stressors,⁷ however, they are cumulative in nature and can thus be a source and subsequent trigger of depression.⁸ We try to manage our daily stress in various ways, which include physical exercise, various relaxation techniques, meditation, etc. During stress, defence mechanisms are invoked,⁹ which enable the survival of the organism exposed to danger. Stress management strategies are called coping strategies.¹⁰ The more controlling abilities we have, there is a direct correlation to managing them and increasing our resilience, which protects us from the burnout syndrome. Strategies focused on emotions (displacement, projection, denial,

³ ŠVINGALOVÁ, Dana. *Stres a „vyhoření“ u profesionálů pracujících s lidmi*. 1. vydání. Liberec: Technická univerzita v Liberci, 2006. 82 pages. ISBN 80-7372-105-8.

⁴ HONZÁK, Radkin. *Jak žít a vyhnout se syndromu vyhoření*. 3. vydání. Praha: Nakladatelství Vyšehrad, 2018, pp. 81–102. ISBN 978-80-7601-004-8.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Factors that manifest themselves creepingly over a long period of time, but do not create fatal stress in the first place, are all the more insidious and dangerous from a longitudinal point of view in their final effect, such as continuous humiliation in the workplace or personal life, long-term absence of a sense of love and belonging or personal importance and significance.

⁷ They may have devastating impacts beyond the limits of carrying capacity. In conclusion, there are short-term and long-term stressors. The organism mobilises its defences to stress and an alarm reaction occurs, with resistance and eventually, with continued stress, a state of exhaustion and failure of the organism.

⁸ Manifested by states of utter despondency, weakness, dejection, with all the above negative emotional feelings.

⁹ ATKINSON, Rita L. *Psychologie*. Praha: Nakladatelství Portál, 2003. ISBN 80-7178-640-3.

¹⁰ Coping = Stress response + the way of coping with stress, whether by behaviour, reacting to a problem that has arisen, e.g. when elevated emotions arise and occur, they can be vented by exercise, relaxation, or in an ineffective way, when the stressful situation is avoided, suppressed, or ignored.

rationalisation, sublimation) do not alter the stressful situation itself, but rather modify the way we perceive these situations think about them.

Burnout arises as a result of long-term negative stress, and it is the basic platform for all other developmental stages of the burnout syndrome. The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life – including our personal, professional, and social life. Stress generally involves too much: too much pressure that demands too much of you physically and mentally. However, stressed people can imagine that if they are in control, they will feel better. Going to a job where we are under pressure for a long time and not feeling comfortable at all is likely to take more from us than it gives in the future. Such a work environment is definitely not relaxed, but a “toxic environment”, in which there is generally a pervasive sense of negativity, disrespect, unhealthy competition among co-workers, and aggression.¹¹

Toxic working environments are most often created by:

- Sabotaging, passive to aggressive boss or co-workers.
- Micromanagement (a management style in which a manager closely monitors and/or controls or comments on the work of subordinates or employees, generally has a negative connotation, mainly because it indicates a lack of freedom in the workplace) blaming, prejudice, ostracism (collective exclusion from the team), harassment, bullying.
- Discrimination, disrespect, jealousy.
- Poor working conditions, lack of growth opportunities, excessive workload, unpredictable schedule.
- Low financial evaluation.
- Unconstructive criticism, lack of respect.
- Microaggressions (indirect insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudices, insensitivity towards individuals, groups).
- Favouritism or unfair treatment.

Most people tend to look for the fault in themselves at such moments. It can also lead to a complete burnout or at the very least severely damaged self-esteem and the feeling that you are simply not worth anything. It is not always easy to recognise that the fault lies in the company's working environment and not in yourself. If the negativity stems from the behaviour of the management, but also from the way the company is set up, then there is probably not much we can do about it. However, when only one or two individuals are the source of everything negative, then it is possible to discuss it with a trusted supervisor, a psychologist, or accept help from colleagues.

The situation is changing and recently the number of police officers and civil servants with various psychological problems and disorders who seek professional care and support from psychologists (including police psychologists) has been increasing significantly. Being more resilient and stronger deserves some service and

¹¹ HONZÁK, Radkin and Klára MANDAUSOVÁ. *Hod' je za hlavu*. Praha: Nakladatelství Mladá fronta, 2024, p. 216. ISBN 978-80-2046-352-4.

good mental fitness is a tough task that we may not be able to handle alone at the moment.

“Very often they feel they are victims of public misunderstanding and disdain, of an overly bureaucratic system, and even of low pay – that is, they perceive their work, their commitment, as unappreciated. In addition, they often fall into an internal belief that their work cannot be fully effective because they have to obey the law, while criminals who should be prosecuted tend to be one step ahead and even seem to be protected by the legal system. This can have the unfortunate consequence of using illegitimate or unethical means to achieve a desired end. This act is then justified and rationalised by the necessity of such an intervention for the protection of society, even though it can never be objectively defensible.”¹²

“A traumatic event that is perceived as a crisis and breaks down the defence mechanisms of the personality is a very serious fact. Because, from an individual’s perspective, it is arbitrary, unexpected, sudden, and rationally incomprehensible, it shatters the fundamental illusions of life from which we unconsciously draw strength for a fulfilling life. The individual loses the illusion of omnipotence, when they think that they can do everything, that everything depends on them. But they also lose trust in others, when the illusion that the world is a generally fair place is shattered.”¹³

If the symptoms of severe mental shock do not disappear in the short term, within hours or days, and, on the contrary, the distressing thoughts and ideas persist or manifest themselves during the first three months following the trauma, sometimes even months or years later, or if the trauma is re-experienced (so-called flashbacks or reminiscence), a post-traumatic stress reaction may occur.¹⁴

The highest norm that establishes the entitlement of police officers and members of the security forces to psychological care is Act No. 361/2003 Coll., on the service relationship of members of the security forces. In the case of both civilian employees and police officers, psychological care is based on the context of employee care, which is one of the dominant parts of human resources management and an important evaluation criterion of quality management, by which the activities of the Police of the Czech Republic are evaluated within the European Union.

The obligation of confidentiality guarantees that the findings obtained in the course of psychological care cannot be used in the context of internal control, inspection investigations, for personnel measures, or in the context of a review of a police officer’s personal competence by the psychological department. If a police officer (employee) voluntarily seeks psychological or other psychological help on their

¹² NESVADBA, Petr. *Policejní etika*. Plzeň: Vydavatelství a nakladatelství Aleš Čeněk, 2009. ISBN 978-80-7380-195-3.

¹³ ČÍRTKOVÁ, Ludmila. *Forezní psychologie*. 3. upravené vydání. Plzeň: Nakladatelství Aleš Čeněk, 2013. ISBN 978-80-7380-461-9.

¹⁴ A disease classified according to ICD-10 as post-traumatic stress disorder, classified under the code F43. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that develops as a reaction to exposure to a traumatic event – an event typically evoking intense fear and a significant stress response at the time of present threat. Online. Available from: https://csu.gov.cz/mezinarodni_statisticka_klasifikace_nemoci_a_pridruzenych_zdravotnich_problemu_-mkn_10-. [cit. 2024-06-09].

own, there are no records or reports on the content of this care to be provided to supervisors, etc., unless upon a direct request by the officer themselves. Protecting the officer's interests and establishing and maintaining a confidential relationship are very important to the mental health care provider. Psychological care within the Police of the Czech Republic also guarantees knowledge of the police environment and the professional quality of the services provided.

There are many barriers that prevent people from using and obtaining psychological care. One of them is low awareness of what such care is, how it can help, or that it is needed at all, and where to look for it.

The system of psychological care within the Police of the Czech Republic can be used independently or in conjunction with other aid based on various needs; these are mutually provided types of activities with different levels and types of qualification of their providers.

Psychological care

Psychological care is a common part of complex multidisciplinary care. Police psychologists take part in the assessment of the professional competence of applicants for recruitment or for deploying to foreign missions. They are ready to offer professional help and support in dealing with crisis and emergency situations to members¹⁵ and employees of the Police of the Czech Republic who are acutely or in the long term faced with a challenging life, work, physical, family, or partnership situations that negatively affect their psychological or physical health, with the aim of clarifying the causes and obstacles related to personality change. Providers of psychological care (police psychologists, crisis interventionists from the ranks of police officers, employees of the Police of the Czech Republic, and clergymen) are bound¹⁶ by non-disclosure, discretion, and confidentiality.

Psychologists are available at the Psychological Services Departments of the Directorate for Human Resources Management of the Regional Police Directorate and the Police Presidium; also, psychologists serve in intervention units, special law enforcement units, and certain police departments with nationwide scope of activities.

Post-traumatic intervention care

The system of providing post-traumatic intervention assistance (known as as "PIP") to members of the Police of the Czech Republic was regulated by the Binding Instruction of the Police President (ZPPP) No. 129/2001 of 14 November 2001. In February 2009, ZPPP No. 21/2009,¹⁷ on PIP and the anonymous crisis helpline was adopted, with minor modifications to the issue. In particular, PIP was redefined as "care

¹⁵ Dle čl. 3 přílohy č. 1 k rozkazu ředitele Útvaru policejního vzdělávání a služební přípravy č. 3/2018, *kterým se vydává organizační řád Útvaru policejního vzdělávání a služební přípravy*, může psychologickou péči poskytovat také lektor odboru zabezpečení výuky Útvaru policejního vzdělávání a služební přípravy, za splnění podmínek dle odst.4) čl. 15 PPP č. 231/2016, *o psychologických službách*.

¹⁶ Čl. 1 Nařízení Ministerstva vnitra č. 62/2007, kterým se vydává statut psychologického pracoviště MV a etický kodex psychologa, čl. 5 a čl. 6 písm. h, i, j).

¹⁷ Změněn ZP PP č. 79/2010 a přílohou uvedené normy je také statut linky pomoci v krizi, změna ZPPP č. 10/2013, který mění ZPPP č. 21/2009 a č.79/2010.

provided to a client by a member of an intervention team (police officers or Mol employees) or a crisis intervention group (psychologists), which included immediate primary assistance, including the immediate use of means aimed at mitigating the effects of a traumatic event” and also included “aftercare, which means other necessary measures provided after immediate primary assistance or as needed and based on the assessment of the situation”.

The members of the PIP team were appointed by order of the director of the respective regional police directorate and the coordinators of each team were appointed by the director of the Directorate for Human Resources Management of the Police Presidium, as were the members of the PP PIP team.¹⁸ The methodological management of the PIP system was the responsibility of the chief psychologist of the Police of the Czech Republic, who proposed the coordinators of the individual teams. The guarantor of the ethical and professional quality of the system of post-traumatic intervention care was the psychological department of the Ministry of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the “Mol”) (Psychology Section of the Mol HR Department), which provided professional training for interventionists and participated with the chief psychologist of the Police of the Czech Republic in the conception and development of the PIP system.¹⁹ Police and Mol staff, police psychologists as well as clergymen were trained to provide and mediate the necessary immediate support and other professional care.²⁰ “The establishment of Post Trauma Intervention Care and the anonymous Crisis Helpline was a significant assistance to police officers who have experienced a traumatic event.”²¹ The Crisis Intervention (CI) system thus took over some of the tasks previously performed by the PIP system and trained members transitioned to the CI system.

1. Crisis helpline.
2. Crisis intervention system – crisis interventionist.
3. Peer support system.

Ad 1) Crisis helpline

The crisis helpline²² started its activities on the basis of the Order of the President of the Police (hereinafter referred to as the RPP) No. 129/2001 and the anonymous crisis helpline team was established by the RPP No. 162/2002. When it was founded, it was exclusively intended as the police expert service for officers, employees of the

¹⁸ VYMĚTAL, Štěpán; VOSKA Vladimír; TOMAN, Ondřej; JUNGWIRTOVÁ, Jana; and Karel URBAN. *Možnosti psychologické podpory v Policii ČR*. 1. vydání. Pro oddělení psychologie odboru personálního MV ČR vydává THEMIS. Praha: Nakladatelství Tiskárny MV, 2010. ISBN 978-80-7312-065-8.

