

ICPRA 2010 Report

ICPRA was established in 1996 when the Canadian Police Association extended invitations to police association executives from around the globe to meet in a formal setting as part of the CPA's Annual General Meeting in Windsor, Ontario. ICPRA as a body now brings together over 1.5 million police members from 43 police unions spanning nearly 30 countries (speaking many more languages) over 4 continents.

ICPRA Council Meets on a bi-annual basis. Since 2000 ICPRA has been hosted by the Canadian Police Association (1998); The Police Federation for England & Wales (2000); The Police Federation of Australia [in conjunction with the Queensland Police Union] (2002); The Scottish Police Federation (2004); Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas [CLEAT] (2006); The New Zealand Police Association (2008) and the Police Union in Denmark (2010).

At the 2004 meeting delegates approved an 'In Principle Agreement Document' and for a General Secretariat for the organization to be established. The current General Secretary is Calum Steele (Scottish Police Federation).

In 2008 ICPRA agreed to establish a subscription base to support its activities and subscriptions were set at \$0.01 USD (one cent) per subscribing member per affiliated organisation per annum (to a maximum subscription of \$1000 USD per affiliated organisation per annum).

The 2010 meeting in Copenhagen was attended by nearly 30 delegates, representing more than 30 countries and representing the interests of well over one million professional police and law enforcement officers from across the world. The theme of the conference was "the Effect of the Global Recession on Policing and Police". The theme reflected that the worldwide recession as the single biggest issue that has impacted on ICPRA members over the last two years. The conference debated that the recession would continue to have a negative impact on policing as governments continue to cut public spending. It was considered unlikely policing would be exempted from this approach. All delegates expressed concerns over a likely increase in crime, decrease in police numbers and reductions in overall terms and conditions.

Another key-theme on the conference was "violence and threats against police officers". Delegates discussed the amplifying effect of the global financial crisis on social unrest and unemployment with the resultant increase in violent behaviour and violence against police officers worldwide. EuroCOP in particular, has made effort to try to draw public attention to this increasing problem; among other things by launching a campaign against police violence.

Delegates also discussed governmental approaches to workforce composition under the guise of so-called police reform. Central to that theme is the "carving up" of a range of policing roles into different jobs - and then providing only the limited training required for that specific role. This goes beyond civilianization of support roles. It has led to the creation of new types of operational 'second tier' police, such as the UK's PCSOs or New

Zealand's Authorized Officers. These officers wear uniforms, and have some power but are not versatile, well-trained police constables in the traditional sense. The risk is that these changes undermine the concept of the highly trained, adaptable, generalist police constable. The police reform agenda is driven by academic and administrative thinking, which is developed and shared across police services. The underlying issues and pressures – such as insatiable demand for police services, combined with government funding pressures – are common to all the jurisdictions worldwide. The conference stated that we can improve our ability to respond as police unions and associations, in our own jurisdictions, if we also share our views and experience.

International policing issues were also discussed. That included operational policing with an international dimension – such as policing the drugs trade, people smuggling and other organized crime and terrorism. Those issues feed through to new work priorities and pressures for police services worldwide. There is much to be gained by being well informed as police association representatives, when we engage with administrations and governments to improve the legislative and policy environment our members are working in. We can learn valuable lessons from each others' experience in these fields, and related issues affecting our members, like corruption and increasing prevalence of firearms in crime. All of the members also have members involved in international deployments, in peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction or capacity building roles. It is not an over-statement to say that police services are now as important to peacekeeping and international conflict resolution as the military.

The logic behind this is clear. A society with a fair, effective and efficient justice system, built round a good police service is much more likely to be stable and peaceful. Involvement in international deployments has generally been very positive for members at a personal level. However increasing demands of such deployments pose challenges for many. These include placing pressure on domestic police service infrastructures and resources, planning and managing deployments, and covering the gaps left on the frontline. They include practical difficulties with potential impacts to career progression, pay and conditions, and ongoing health support or compensation for conditions developed 'in theatre'. Those are all issues which police associations and unions have a clear role in responding to, on behalf of members and are issues on which ICPRA clearly has a key role.

ICPRA agreed in 2008 that there is clear potential to play a role in liaising with organizations that initiate and mandate international missions. Key amongst those organizations is the United Nations. The UN in recent years has responded to the increasing reliance on police in peacekeeping through development of a Police Division within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, or "DPKO".

This division has been involved in developing standards, norms, and doctrine governing deployments. ICPRA members are being deployed yet police associations and unions have had no input into this process, to ensure that members' interests are looked after. Conference therefore decided to continue engaging and building up relations with the UN in a mutually beneficial way; both to ensure our members' interests are protected,

and to assist in achieving rule-of-law objectives, by lending our experience and expertise in the development of strong, democratic police associations alongside police services.

The large US-association, Fraternal Order of Police, offered to host the next ICPRA meeting in 2012 in the United States.