¹⁹ VYMĚTAL, Štěpán; VOSKA Vladimír; TOMAN, Ondřej; JUNGWIRTOVÁ, Jana; and Karel URBAN. *Možnosti psychologické podpory v Policii ČR*. 1. vydání. Pro oddělení psychologie odboru personálního MV ČR vydává THEMIS.. Praha: Nakladatelství Tiskárny MV, 2010. ISBN 978-80-7312-065-8.

²⁰ Responsibility for the design of the PIP system and training of interventionists: PhDr. VYMĚTAL Štěpán, chief psychologist of the psychological section of Mol.

²¹ KOZÁK, Jaroslav. Posttraumatická intervenční péče v policii. In: *Východiska a perspektivy duchovní služby u policie*. 1. vydání. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2012. ISBN 978-80-7394-391-2.

²² Příloha č. 12 k PPP č. 231/2016, o psychologických službách.

Police of the Czech Republic and the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the MoI). The helpline could also be used by the wider public, especially in emergency situations, namely those who were in difficult life situations, acute or chronic psychological distress that could be related to service or work, privacy or interpersonal relationships, or to request help and information for psychological support as a result of psychologically demanding situations.

On the basis of an agreement concluded on 6 December 2013 between the Police of the Czech Republic, the Fire and Rescue Corps of the Czech Republic, the Prison Service of the Czech Republic, the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, and the Inspectorate General of Security Forces of the Czech Republic on the use of the anonymous crisis helpline, it could be used by employees of the above-mentioned organisations and their family members. By amending PPP No. 231/2016, on psychological services, the crisis helpline is applicable on the basis of the above agreement and the implementation agreement between the Army of the Czech Republic and the Police of the Czech Republic as of 22 August 2017, concerning education, training, deployment, and performance of tasks of the Army of the Czech Republic.

The helpline was built on the principle of anonymity, where the caller does not have to prove their identity, nor does the helpline worker, calls are not recorded, the caller's number is not displayed, which is also the reason why it is not possible to call back. The line is staffed by specially trained staff of the crisis intervention group²³ of the department of the Chief Psychologist, who are also able to provide intervention or counselling via Skype or e-mail or provide contacts to specialists (psychological, legal, and social counselling).

Ad 2) Crisis intervention system – crisis interventionist

The primary goal of crisis intervention (hereinafter referred to as CI) is to improve the approach of the Police of the Czech Republic to victims of crime and thus to reduce the risk of their secondary victimisation and to prevent post-traumatic conditions, or to mediate subsequent assistance provided by external specialists. In addition, in order to support victims of serious crime and emergencies, the Police of the Czech Republic began to operate a special service in mid-2010 – a system of psychological assistance to victims (ZPPP No. 79/2010, amended by No. 10/2013). This service has been provided by the Crisis Intervention Group around the clock by the department of the Chief Psychologist and is established at the regional police headquarters.

Crisis intervention is newly defined in PPP No. 231/2016, on psychological services, as follows: *short-term specialised assistance provided to reduce the adverse psychological consequences caused by a traumatic event and restore psychological balance, is provided, for example, in the form of psychological first aid, crisis intervention interview, or mediation of contacts to obtain further professional help.*²⁴

²³ ZPPP č. 227/2008, *k zajištění akceschopnosti*.

²⁴ PPP č. 231/2016 čl. 26, odst. 1, předání osobních údajů se souhlasem příjemce KI mimorezortní organizaci, např. Dohoda mezi PČR a Bílým kruhem bezpečí z roku 2013, dodržení čl. 4 odst. 11, nařízení Evropského parlamentu a Rady (EU) 2016/679, o předávání osobních údajů, dále RPP č. 111/2013, k plnění úkolů v souvislosti s poskytováním pomoci obětem trestných činů a osobám zvláště traumatizovaným trestnými činy.

The target group of the crisis intervention can be basically anyone, i.e. including a police officer and a police employee experiencing a traumatic event,²⁵ a victim of a crime during an emergency,²⁶ but also a relative of a missing person²⁷ or a person who has found themselves in an unexpected and difficult life situation; these people are often in an extreme psychological condition and need support. Currently, it could be said that there is also a growing interest in psychological services on the part of police officers and supervisors. The coordinator is a crisis interventionist appointed by the Director of the Regional Police Directorate. The professional development of crisis interventionists is the responsibility of the trainer-psychologist, who ensures the professional level of training, courses, exercises, and continuing education of CIs who are assigned under their competence. The trainer-psychologist enables meetings with colleagues within the Anti-Conflict Teams (hereinafter referred to as “ACP”), the possibility of internships at executive departments, so as not to lose contact with the police reality, and when necessary, they also cooperate with the interventionists of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic or provide opportunities for additional psychological and psychological support,²⁸ social, legal, and non-departmental professional assistance. Psychological assistance can be used in various areas of the service to support police activities, e.g. when communicating with members of the public or in the context of pre-trial proceedings under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Ad 3) Peer support activities

Instruction No. 231/2016 of the President of the Police on psychological services establishes a system of peer support.²⁹ In the Czech Republic, the peer support (hereinafter referred to as “PS”) is a continuation of the Post-Traumatic Intervention Assistance (Posttraumatická intervenční péče, PIP) system and its establishment is aimed at maintaining and extending the principle of selfless, voluntary, and mutual psychological support among employees / police officers.

This major change was mainly justified by the fact that the PIC system was mainly focused on managing traumatic experiences, whereas police officers mainly deal with problems in the form of prolonged or accumulated stress rather than acute trauma. This is one of the specific kinds of psychological support that is not exclusively provided by a psychologist, a specialist, but can also be provided by fellow police officers and staff. They are professionally trained police officers or police employees. Their work consists mainly in offering to talk, sharing feelings and problems, and last but not least, offering help or providing information (e.g. on the appropriate course of action), including arranging professional psychological help.

People use many different words to describe peer support, such as self-help group, support group, mentoring, or peer and family support. It is in these professionally demanding and challenging situations that they are there because no situation is trivial, it deserves attention and there is no reason to wait for the problem

²⁵ Zákon č. 45/2013 Sb., *o obětech trestných činů*, ve znění pozdějších předpisů, § 2 odst. 5.

²⁶ E.g. § 140,141,145,149 a173 zákona č. 40/20009 Sb., trestního zákoníku.

²⁷ PPP č. 235/2020, *o pátrání*, čl. 2 písm. l (pohřešovaná osoba) a písm. n (dítě v ohrožení).

²⁸ PPP č. 231/2016 čl. 15 odst.1 písm. d), (supervize zaměřená na osobní a profesní růst, zvládání stresu a prevence syndromu vyhoření mimo jiné).

²⁹ PPP č. 231/2016, o psychologických službách (dále jen „PPP č. 231/2016“). Příloha č. 11 PPP č. 231/2016 byla zrušena jeho novelizací ze dne 6. ledna 2020.

to escalate. Some people may find it difficult to decide whether to try peer support or what type of support to try.

At present, the PS system is established in most regional police directorates of the Czech Republic, at the Police Education and Service Training Unit, and at the basic units of the Police of the Czech Republic; the aim is to fully develop the system in all regional police directorates and, eventually, in police units with nationwide coverage.³⁰ Each regional directorate has its own PS coordinator, who is a psychologist or a peer support provider appointed by the director of the regional police directorate and provides psychological care to peer support providers in the form of supervision.³¹

The aim is to promote trust in anonymity and to adhere to the code of conduct as a formal codification and requirement of confidentiality³² for providers for police officers who use the services. Through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, they provide help in engaging in the recovery process, staying involved, and reducing the likelihood of relapse.

"It is not always about getting or giving advice. It is also about having a safe space where we can get things off our chest, and sometimes laugh about it all!"

Despite this, there are still many barriers (fear of losing job, distrust of peer support, downplaying its meaning, the myth of the indomitable police officer) that probably still need time to be largely removed and overcome.

The police profession carries a profound and unique responsibility. A police officer holds both an extraordinary power and an extraordinary duty: in certain circumstances, they may be permitted to take another person's life, and at the same time, they are bound by duty risk offer their own. These are ultimate, irreversible decisions. How ethically grounded must a person be to bear such a burden? An officer must continually educate themselves and reinforce themselves with the right ideas — so that they do not stray from the right path.

Due to the objective difficulty of recording aid, the types and specific topics of aid and support have not been recorded from 2020 onwards. The peer support system

³⁰ *Psychologie pro krize*. Available from: <https://psychologieprokrize.cz/>. [cit. 2024-01-21].
Psychologická podpora Policie ČR. Online. Available from: YouTube, www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7q4z0ZRpaLDHzq2j2sSncxC4hhRJ5rqp [cit. 2024-01-27].

³¹ A term associated with the assisting professions, which includes the practice of psychotherapy. In psychology, it represents a way of developing the supervisee's professional skills, finding better solutions to problematic situations, providing insight into the situation, and the possibility of improving one's own activities overall. As part of supervision, the supervisor provides the supervised psychologist with feedback on their work, usually through an interview, and supervision guarantees a good level of expertise of the supervisee, control of compliance with ethical standards, and the possibility of improving one's own work.

Cf. BAŠTECKÁ, Bohumila; ČERMÁKOVÁ, Veronika; and Milan KINKOR. *Týmová supervize*. Teorie a praxe. Praha: Nakladatelství Portál, 2016. ISBN 978-80-262-0940-9.

³² The code of conduct follows up on the code of the Police of the Czech Republic and complements it. The only exceptions are situations defined by law, subject to the reporting obligation according to Act No. 273/2008 Coll., *on the Police of the Czech Republic*, Section 10.

includes about 305 peers trained and involved in the system across the Czech Republic. The benefits of peer action are in prevention and reducing the shame of seeking help from a psychologist. The shortcomings of the system lie in the still low awareness of the functioning of peer support not only among police officers in general, but also among police management. Lack of awareness is behind the mistrust that still exists towards this activity.

The pilot survey aimed to find out how psychological support and the chaplaincy service are currently known and used as one of the options that could help police officers and civilian employees in complicated and psychologically challenging life and work situations. The quantitative method was therefore chosen for this survey for quick and straightforward data collection and easy generalisation of the results for the whole population. The data collected is accurate, numerical, easy to verify³³ and the results are then usually processed using statistical methods. The aim was to obtain data from the population or group under study. The quantitative method³⁴ is time-saving and it is possible to work with a large amount of data and respondents.

One of the basic data collection techniques was a questionnaire, characterised by clear predefined answers and closed questions that could be answered “yes” or “no”. One of the features for quantitative research is the deductive³⁵ approach, as researchers start from a theory or a broadly conceived problem and formulate research questions about the relationships between variables so that through subsequent data collection they are able to verify or refute the truth of these questions.

The responses from the respondents were selected by the method of data collection method, data filtering, inference, and analysis. Reductions of measurable features are processed and interpreted.

Based on the above, a sociological survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire; the respondents were students of the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague. The reason for the selection of respondents was the fact that the composition of respondents covers the whole territory of the Czech Republic, officers serving in other security forces, the Police of the Czech Republic at different levels of service, or civilian employees of security forces; therefore, it is possible to obtain an

³³ WALKER, Ian. *Výzkumné metody a statistika*. 1. vydání. Praha: Grada, 2013. ISBN 978-80-247-3920-5.

³⁴ HENDL, Jan. *Úvod do kvalitativního výzkumu*. 1. vydání. Praha: Karolinum. ISBN 978-80-7184-549-2.

Cf. GAVORA, Peter. *Úvod do pedagogického výzkumu*. 2. vydání. Brno: Paido, 2010. ISBN 978-80-7315-185-0.

Cf. CHRÁSKA, Miroslav. *Metody pedagogického výzkumu – Základy kvantitativního výzkumu*. 2. aktualizované vydání. Praha: Grada, 2016. ISBN 978-80-247-5326-3.

Cf. ZHÁNĚL, Jiří. *Metodologie výzkumné práce*. 1. vydání. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014. ISBN 978-80-210-6696-0, ISBN 80-210-6696-2.

Cf. KOČVAROVÁ, Ilona and Petr SOUKUP. *Výuka kvantitativní analýzy dat jako součást metodologie výzkumu v pedagogických studijních programech veřejných vysokých škol v ČR*. Orbis scholae, 2019. ISSN 1802–4637.

³⁵ Deduction – (from Lat. deductio = deduction of money, consequence) – a thought process in which other statements (conclusions) are deduced from some given propositions (premises), according to logical rules that guarantee that the deduced conclusions are always true if all premises are true.

up-to-date overview, opinions, and current situation based on the pre-prepared questions. The questionnaire was created on the website using Google, via Survio,³⁶ as a form and then sent out via QR code or handed out in person to respondents with a link to a website where the online questionnaire could be completed and the results then evaluated for the author. The survey was conducted in the **period from 06. 04. 2024 to 11. 06. 2024**, under the title Psychological Help and Spiritual Service in the Police of the Czech Republic and Other Security Forces.

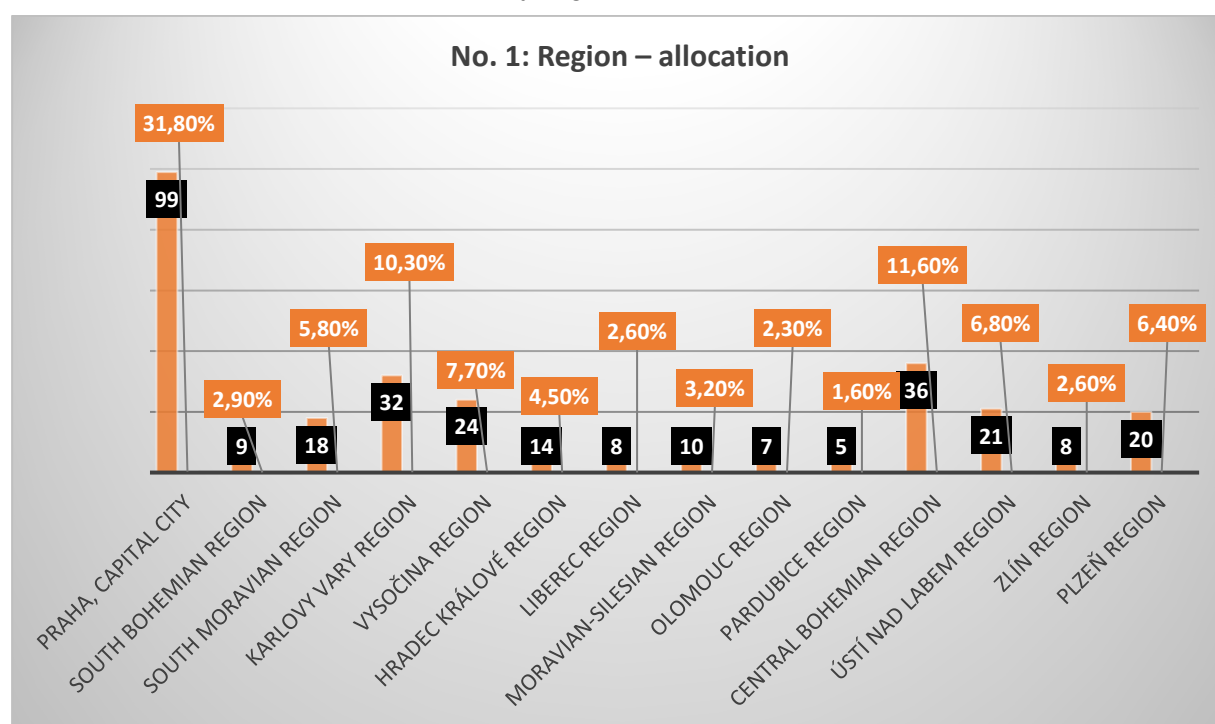
To eliminate information bias, emphasis was placed on specific questions that were concise and easy to understand and that left the respondent in no doubt that they were being tested. Respondents were informed that the anonymity of the respondent would be maintained and the assessment would be for overview and the possibility of using psychological services pertaining to the topic only.

A total of 433 (100%) links were sent out, with 52.7% being a direct link to the website and 47.3% via QR code, a total of 311 questionnaires were completed, the remaining 122 (28.2%) were only either viewed or not completed for no apparent reason, which resulted in the overall completion and return rate of 71.8%.

Before the questionnaire was designed, research questions were formulated:

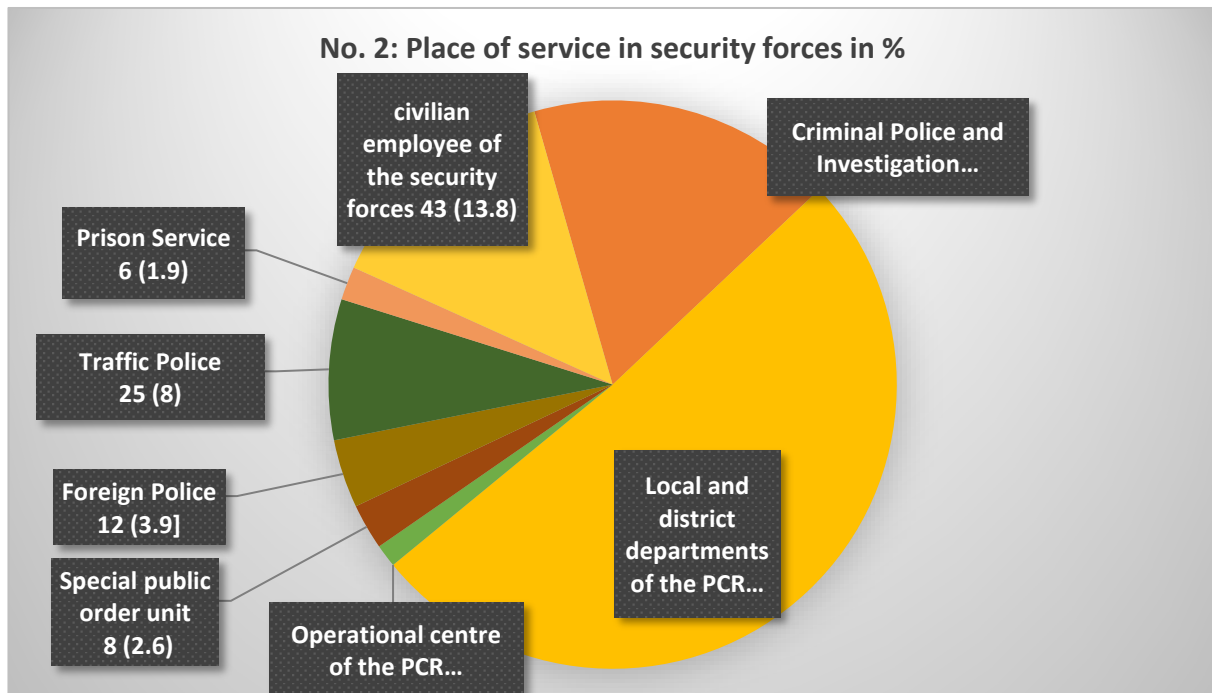
- 1) Which option of the Psychological Support Services provided by the Police of the Czech Republic would you use?
- 2) What is the use of other psychological support (chaplain) for police officers?

Chart 1 – Distribution of respondents by region.



Source: authors' own processing based on data obtained (Survio)

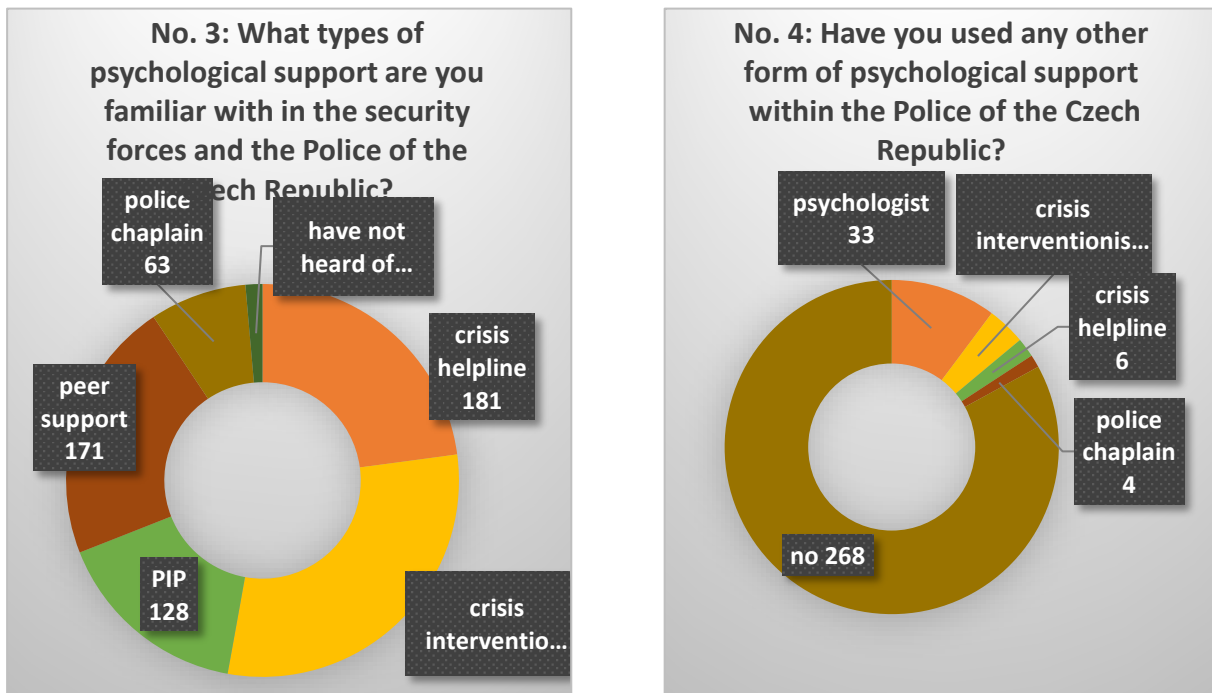
³⁶ <https://www.survio.com/survey/d/M9S8H7S1J9U4X6N1A>

Chart 2 – Distribution of respondents by place of service

Source: authors' own processing based on data obtained (Survio)

The largest representation of respondents was from the local and district departments of the Police of the Czech Republic, the Criminal and Investigation Service, and the Traffic Police, 76.5% in total.

Charts 3 and 4 – Types of psychological support in the security forces of the Czech Republic and possibilities of using other forms of psychological support



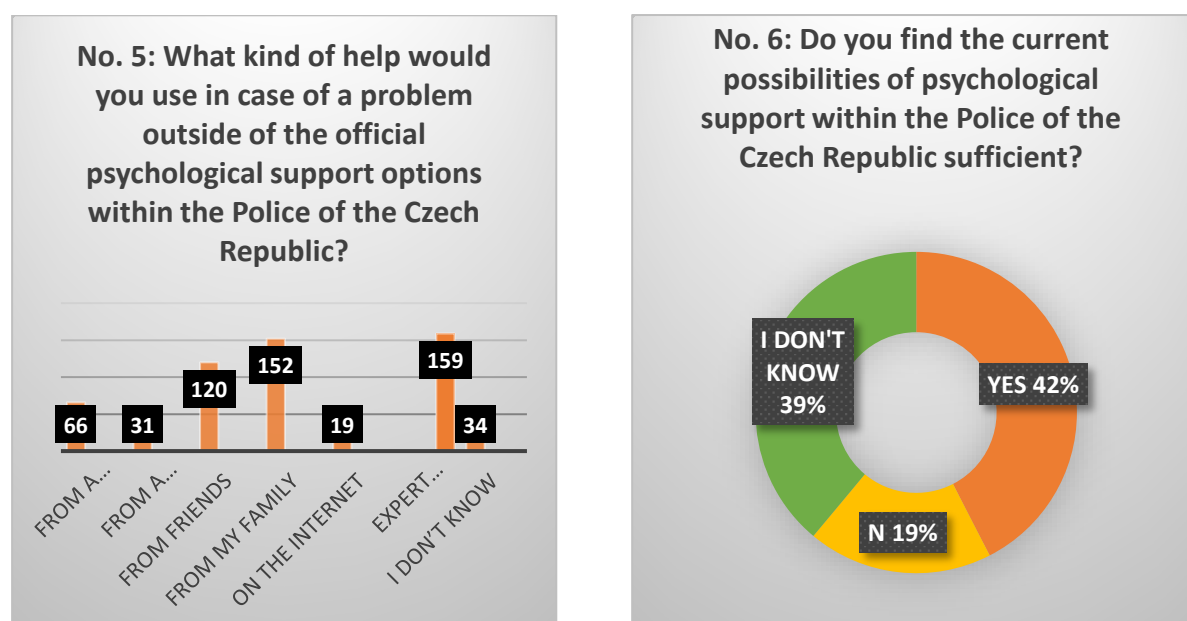
Source: authors' own processing based on data obtained (Survio)

Questions 3 and 4 cannot be answered as a percentage as there was a multiple choice option for this question. Here, the author wanted to find out whether and what kinds of psychological support within the Police of the Czech Republic are known to the respondents, used by the respondent, or provided during police activities.

Despite the fact that PIP is listed here as one of the psychological services, which is currently no longer provided, as it has been replaced under the new ZPPP No. 213/2016, on psychological services, with the crisis helpline and crisis intervention, as well as newly also peer support, it is still in the subconscious of longer serving police officers as a form of assistance for those who are in difficult situations in life, related to the performance of duty, to privacy or interpersonal relationships, or in need of help and information as a result of psychologically difficult situations.

Rather strikingly, and this survey partly proves the point, there are currently 11 respondents out of 311 who have not heard of none of these services. Respondents also pointed to the possibility of using a police chaplain, with 63 of them knowing about his form of assistance as a psychological support.

Charts 5 and 6 – Forms of psychological support outside the Police of the Czech Republic and assessment of the sufficiency of psychological support within the Police of the Czech Republic.



Source: authors' own processing based on data obtained (Survio)

There were multiple response options for Question 5, so the data is not shown as percentage so as not to skew the number of respondents and their choice.

Question 6 was answered by all 311 respondents, and there is a significant difference here, with a total of 58% of respondents being dissatisfied with the current state of the possibilities of providing psychological support within the Police of the Czech Republic.

The aim of the analysis was to determine the satisfaction of police officers with the provision of psychological services, their types, and the possibilities of their use by respondents. The analysis was carried out on the basis of theoretical knowledge and

the current state of psychological services provided by the Police of the Czech Republic.

By analysing the responses, recommendations will be proposed that could lead to improved satisfaction and the possibility of using psychological services within the Police of the Czech Republic, and expanding awareness among new police officers – respondents.

At the present time, when people are burdened by the hardships and fears of wars that have been waged or are imminent, the church seeks to promote a true and noble concept of peace. To condemn the inhumanity of war and to appeal to Christians, with the help of Christ, the author of peace, to work with all to establish peace among men in justice and love and to provide the means to achieve it.³⁷

The words of Jesus are an inspiration and comfort to police officers: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” John 15:13. The Old Testament commandment “Thou shalt not kill” prohibits arbitrary killing, but its purpose is also the protection of life that the police provide for people. Legitimacy and proportionality of the use of necessary defence and extreme emergency³⁸ and the responsibility to protect the life and health of others.

Police chaplaincy service

In this part, we will introduce the spiritual service of the Police of the Czech Republic and other security forces in a historical context (especially the period after 1989) with an emphasis on the position and role of the chaplain within the psychological support system for police officers and employees of the Police of the Czech Republic and other security forces. The study is based, inter alia, on a guided interview with police chaplain Jiří Ignác Laňka. In the final part of the article, the authors focus on international comparisons in the provision of spiritual services falling within the broader range of psychosocial care and services offered as a possible inspiration for the domestic setting.

The oldest foundations of supervision can be found in the role of spiritual teachers (gurus³⁹). “Guru is someone who dispels the darkness of ignorance with the light of knowledge”,⁴⁰ and their followers, also in the roles of masters and disciples, in craft or even in conducting a Socratic dialogue by means of appropriate questions which the

³⁷ Cf. BREČKA, Tibor. *Psychologie katastrof*. Praha: Nakladatelství Triton, 2009. ISBN 978-80-7387-330-1.

³⁸ Zákon č. 40/2009 Sb., trestní zákoník, ve znění pozdějších předpisů.

³⁹ It is a being that helps bring light and hope into a person's life. It enriches them with energy and happiness from being itself. “Gu” can be interpreted as darkness, or ignorance, and “ru” as an action that takes away this darkness/ignorance, i.e. removes it. It is said that only the one who has already reached a high level of spiritual development can become a spiritual teacher called a “guru”. Metaphorically, this word is also used to name persons who are engaged in spirituality or have specific spiritual abilities.

NEŠPOR, Zdeněk R.; VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Encyklopedie menších křesťanských církví v České republice*. 1. vydání. Praha: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2016. ISBN 978-80-246-3315-2.

⁴⁰ GRIMES, John. A. *Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy: Sanskrit Terms Defined in English*. SUNY Press. 1996. ISBN 0-7914-3067-7.

pupil seeks an answer to. Supervision in the narrower sense, as a tool for improving the quality of work, has been associated with the development of the assisting professions since the end of the 19th century. Even then, the predecessors of today's supervisors fulfilled both supervisory and administrative functions, as well as supporting and helping functions.

With the high degree of religious freedom guaranteed to us by the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms,⁴¹ where everyone is free to adopt the religion of their choice, the later adoption of a particular religious belief by some of those who have been subject to that care cannot be ruled out. There is also a legal guarantee that anyone may change their religion, but may not be compelled in any way either to adopt a religion or to change or abandon a religion. Experience has shown that a significant proportion of those who accept the help of religious communities do not convert. *“Because of its geographical location, the Czech lands are destined to be a country that receives influences from all directions. Western culture and the Slavic language of the inhabitants of these countries aid this. The long experience of two of the most horrific totalitarian regimes that plagued Europe in the 20th century, the Nazi and Communist regimes, has contributed to a deeper understanding in the Czech lands of the need for spiritual care for the benefit of religious believers and non-religious individuals alike. Spiritual care is characterised by a significant diversification of the services they provide, with a common focus on helping both those who are religious and those who are not, especially in the case of helping victims of crime or natural disasters and refugees.”*⁴²

After 1989, spiritual care outside religious communities was not sufficiently grounded legally nor in terms of personnel and the establishment of legal instruments in most sectors would only take place after 1994. At present, the legal provision of spiritual care in public institutions is one of the areas of Czech confessional law.⁴³ Gaining a good reputation for religious communities from a historical perspective is very difficult and the past cannot be changed, but for the future, we need to create space for its current need and its assistance.

Today, the spiritual service is seen as one of the helping professions, as another tool that the police have available for the human and psychological support of their staff. The spiritual service is not seen as a substitute for the work of psychologists or doctors; chaplains collaborate with psychologists, peers, crisis intervention groups, and other professionals in the provision of spiritual services. The spiritual service helps bring a human dimension to an otherwise rather harsh police world. It is by no means a substitute for either, rather a complement to them.

Its task is to offer assistance in managing personal crises and difficulties that arise in professional, personal, and family life, to contribute to the development and deepening of democratic traditions of European culture, to create conditions for the

⁴¹ Listina základních práv a svobod, jako součásti ústavního pořádku České republiky, zákon č. 2/1993 Sb., čl. 15, odst. 1.

⁴² TRETERA, Rajmund, Jiří and Zábaj HORÁK. *Konfesní právo*. Praha: Leges, 2015. ISBN 978-80-7502-118-2.

⁴³ Confessional law is part of the legal systems of individual states and the international community; it is therefore a branch of secular law. This is different from ecclesiastical law, which deals with the internal legal order of religious communities.

fulfilment of constitutionally guaranteed human rights related to freedom of religion for police officers in all situations related to the performance of their official and professional duties.

The police chaplain was associated with the post-traumatic intervention assistance teams of the Police of the Czech Republic⁴⁴ and the clergy involved in the provision of post trauma care only carried out their service on the basis of informal relationships within the original intervention teams.

The agreement on the participation of religious communities in the provision of post-traumatic intervention care for members of the Police of the Czech Republic and members of their families and civilian employees in units subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior was concluded between the Ministry of the Interior, the Czech Bishops' Conference, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches on 17 October 2002. The agreement⁴⁵ was concluded for a period of three years and extended twice: on 10 October 2005 and 24 September 2008. The agreements were followed by binding instructions from the Police President to implement them, and based on these agreements, clerics were assigned to teams to help officers deal with psychologically stressful situations (encounters with death, serious traffic accidents, use of issued firearm with permanent consequences). The clerics delegated by their religious communities also participated in psychosocial intervention teams, along with psychologists, social workers, and NGO workers. All members of these teams, including the clergy, underwent a special annual training. Their work also focused on helping victims of crime, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and catastrophes.

The cooperation was brought about by the comprehensive agreement on the participation of persons performing clerical services in the post-traumatic intervention care delivery system of 6 October 2011, which combined the regulation of the participation of religious communities in post-traumatic intervention care for the benefit of both the police and the fire rescue service. This agreement was concluded between the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, the Ecumenical Council of Churches, and the Czech Bishops' Conference.⁴⁶ Under this agreement, care was also provided to members of the public who had been victims of emergencies or crimes. The participation of religious communities in post-trauma intervention care has been extended to injured and stressed firefighters and their families. This care was established by the Instruction of the Director General of the Fire Rescue Service of the

⁴⁴ Binding Instruction of the President of the Police No. 129/2001, which establishes a system for the provision of post-traumatic intervention assistance to members of the Police of the Czech Republic who have experienced a traumatic event in connection with the performance of official tasks.

⁴⁵ Agreement on the participation of persons performing clerical service in the system of providing post-traumatic intervention care to members of the Police of the Czech Republic. In: *Bulletin of the Ministry of the Interior*. 25 November 2002, vol. 2002, No. 96.

⁴⁶ Dohoda byla zveřejněna ve Věstníku Ministerstva vnitra, v částce 106/2011 a v Revue církevního práva, Praha, 2012. roč. 51, č. 1. Online. Available from: <http://spcp.prf.cuni.cz/42-56/51-cele.pdf>. [cit. 2023-11-20]. Cf. KOZÁK, Jaroslav. Posttraumatická intervenční péče v policii. In: *Východiska a perspektivy duchovní služby u policie*. 1. vydání. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2012. Opuscula; 7. ISBN 978-80-7394-391-2.

Czech Republic and Deputy Minister of the Interior of 8 September 2003.⁴⁷ There is no new agreement on spiritual care for the benefit of the fire rescue service, but there are agreements at diocesan level.⁴⁸ The religious communities, or their representatives, i.e. chaplains and their assistants, were not entitled to remuneration, but under the agreement, they had the right to have the Police of the Czech Republic and the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic provide their transport to the place of providing intervention care, or to cover the costs of their transport from their own funds. Unlike in the Prison Service of the Czech Republic, the Army of Czech Republic, or the health care sector, there is no option for the so-called service of presence at the Police of the Czech Republic.

In 2011, the **Christian Police Association (Křesťanská policejní asociace, KPA) was established**,⁴⁹ as a civil association pursuing its activities throughout the Czech Republic. It is an independent, non-profit, interest organisation with a professional focus, which brings together men and women primarily from the ranks of the Police of the Czech Republic, civilian employees of the Police of the Czech Republic, secondary and higher police schools and the Police Academy of the Czech Republic, open to other employees of the security forces of the Czech Republic who are members of Christian churches and profess Christian values.

The chairman of the Czech Christian Police Association (KPA) is Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D., Permanent Deacon;⁵⁰ in 2011 he received his ordination and was appointed to the clerical ministry at the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and St. Charles the Great in Prague, which is part of the premises of the Police Museum of the Czech Republic.

⁴⁷ PGŘ HZS ČR č. 30 z 25. července 2008, kterým se zřizuje systém poskytování posttraumatické péče příslušníkům a občanským zaměstnancům HZS ČR, kteří prožili traumatizující událost v souvislosti s plněním služebních nebo pracovních úkolů a stanoví se postup při posttraumatické péči o oběti mimořádné události.

⁴⁸ Announcement in Acta Curiae Archiepiscopalis Pragensis No. 10/2020 on p. 9: "Mgr. Vojtěch Mátl has been appointed as a proxy for the Archbishopric of Prague on the basis of Article 5, point 3, of the Agreement on Cooperation concluded between the Archbishopric of Prague and the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic represented by the Ministry of the Interior – General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic with effect from 1 October 2020."

⁴⁹ One of the ambitions of the KPA was to be integrated into the international structure of the Christian Police Organisation. It was founded in the UK in 1883 and is now known as the Christian Police Association (CPA), working also in Germany, Switzerland, and the US. Since its inception, KPA has been part of the online platform Prayer Request as well as of the international grouping of national Christian police fellowships ICPF (*International Christian Police Fellowship*), which, like the Prayer Request platform, facilitates prayers for police officers and their families around the world on a global scale.

⁵⁰ Qualifications for the performance of the chaplaincy service include the ability to communicate in the specific environment of the Police, stay independent and maintain confidentiality about the facts that they learn in the performance of the chaplaincy service, observe laws, decrees, and other regulations, pertaining to the Police in the sense of Act No. 361/2003 Coll., on the service of members of the security forces, completed university education with at least the Bachelor's degree in a theological study programme, at least three years of work in general pastoral care.

One of the founders of KPA is Mgr. Tibor A. Brečka, Ph.D. et Ph.D., MBA, LL.M., Secretary General of the KPA, minister for the Holy Celtic Church International, who also provides services as a psychotherapist, and his services can be used by both the police and the civilian sector.

KPA is fundamentally apolitical and supra-confessional in terms of church affiliation, i.e. it stands on a strictly ecumenical basis. They are divided into local groups called “commanderies”; smaller local groups that do not reach the size of “commanderies” are called “delegations”. These groups, “commanderies” or “delegations” have a high degree of autonomy, their own leadership, under the umbrella of the KPA leadership.

The main task of the KPA was to create a space where Christians “in uniform” could talk to each other, share their faith, and support each other and their colleagues in the Christian spirit. After the formation of the KPA, some believers from the ranks of the police joined, being also members of the post-trauma teams. The experience of military chaplains and police chaplains from European countries has shown that the work of internal chaplains, i.e. chaplains working directly in this specific environment, simply cannot be fully replaced by external chaplains, which is why the KPA has been trying to establish police chaplaincy since its inception. It is service to others, it is personal service to colleagues in sharing their joys and sorrows, and most importantly in personally helping those in need. It is an organisation that stands outside the police environment and brings together police officers, firefighters, members of the prison service, and municipal police officers, and accepts other members of the security forces who are Christians or who are moving towards Christian faith.⁵¹

The aim is to promote the professional ethics of officers and work colleagues, to help others, to care for the community, and to proclaim the gospel. It connects police officers and other law enforcement personnel who live by Christian principles; although the KPA is an exclusively Christian association, it also holds in high esteem all seekers and other religions in which people freely practice their faith. It contributes to the development and deepening of the democratic traditions of European culture in the Police.

Abroad, spiritual support is part of the care for the psyche of the officers. The question arises as to whether or not spiritual support has a place as a form of additional support for police officers.

To date, the Police of the Czech Republic has two chaplains for the benefit of civilian employees as well as police officers – permanent deacon Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D. for the Roman Catholic Church and Lt. Mgr. Grzegorz Żywczok for the Old Catholic Church. These chaplains perform their ministry beyond their service duties, without pay.

“Coming together and knowing that we are united and being united makes us stronger. The wellspring from which we draw strength, individually and collectively, is abundant and open to all. It goes without saying that we are NOT ALONE in the

⁵¹ The chaplain’s service, not only in the police (security forces), is not a missionary matter, this service is not an opportunity to win new believers.

world!”⁵² “The way was sought and it was finally found. *The ministry was practiced until its inception by police clergy, albeit unofficially, and most importantly it was accepted by the police. These efforts and activities culminated in the issuance of a directive by the President of Police on the provision of spiritual services in June 2019.*”⁵³

Police officers do not necessarily have to be in a crisis or traumatic event to need help. There are other, latent and creeping ways, and a policeman who remains alone in such situations may not have the strength to deal with them alone. In such a situation, the presence of someone who is willing to listen to them and who also knows what police work entails is priceless, so to speak. This is where the police chaplain could play an important role. Their service is sometimes, on the contrary, much more beneficial than the “irreligious” (the seeker).

Under no circumstances should a police chaplain substitute for the service of a psychologist. The most common pastoral activities include interviews, which are conducted with discretion and have a legally⁵⁴ assigned status of confidentiality. The interviews can cover any area of a police officer’s life, i.e. not only their profession, but also their relationships and personal problems outside the workplace; they can also be helpful in resolving internal conflicts in a police officer’s conscience. The police chaplain is also available for interviews with family members of police officers, civilian police employees and their families, and victims of crime and various disasters.

Police chaplains are individuals who serve employees, officers, and family members. Their role is to provide spiritual support and care and it is usually associated with the provision of spiritual counselling, helping officers to process the emotional stress and trauma associated with their work. They provide encouragement and religious services within a police environment. Primarily, they serve their colleagues as well as their families as a neutral source of support and encouragement regardless of religious beliefs. Anyone who needs services of a chaplain can request them. Chaplains can also act as liaisons between police officers and their supervisors to promote ethical behaviour and address issues related to morality and justice.

A police chaplain is a clergyman who is currently sent into ministry jointly by the Christian churches associated under the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops’ Conference. In this service, they are not only the representative of their own church, but they are a representative of all the churches. Only a police officer in active duty may be a police chaplain; they perform their chaplaincy voluntarily without any financial compensation.

The role is therefore not to promote a particular religious belief, but to serve as a neutral source of support and encouragement regardless of their religious beliefs. Their

⁵² Neurazitelný.cz. Šéfinstruktor URNA: *Člověk musí být stále ve střehu*. Online. Available from: <https://neurazitelný.cz/urna-jiri-ignac-lanka-rozhovor/>. [cit. 2024-08-30].

⁵³ PPP č. 121/2019, *o poskytování duchovních služeb*, příslušníkům a zaměstnancům Policie české republiky v souvislosti s výkonem služby nebo práce a některé věci s tím související. Zákon č. 3/2002 Sb., o svobodě náboženského vyznání a postavení církví a náboženských společností a o změně některých zákonů (zákon o církví a náboženských společnostech), § 6.

⁵⁴ Zákon č. 308/1991 Sb., o svobodě náboženské víry a postavení církví a náboženských společností, § 8, stát uznává povinnost mlčenlivosti osob pověřených vykonávat duchovenskou činnost.

role is often seen as an important part of the overall health and well-being of officers, united by a desire to provide support, a sense of hope and a moral compass for officers who often face challenging situations and stress in their work. They can listen, maintain confidentiality in relation to police officers, employees, family members, and other close individuals and members of the public, including victims of crime and various disasters. Police clergy may be priests, pastors, or other spiritual workers, who are trained and able to work with police officers and adapt to their specific needs.

Spiritual service is therefore meant to be Christian-motivated outreach; the essence of the Christian life is service following the example of Jesus Christ, who: *„did not come to be a slave master, but a slave who will give his life to rescue many people (Mat 20:28). And it is in this spirit that we, as police officers, are supposed to serve justice and the people entrusted to us by law, that is, the citizens. And to serve even at the risk of our own lives, as all of us have promised in our oath of service. Police officers, firefighters, paramedics, as well as colleagues from the prison service or customs administration, they put their health and their lives on the line every day in the service of society.”*⁵⁵

If representatives of only certain religious communities are present in a particular public institution, then they are obliged to call, if necessary, at the request of the client, any representative from any religious community registered in the country to talk to them or to perform a religious act on their behalf. This is declared in contracts concluded between religious communities and in agreements between religious

⁵⁵ Interview with Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D., permanent deacon at the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and St. Charles the Great in Karlov, police chaplain of the Police of the Czech Republic and chairman of the Christian Police Association.

A deacon (diakonos, waiter, or minister) in the Christian Church is responsible for a variety of tasks – they read the sacred texts of the Bible during worship, conduct marriages, funerals, baptisms, they teach, they are engaged in charitable activities, they manage the administration of the parish. (Deacons are already mentioned in the New Testament (1 Tim 3:8-13; Phil 1:1).)

We distinguish deacons – candidates for the priesthood – they only exercise this ministry for a certain time, usually a year. Then they are ordained priests. Permanent deacons of the Roman Catholic Church are deacons permanently, they can be single or married, in the latter case they are ordained only with the consent of the wife. (Before ordination, they undergo four years of formation and must complete a university theological degree, age 35-55, if a married permanent deacon happens to be widowed, they are not allowed to remarry.) Permanent deacons assist in the liturgy, pastoral work, and social and charitable activities. They may celebrate baptisms, witness marriages, conduct funerals, preside at services of the Word, and distribute the Eucharist. They are also entrusted with preparing candidates for baptism, confirmation, and marriage, teaching religion, presiding at exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and giving benediction. They bring Holy Communion to the sick and assist at the celebration of the holy mass. Due to the shortage of priests, deacons also act as material administrators of parishes. The liturgical garment of the deacon during services is the so-called dalmatic – a robe with sleeves, which is very similar to the chasuble, i.e. the mass vestments of Roman Catholic priests. Dalmatics have different colours and so the deacons wear the vestments that belong to a given Christian feast – all feasts have their own liturgical colour (for example, the liturgical colour of Advent, which precedes Christmas, is purple). Underneath the dalmatic, the deacon wears an alb, which is a white linen robe in heel length. From the left shoulder, a stole is attached, i.e. a liturgical sash, clasped in turn on the right side. Permanent deacons also exercise their civil vocation.

communities and their associations on the one hand and representatives of public authorities on the other.⁵⁶ There is no aim to convince members of other religious communities, as emphasised in the treaties concluded by the religious communities. The qualification to serve as a chaplain is, among other things, affiliation with the Police.⁵⁷ The purpose of a chaplain is to be a trusted and confidential partner in addressing personal, existential, spiritual, ethical, and moral issues and needs. It provides a space to discuss ethical dilemmas and reinforces values such as justice, service, respect, and compassion.

“Although there is no place in the world that is absolutely safe. He says that we should all realise and accept into our lives the fact that the world is not a garden of Eden, and that just because I get up alive and well in the morning does not mean that I will go to bed in the same condition at night.”⁵⁸

The service includes in particular the following activities: commemorative and worship support; consultation on criminal proceedings in relation to religion; interviews (supervision); intercessory prayer and sacramental acts; education; provision of contacts to external organisations; assistance in reporting an unpleasant event (death); mediation of support (bridge to the community); prevention of negative forms of manipulation (influence of so-called sects, etc.).

The main activity of the police chaplain is pastoral work, which includes individual talks, religious instruction, the celebration of liturgical services, and the organisation of various spiritual activities. Here, pastoral care is “understood as an individual-centred activity, an accompaniment, a consoling presence, a common endurance of difficulties, which is ultimately aimed only at enabling each person to be human.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, pastoral activity is aimed at helping in life crises and questions about the meaning of life, at promoting awareness of one’s own responsibility and at guiding one to be able to make autonomous ethical decisions.

A chaplain may be called upon or sent on call in the field of moral values and interpersonal relationships, to encourage police teams to maintain a friendly atmosphere in the workplace, to report the death of a loved one, and to assist with psychologists as a crisis interventionist in tragic events. They are responsible for the social and charity service for long-term ill or hospitalised officers, police employees and their relatives, as well as for former police officers who receive a pension.

⁵⁶ Dohoda o podmínkách vzniku a působení duchovní služby v prostorách Policie České republiky a u ostatních bezpečnostních sborů ze dne 14. 4. 2020 a následně Dohoda o duchovní službě v Policii ČR ze dne 16. 12. 2024.

⁵⁷ As regulated by zákona č. 361/2003 Sb., o služebním poměru příslušníků bezpečnostních sborů.

⁵⁸ Interview with Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D., permanent deacon and police chaplain of the Police of the Czech Republic. “Zabezpečení naší země je v našich rukách.” Online. Available from: https://open.spotify.com/episode/2qWZTIhqKDQ0W3FiBtCzvp?go=1&sp_cid=1b3748aa2018579e47d334fca354afc3&utm_source=embed_player_p&utm_medium=desktop&nd=1. [cit. 2023-11-11].

⁵⁹ KOZÁK, Jaroslav. Charakter pastorační práce duchovní služby u policie. In: *Východiska a perspektivy duchovní služby u policie*. 1. vydání. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích, 2012. ISBN 978-80-394-391-2.

The comprehensive agreement was in effect until 2014, then until 2016 the spiritual; service was accepted within posttraumatic interventional assistance. However, some services are still provided mainly at the request of regional police headquarters and likewise fire departments under local agreements. Every police officer has the option of contacting a chaplain if they have personal concerns, family issues, or work problems and need to share them with someone, and of course every police officer has the option of using a chaplain whether it is a personal intervention or a ceremonial matter.

“Police officers often have a distrust of the outside world and need to come into an environment of absolute trust which is very important in this day and time. Chaplains in their church’s regime have a duty of confidentiality for personal conversations, even if they are not confessional, and the environment of trust that the chaplain offers to police officers is and should be absolute. A believing police officer, a practitioner, knows where to go, but there are things that their parish priest simply will not understand because these things are specific to the police profession and some of them cannot even be explained.”⁶⁰

The ministry of police chaplains, chaplains in the military, prison and health care⁶¹ or in any other setting, is a ministry that is not exclusively for believers, indeed most people are from a non-believing background, a denomination that is outside the influence of the church and the faith. The anticipation of trust that most people associate with the ministry of chaplains plays a significant role here. From a historical perspective, in-house police chaplains are indeed a historical novelty. If we look back in history, in the time of the monarchy, in the time of the First Republic and of course even less in later times, the security forces, whether it was the police or the gendarmerie, did not have their chaplains available; the situation was different in the army.⁶²

In 2019, there has been a major turnaround. On June 7, 2019, the Police President Brig. Gen. Mgr. Jan Švejdar issued an instruction⁶³ on the provision of spiritual services and in turn new contracts were being prepared on the part of religious communities and state bodies.⁶⁴ This instruction does not establish spiritual service as a structural matter that is officially declared, but it does set certain boundaries. At the time when this internal act was issued, the Czech Bishops’ Conference and the Ecumenical Council of Churches concluded the Agreement on the Conditions of the Establishment and Operation of the Clerical Ministry in the Premises of the Police of

⁶⁰ Magazín Signály. *Policejní kaplan musí rozumět řeči svého kmene*. Online. Available from: <https://magazin.signaly.cz/2008/mjr-jiri-ignac-lanka-policejni-kaplan-musi-rozumet-reci-sveho-kmene>. [cit. 2023-06-28].

⁶¹ Catholic Association of Hospital Chaplains in the Czech Republic. *Dohoda o duchovní péči ve zdravotnictví mezi ČBK a ERC s MZ ČR ze dne 11. 7. 2019*. Online. Available from: <https://kaplan-nemocnice.cz/>. [cit. 2025-01-05].

⁶² On the history of the ministry in the army, see e.g. VAŇOUREK, Martin; LAŇKA, Jiří Ignác. *Bůh a armáda: Historie a současnost duchovní služby Armády České republiky*. Cpress, 2023.

⁶³ PPP č. 121/2019, o poskytování duchovních služeb policistům a občanským zaměstnancům PČR.

⁶⁴ LAŇKA, Jiří Ignác. Zpráva zveřejněna na Čtvrté pražské konferenci o vztahu církví a státu. In: *Revue církevního práva*. Praha, 2019, vol. 77, No. 49 (in print).

the Czech Republic and Other Security Forces.⁶⁵ This agreement defines the rules for the service of police chaplains, the requirements for their personality and professionalism.

At the end of 2020, the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference sent Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D. and Lt. Mgr. Grzegorz Żywczok to serve as the police chaplains.

A police chaplain is a clergyman who is currently sent into ministry jointly by the Christian churches associated under the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference. Since the security forces do not have the same status as the armed forces in terms of the Act on Churches, this may be different in the future. Before, there was no official communication between the police and the churches, but the police formally accepted the presence of the chaplains, while giving them certain boundaries. On the other side, churches gave their candidates commissions for spiritual service.

The agreement on the spiritual service in the Police is a confirmation of the spiritual path in the categorical pastoral ministry, which has gradually developed since the fall of communism in our country. On 16 December 2024, in the premises of the Archbishop's Palace in Prague, new agreement on the spiritual service in the Police of the Czech Republic was signed with the Czech Bishops' Conference (hereinafter referred to as "CBC"), represented by Mons. Jan Graubner, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches (hereinafter referred to as the "ECC"), represented by Mgr. Tomáš Tyrlík and Marián Čopa, General Secretary of the Evangelical Church in the Czech Republic, and Martin Vondrášek, President of the Police of the Czech Republic. Police chaplains provide this service voluntarily and free of charge.

The chaplaincy service in the police, and indeed in any professional setting, is not evangelistic and it is up to the recipient to use it voluntarily on the basis of their free decision. Based on an agreement between the Police of the Czech Republic, CBC, and ECC, a spiritual service coordinator is appointed by the Police President. Their job also involves possible cooperation with chaplains of other security forces of the Czech Republic, with chaplains in the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, and with foreign police chaplains for gaining experience and pursuit of the activities of the spiritual service. It also includes external cooperation with churches⁶⁶ associated under

⁶⁵ Agreement on the Conditions for the Establishment and Operation of the Clerical Ministry in the Police of the Czech Republic and Other Security Forces of 14 April 2020 between the Czech Bishops' Conference (hereinafter referred to as the CBC), represented by Cardinal Dominik Duka, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches (hereinafter referred to as the ECC), represented by its President Daniel Ženatý and its Secretary General Petr Jan Vinš.

⁶⁶ The competent church authorities to commission chaplains are: for the CBC, the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Catholic Church; for the ECC, the Apostolic Church, the Salvation Army – Church, the Baptist Brethren Unity, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Church of the Brethren, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, the Christian Fellowship Church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic, the Evangelical Methodist Church, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the Unity of Brethren, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic, the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands, the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, and the Old Catholic Church.

the CBC and ECC and with other extra-ministerial departments and organisations. This is a further advance for the future, where until now it has not been possible to cooperate with other security sector bodies. Cooperation with other clergy of other churches must not conflict with the mission and tasks of the police.

The primary task of chaplains is to be there for their colleagues, offering help in difficult life situations. From a spiritual point of view, their task is to pray for safety in our country, to pray for police officers and members of other security forces, and, of course, for victims of crimes, traffic accidents, natural and other disasters. Another task is to bring Christian values, which are the foundation of our culture, into the law enforcement environment and, last but not least, to help where needed, for example by organising financial collections to support those in need. Spiritual service is one of the helping professions that the police pursue and that effectively help bring a human dimension to the otherwise rather harsh world of policing. It is by no means a substitute, but rather a complement to other tasks.

On 6 June 2024, a structured interview with **Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D.** on the topic **“Chaplain in police services and his role in providing assistance as one of the psychological supports for police officers”** took place at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic.⁶⁷

What is the job of a police chaplain and who can request your services?

“A police chaplain is a clergyman who is currently sent into ministry jointly by the Christian churches associated under the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops’ Conference. In terms of the Act on Churches, the security forces do not have the same status as the armed forces, but it may be different in the future. The chaplain is therefore in this ministry not only a representative of his own church, but a representative of all the churches that have sent him. Only a police officer on active duty may be a police chaplain; he performs his chaplaincy voluntarily without any financial compensation. Primarily, he serves his colleagues, but also their families, with his presence and assistance. The chaplain’s service can be requested by anyone who needs it.”

What is the permanent deacon in charge of?

“The deacon’s service is as old as Christianity itself. In the Roman Catholic Church, which I am a member of, there are today three degrees of ordination, namely, those of a bishop, priest, and deacon. The deacon’s ordination has two forms. In the former, a theologian is ordained a deacon on his way to priestly ordination. In the latter, an adult man is ordained as a “permanent” deacon, in the vast majority of cases he is married and is expected to be a deacon for life. A deacon performs tasks that are appropriate to his ordination. He officiates at the holy mass for the priest or bishop, reads the gospel, teaches catechism, prepares children or adults to receive the sacrament of baptism or confirmation, guides the engaged before marriage, and so on. He can conduct baptisms, marriages, funerals, and confer certain blessings. He also often looks after the running of the parish and the church. Deacons then have an important role in the so-called “categorical pastoral”, i.e. in the church’s ministry outside

⁶⁷ The recorded interview with Col. ThDr. Mgr. Jiří Ignác Laňka, Ph.D. is in the possession of the interviewer – the author of the article.

the church environment, such as, for example in hospitals, charitable institutions, schools, the army, prisons, and nowadays also in the police. Over the past years, an environment of trust has been built between the police leadership and the chaplains, and this is paramount and very important for the further development of the spiritual service. Significantly, the police community is also being introduced to the possibility of using the services of chaplains, whether on a personal or professional level. A chaplain must be a police officer so that other police officers understand him and so that he understands what police service entails, so that he has it in him, in his blood, and so that he can shape his ministry for the benefit of the police, and at the same time, he must be a minister in his church or congregation, he must have some experience there, he must have theological training, and he must have the personal qualities to exercise independent ministry in a specific police environment.

In our Catholic environment, we are reaching out to police officers who do not want to be parish deacons but would like to be police deacons, and we are in contact with several of them.

On this basis, police officers or police employees who are also clergy in their own religious community perform spiritual service as part of their duties within the police force. This distinguishes this type of spiritual care from the participation of clergy in post-traumatic intervention assistance, to which clergy were invited as external consultants. In both cases, the provision is free. Spiritual services are provided on an ecumenical basis by chaplains, who offer assistance to all persons working within the Police and their family members and loved ones. Everyone as an individual has the right to request, accept, or refuse the help of a clergyman for themselves. The understanding of chaplaincy in the police force is non-missionary; it is not motivated by an effort to recruit new members for one's faith or church or to spread a particular religious belief, but to serve as a neutral source of support and encouragement regardless of religious affiliation.

The task is to offer assistance in resolving personal crises and difficulties that arise in the professional, personal, and family lives of police officers; to contribute to the development and deepening of democratic traditions of European culture in the police force; to create conditions for the fulfilment of constitutionally guaranteed human rights related to freedom of religion for police officers in all situations related to the fulfilling their service and work duties.

It will certainly be the subject of legal-historical research in the future to determine to what extent this break was initiated by police commanders and to what extent by church leaders. The information available to us so far in mid-2020 does not give a clear answer and the interpretations by the different actors differ. We believe that the acts to date to re-establish spiritual care in the police forces in the Czech Republic will lead to a new agreement and the establishment of a whole system of this kind of care. However, we lack a new agreement on spiritual care for the benefit of the fire department, although some agreements at the diocesan level appear to be in place.”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Announcement in *Acta Curiae Archiepiscopalis Pragensis* No. 10/2020 on p. 9: “Mgr. Vojtěch Mátl has been appointed a proxy for the Archbishopric of Prague on the basis of Article 5, point 3, of the Agreement on Cooperation concluded between the Archbishopric of Prague and the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic represented by the Ministry

Do non-believing police officers accept your role as a clergyman?

“The spread is wide, and my experience is that some people accept it as good. It really makes you wonder – how this is even possible? What is it like in your church? Other activities in which spiritual services could be seen as beneficial include educational activities that are understood as ‘assistance in the personal and professional development of police officers.’ In addition to ethical education, education in the field of knowing other cultures is becoming increasingly necessary, as there are currently more and more people of other nationalities and cultural traditions present in our territory due to the free movement of people and migration. Officers coming into contact with them often deal with cases where ignorance of religious and cultural differences can cause misunderstanding on both sides.”

Why do you think evil exists in the world, even though God is omnipotent?

“Just my personal opinion, I am no expert on theodicy. We have some wonderful gifts that we did not deserve in any way. Life, reason, conscience, and freedom. If we decide by reason that our freedom will be in accord with our conscience, we live a good life. If we choose to suppress our conscience and prioritise our own freedom, the good disappears and evil takes its place. Evil is the absence of good. Evil is not created, it is not God’s attribute or intention, we create it ourselves. God is omnipotent, but he is not a puppeteer. If he had shaped, or rather formatted, our thinking, he would have suppressed our free will and we would have been reduced to those puppets. And if someone is good, they certainly don’t want the one they love to be a puppet, they want them to be free and decide for themselves. Only then there can be true, adult love and respect in a relationship. Even more so with God, who loves us in fullness.”

As a starting point for the ethical dilemmas of the Christian in the use of violence, you usually quote St. Augustine: “I may turn my own cheek, but I must never turn another’s cheek for them.” How are we to understand this?

“The controversy over the Christian’s use of force is actually as old as Christianity itself. And it continues to this day. Once again, just my personal opinion. The world is corrupted by the presence of evil, the world we are supposed to care about. The bad actions of bad people fall on the innocent. Our Supreme Commander summarised the Ten Commandments in two commandments of love, wherein he said to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. I don’t want anyone to rob me, or hurt me, or kill me. Nor can I want it for another. It is my duty to protect others as I would protect myself. If it’s necessary to use force for that protection, then I’ll do it. To the best of my ability and capacity. When someone falls into the water and begins to drown, it is not enough to fall on our knees and start praying. I’ve got to jump in the water and pull the one out. Similarly, if a villain ambushes a person at gunpoint, or a terrorist takes hostages and is about to execute them, prayers will not help at that moment. I must use the appropriate force to save these people.”

of the Interior – General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic with effect from 1 October 2020.”

Has your experience in foreign missions influenced your different outlook on life?

“A lot. Encountering an environment where completely different cultures with their specific views on life and its values intermingle is enriching and fascinating for anyone who wants to see and learn from these differences. One must then realise what a beautiful and safe country we live in, and gain a great respect for the work of generations of our ancestors who laboriously built this country, and pride in those who gave their lives defending it. And they will begin to have more respect for those who are building and protecting it today.”

Do you think that migration has influenced the perception of security of the population and security itself in the Czech Republic?

“The security situation of our country depends solely on ourselves. It depends on the activity and cooperation of all the state forces, especially the security forces, but also on the responsibility and vigilance of every citizen. Our safety is everybody’s business! We should all realise and accept into our lives the fact that the world is not a garden of Eden, and that just because I get up alive and well in the morning does not mean that I will go to bed in the same condition at night. The important thing is not to be indifferent. It is not only a question of terrorist attacks, human lives are also threatened in everyday life such as by traffic accidents, health problems, robberies, fights. Often, it only takes one phone call to save the day, and nowadays, practically everyone has a mobile phone.”

International comparison of the use of the spiritual in the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic and security forces in Europe

The presence of chaplains and spiritual care in police and security forces help create a healthy and supportive work environment and can contribute to the overall well-being of police officers. Police chaplains have a deep respect for the professional and personal challenges that police officers face and are present to provide support regardless of the religion or beliefs of individual officers. The existence and role of police clergy may depend on the jurisdiction and organisational structure of the police force.

Armed Forces of the Czech Republic

Already at the beginning of 1996,⁶⁹ the Czech Ministry of Defence, through the Humanitarian Services Section, began to consider the participation of a military clergyman in the units of the Czech Armed Forces operating within the IFOR⁷⁰ international operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The one asked by Bishop Cikrle to perform the tasks of a military clergyman was a Catholic priest Tomáš Holub, at that time a chaplain in Kutná Hora (on 29 July 1996, he left for the IFOR mission together

⁶⁹ Víra.Cz. *Historie duchovní služby v armádě*. Online. Available from: <https://www.vira.cz/texty/clanky/historie-duchovni-sluzby-v-armade>. [cit. 2024-07-30].

⁷⁰ Abbreviated from the English The Implementation Force, a NATO-led international military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina lasting from 20 December 1995 to 20 December 1996 under the authorisation of the UN Security Council. Non-NATO member states also participated in the operation: Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, and Ukraine.

with soldiers of the 6th Mechanised Battalion). The very work of Tomáš Holub in Bosnia and Herzegovina laid the foundations on which the spiritual service could begin to be built.

The establishment of the spiritual service culminated in the signing of an agreement between the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference on 3 June 1998, which regulated mutual cooperation in the activities of the spiritual service in the units of the Army of the Czech Republic. The opening statement of the agreement states that all representatives of the churches participating in the agreement are deeply aware of the need to witness to the Christian faith in the defence environment.

On the same day that the agreement between the churches was signed, the agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference was also signed. This agreement establishes clear conditions for the ministry of military clergy from the churches that participated in this agreement, in the spiritual service in the Army of the Czech Republic. The purpose was to define the structure and securing of the spiritual service, to determine the exact status of the military clergyman, to determine their financial and material background, and to described their functional content and assignment.

The signing ceremony culminated in the promulgation of an order by the Minister of Defence which finally established the Ministry of Defence's spiritual service with effect from 22 June 1998.

On the same day that the agreement between the churches was signed, the agreement between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference was also signed. This agreement sets clear conditions for the work of military clergy from the churches that are part to the agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to define the structure and securing of the ministry. It also determines the status of the military cleric. It sets the financial and material background of the clergy and to specifies their job description and assignment. Subsequently, a chief chaplain of the Czech Army was appointed at the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, who began the practical implementation of this agreement in the units of the Czech Armed Forces. The Czech Republic and the Ministry of the Interior could take inspiration from neighbouring countries, where the spiritual service falls within a broader range of psychosocial care and services offered to security forces and armed forces, which have long been established. For example:

Slovakia

In the Slovak Republic, since 2002, this service for the Catholic believers has been intended primarily for members of the armed forces and armed corps and for persons deprived of their liberty by a decision of a state authority, on the basis of the Basic Agreement between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See,⁷¹ signed in the

⁷¹ The activities for the spiritual ministry for the Catholic believers are governed by the canon law, the *Spirituali Militum Curae* apostolic constitution, the aforementioned agreement, and the laws of the Slovak Republic. The agreement between the Slovak Republic and registered churches and religious societies of 24 April 2005.

Vatican on 24 December 2001. Its exercise is represented by police chaplains and pastoral activities in all regions of the Slovak Republic. Spiritual service in the police is a different job, one that is viewed from both the outside and the inside, and it is a space to respond to real-world situations. The police protect the external values of society, but there are other dimensions of human life that hold tremendous value and there is room for spiritual service.⁷²

Germany

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the police are governed by individual states. Police chaplaincy is a church service in the world of the police work and is offered to all police personnel. This service is not bound by the religious affiliation of the person concerned, is autonomous and independent of the internal structure of the agency, and is aimed at special stress situations and ethical requirements of the police profession. The activity is carried out on the basis of one's faith, but regardless of the denominational or religious affiliation of the officers.

The police chaplaincy is structured accordingly. The regional deans or regional representatives are the contact persons of the Catholic Church for the management of the police in the respective federal state.⁷³ In their respective dioceses, the bishops have appointed diocesan representatives for pastoral care related to the police profession in their area. Pastoral care is provided locally in the police organisational units. There are currently 87 police chaplains working nationwide. Police chaplaincy also exists for the federal police. There are 12 pastors who are contact persons for their colleagues. Police chaplains in state police forces are accountable to their bishops.⁷⁴ Federal police chaplains are accountable to the police bishop, are independent of the control of the state and the police in their pastoral activities, and are subject to confidentiality.

A list of police chaplains and pastors who are currently serving in the respective federal state of the Federal Republic of Germany is provided on the website⁷⁵ as an extensive directory, alphabetically arranged.

Police chaplains provide professional ethics training and conduct training seminars. They visit police stations, accompany officers in difficult missions, and offer assistance after stressful operations. They are members of crisis intervention teams for emergency pastoral care for disabled citizens or in post-operation teams for police

⁷² Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky. *Poslání duchovní služby*. Online. Available from: <https://www.minv.sk/?poslanie-duchovnej-sluzby>. [cit. 2024-05-30].

⁷³ TRAPPE, Tobias and Judith PALM. *Zmocnění lidí: Etika a pastorační péče pro policii*. Frankfurt: Publisher for Police Science, 2013. ISBN 978-3-86676-225-1.

⁷⁴ Auxiliary Bishop Wolfgang Bischof of Munich has been the Commissioner of the German Bishops' Conference for Catholic Pastoral Care in the Police in Germany (state police) since the 2011 autumn assembly. Since 2016, he has also been the representative of the German Bishops' Conference for the Federal Police Chaplaincy. And from 2022, the Bavarian Bishops' Conference's representative for police chaplaincy is auxiliary bishop Wolfgang Bischof.

Policejní kaplan ve vaší oblasti. Online. Available from:

<https://polizeiseelsorge.org/hp419/Polizeiseelsorge-in-Ihrer-Naehe.htm>. [cit. 2025-01-05].

⁷⁵ *Policejní kaplan ve vaší oblasti*. Online. Available from:

<https://polizeiseelsorge.org/hp419/Polizeiseelsorge-in-Ihrer-Naehe.htm>. [cit. 2025-01-05].

officers. They are available in *emergency situations*, such as suicide risk, when local pastors are not available.

Austria

On 12 December 2002, the President of the Austrian Bishops' Conference His Eminence Christoph Cardinal Schönborn and the Federal Minister of the Interior Dr. Ernst Strasser,⁷⁶ agreed to dedicate themselves to the Catholic pastoral care for police officers and thus contribute to the development and strengthening of pastoral care for police officers in Austria in accordance with the provisions of the Concordat governing the relationship between the church and the state. A similar agreement⁷⁷ was concluded with the Austrian Evangelical Church on 26 September 2006 in the presence of the President of the Council of the Evangelical Church of Austria, Bishop Herwig Sturm, and the Federal Minister of the Interior, Liese Prokop.

The Evangelical Police Chaplaincy is overseen by the Evangelical Senior Church Council, which is responsible for appointing the respective police chaplains as Evangelical "federal coordinators" in agreement with the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The Roman Catholic police chaplains are subordinate to the respective diocesan bishops,⁷⁸ at the level of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, the divisional

⁷⁶ Austria's current federal minister of the interior is Wolfgang Peschorn.

⁷⁷ 1. Agreement on the Catholic pastoral care for police officers between the Austrian Bishops' Conference and the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Austria, 12 December 2002. 2. Organisational Order of the Federal Ministry of the Interior for the Police Chaplaincy of 2 January 2007. 3. Regulation on the Police Chaplaincy Service of 2 January 2007. Federal coordinator, job description, and election rules. 4. A framework regulation for educational standards for police chaplains. This pastoral concept was developed by the participants of the Police Chaplains' Conference in Großrußbach in 2019 and, after final adjustments, adopted at the Police Chaplains' Conference in Bregenz on 14 July 2020. Policejní kaplanství. Online. Available from: <https://www.pastoral.at/polizeiseelsorge>. [cit. 2025-01-05].

Catholic Police Chaplain of Austria – **Federal Police Chaplain Lienhart, Elisabeth**, E-mail: elisabeth.lienhart@bmi.gv.at, BMI-Polizeiseelsorge@bmi.gv.at.

⁷⁸ Diocesan bishops are responsible for the staffing and funding of police chaplains and for the implementation of this pastoral concept. For this purpose, they may, in agreement with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Provincial Bishop of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, appoint a provincial chaplain and other police chaplains for territorial, regional, or staff areas. Police chaplains, together with the concerned staff of the regional police headquarters, form regional advisory boards for the respective federal state for which they are appointed and commissioned by the assigning diocesan bishop. Since state boundaries are not always the same as diocesan boundaries or other classifications may be useful for other reasons, coordination of police chaplains is the responsibility of the state chaplain for the provincial police department of the respective state. The coordination is the responsibility of the federal coordinator. The Federal Advisory Council is responsible for the police chaplaincy in the concerned bodies throughout Austria, in particular the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the Fight Against Terrorism, the Federal Office for the Prevention and Fight Against Corruption, the Federal Criminal Police Office, the Cobra Directorate for Special Units, and the Security Academy, and advises the regional bishops. It supports the diocese in relation to the service of police chaplains.

bishop is responsible for the pastoral care for the police and is assisted by a “federal coordinator”.

The police chaplaincy is rooted in the Catholic faith and is pluralistic regardless of religion or denomination. The service of the chaplain is understood as a church service for the employees of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and its subordinate organisational units in cooperation with other services of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, such as in particular: psychological services, peer support, personal development, employee support, and employee representation. Police chaplaincy is a ministry to people in the field. It offers personal contact with police chaplains⁷⁹ in the context of visits to police stations, cooperation with the psychological service of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, with staff representatives and social institutions of the executive branch. Chaplains are subject to a duty of confidentiality in their work; an accurate knowledge of service procedures, police culture and customs is essential for their service and specific training is involved.

In the Czech Republic, the assistance of public authorities to provide regular spiritual care was contractually secured as late as of 16 December 2024. This clerical assistance, which in fact has not ceased, has again been given a legislative framework, now in the form of an agreement between representatives of the churches and the Police of the Czech Republic (as opposed to the previous agreement with the Czech Ministry of Interior). This assistance was provided only randomly, individually, and through the care of the parish ministries of the various churches.

Conclusion

The situation regarding religion and its evaluation changed radically after November 1989. The phenomenon is ubiquitous in postmodern society with many cultural and historical contexts. While on the one hand opening up to the world is an absolutely necessary condition for a normal and successful life of our country in terms of international relations, it is a fact that carries considerable risks. This is not only due to the fact that we are exposed to problematic groups of people, controversial films and audio-visual productions, drugs, and kinds behaviour that are not beneficial for anyone, but also because the population is exposed to a kind of civilisational and ideological shock, which is often not understood even by those who are supposed to help.

One of the main causes is the change of political system, primarily not preferring any philosophy, religion or ideology,⁸⁰ and on the other hand the opening of our country to the globalised religious world (migration). Undermining atheism and tabooing many religious topics will not change people’s minds or their ability to navigate the world of religiosity. Thus, today we meet people with atheistic upbringings or people without any religious beliefs. On the one hand, this means openness and open-mindedness, on the other hand, often a limited ability to orient at the “marketplace of religious

⁷⁹ *Aktuální seznam všech katolických policejních kaplanů*. V sekci „Kontakt“. Online. Available from: www.polizeiseelsorge.at. [cit. 2025-01-05].

⁸⁰ Cf. NOVOTNÝ, Tomáš et al. *Zneužití náboženství*. 2. vydání. Praha: Oliva, 1996. ISBN 80-85942-22-4.

ideas”,⁸¹ but we do not know who is actually involved and what the impact will be on individuals and smaller groups.

To understand means to uncover and realize the roots of one’s actions, to know their motivation and, last but not least, to assess where the real path of the individual we are helping leads to a better and more valuable life.

At this time, police chaplains could enter into the educational process by teaching ethics, religious cultures, seminars, lectures, and courses, which in our cultural conditions will always have Christian overtones and Christian roots. They know how to listen, to maintain confidentiality even in relation to police officers, believers, and those seeking answers, whom they support.

The goal should be to find criteria that are sufficiently understandable and usable for the non-believer to distinguish the risk and potential social harm associated with a particular group or person.⁸²

A practising Christian in the ranks of the Police of the Czech Republic can be a support to his colleagues. This applies, however, only to a limited extent, as they need to perform their assigned duties while in service. The full range of “services” should be provided by a representative of the ministry, who should be in service, as is the case with the armed forces and other security forces in the Czech Republic and abroad.

Europe has been multicultural for many centuries and this phenomenon has only accelerated in recent decades. Today’s Europe is home to Christians and non-believers, as well as Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and followers of other religious movements. People of all races and colours live here, everyone is different, but we all have one thing in common – we all have free will to do what we want with our lives. Multiculturalism⁸³ does not mean eliminating differences, but recognising that culture plays an important role in our lives, without discriminating against groups, and getting to know, tolerate, and respect each other so that we can enrich each other and learn to embrace difference. Is there anything wrong with that?

The people who are attacking multicultural coexistence are those who are worried about losing their own identity and the feeling that someone “from outside” wants to take everything away from them, that everything in the world is losing its meaning and

⁸¹ E.g. new, alternative (to known churches) religious movements and groups, Jehovah’s Witnesses, but also Mormons, Hare Krishna movement, Church of Scientology, Unification Church (Moonists), Bahai, Family (formerly Family of Love), followers of Parsifal Immanuel, Satanists, and others. The danger here is the unnoticed loss of freedom of a member of a sect or movement, strong and subtle manipulation, emotional, economic, personal dependence of a person, especially on the leader of the sect, which is irremovable even when the followers of the sect are demonstrably harmful; the denial of generally accepted cultural values and the consequent isolation from the generally accepted culture of life, which then results in a deep alienation from family and friendship, work, and cultural ties.

⁸² Ing. Aleš OPATRŇÝ, “*Sekty jako pastorační problém i úkol*”. Orientace v pastoraaci a některé zkušenosti. Director of the Pastoral Centre of the Archbishopric of Prague. Online. Available from: http://www.knihovna.net/KNIHA/0063_t.htm. [cit. 2023-02-02].

⁸³ Shadi Shanaah at the debate “The Present and Future of Multiculturalism in Europe” organised by Eurocentrum in Jihlava on 24 October 2014. Online. Available from: <https://denikalarm.cz/2014/12/multikulturalismus-stale-zije-nastesti/>. [cit. 2025-02-05].

order, everything is speeding up, social networks, news and information overload, there is so much that it makes one's head spin and one loses one's footing.

Diversity of religion? Showing fear of the other is part of human nature, it is good to put some heart and reason into this attitude. Our hearts tell us that we are different, but all flesh and blood, and reason tells us that the opposite would be a step backwards in history.

History keeps repeating itself until one learns. Every great horror began with a little aversion, ridicule, and scorn, but the actual cause was always fear of loss and ignorance. New experiences broaden horizons and allow us to work with our own weaknesses and prejudices. Human beings and humanity are evolving and a multicultural society requires tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for the laws of that society.

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Metodický pokyn ČBK pro službu Nemocničních kaplanů schválilo PZ ČBK ze dne 28.04.2022

Oznámení v Acta Curiae Archiepiscopalis Pragensis č. 10/2020 na s. 9: „Mgr. Vojtěch Mátl byl na základě čl. 5 bod 3, Dohody o spolupráci uzavřené mezi Arcibiskupstvím pražským a Hasičským záchranným sborem České republiky zastoupeným Ministerstvem vnitra – generálním ředitelstvím Hasičského záchranného sboru České republiky s účinností od 1. října 2020 jmenován zmocněncem za Arcibiskupství pražské.“

Dohoda o podmínkách vzniku a působení duchovní služby v prostoru Policie České republiky a u ostatních bezpečnostních sborů ze dne 14. 4. 2020 mezi Českou biskupskou konferencí, zastoupená kardinálem Dominikem Dukou (dále ČBK) a Ekumenickou radou a církví, zastoupená předsedou Danielem Ženatým a generálním sekretářem Petrem Janem Vinšem (dále ERC)

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Pplk. Mgr. Renata Jamelská (*1968). She has a university degree in Security and Legal Studies at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague. From 2002 to the present, she has been a member of the Police of the Czech Republic. From 2002 to 2007, she was assigned to the Foreigners' Border Police of the Czech Republic. From 2008 to 2018, she worked at the Police of the Czech Republic on the files. Since 2018, she has been assigned to the position of an academic staff member at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague, where she is currently working. In her teaching and publishing activities she focuses mainly on municipal police, non-state security sector in the Czech Republic and the EU, and police law.

Pplk. v. v. Mgr. Jozef Tóth (*1960). In 2005, he graduated from the study programme Security and Legal Studies, Police Management and Criminalistics at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague. In 2007, he graduated from the post-secondary programme in Higher Education Pedagogy. From 1980 to 2011, police officer, predominant activity within the Rapid Deployment Unit, leadership position, special training instructor. From 2006 to the present, he has been an academic staff member at the Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague, where he has also held the positions of Head of Department, Head of the Dean's Office, and Vice Dean for Studies and Development. In his teaching and publishing activities, he focuses mainly on selected activities of the police services.