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Extract from Rigsrevisionen's report on
**the performance of the Danish police
following a strengthening of terrorism
prevention and implementation of
temporary border control**

submitted to the Public Accounts Committee



1849
147.281
237
1976
114.6
22.480
908

1. Introduction and conclusion

1.1. PURPOSE AND CONCLUSION

1. This report concerns how policing has been affected since 2015, when police priorities shifted following an increased terrorism threat level and increased border control.

The duties of the police are determined in the Danish Act on Law Enforcement and in the prerequisites of the appropriations in the Fiscal Act that include the multi-annual political agreement covering the years from 2016 to 2019, and the increased appropriation for the police that is referred to in the Fiscal Acts for 2016, 2017 and 2018.

With the adoption of the multi-annual agreement, the parties agreed on a comprehensive strengthening of terrorism prevention and border control. Since it was impossible to increase the police force to the extent necessary in the short term, the agreement stipulated a shift in policing priorities for 2016 and 2017 corresponding to 300 man-years in 2016 and 117 man-years in 2017. However, the agreement did not stipulate which areas the police should downgrade. Moreover, immediately after adoption of the agreement, Denmark introduced temporary border control that went beyond the strengthening of border control implied in the agreement. Subsequently, the police upgraded the need for re-allocation of resources to 775 man-years, which corresponds to the police force of a major police district.

Ensuring that the consequences of the shift in priorities for the citizens were reduced to a minimum was a primary goal for the police. However, throughout the process, the National Danish Police have made it clear to the parties to the agreement and to parliament that it would not be possible to implement the shift in priorities without affecting the performance of the police.

2. The purpose of the study is to assess whether the police have ensured that the consequences for the citizens of the allocation of additional resources to terrorism prevention and border control have been minimised. The report answers the following questions:

- Have the police adjusted the scope of border control to the number of migrants arriving, regularly, in order to release resources for other aspects of policing?
- Have the police minimised the impact of the shifting priorities on the investigation of serious offences against citizens and the citizens' safety?
- Have the police ensured the continuation of the politically determined strengthening of the seven priority areas as stipulated by the multi-annual agreement?

Copenhagen was the target of a terror attack in February 2015 directed against a cultural centre and the synagogue.

Six months later, in September 2015, large numbers of refugees put unprecedented pressure on Denmark's borders.

THE PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

The parties to the multi-annual agreement covering the years from 2016 to 2019 represented a majority in the Danish parliament and consisted of the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Liberal Alliance, the Danish People's Party and the Social Democratic Party.

THE SEVEN PRIORITY AREAS

The priority areas determined by the politicians are burglary, gang crime, economic crime, cybercrime, organised crime and cross-border crime, policing in particularly vulnerable neighbourhoods and illegal cabotage.

Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in January 2017.

CONCLUSION

The shifting priorities following the increased terrorism threat level and the temporary border control have affected the performance of the police generally and also some of the priority crime areas like, for instance, serious offences against citizens. The study indicates that although the police have transferred resources to the area of serious offences against citizens, they have only been partially successful in preventing the shifting priorities from having an adverse effect on the citizens.

The police have allocated considerable additional resources to terrorism prevention and border control since the terror attack in February 2015 and the introduction of the temporary border control in January 2016. Resources allocated to the terrorism threat level and border control made up between 9% and 20% of the total amount of police time in 2016 and 2017, against 7% in 2014. As a consequence of the additional resources used for these two high-priority areas, the police have been forced to shift its priorities, as implied in the multi-annual agreement.

Upon completion of the agreement, and subsequently, the Danish National Police indicated that the police would minimise the impact of the shifting priorities on the citizens. To support the police in this goal, the Danish National Police, in March 2016, defined a set of principles to guide the priorities of the police districts. According to these principles, the police districts are required to give serious offences against citizens a higher priority than investigations of suspicious activities launched at the initiative of the police and less serious criminal cases.

The study shows that the total number of reported offences, excluding automated speed control, has dropped from 2014 to 2017, but the share of reported serious offences against citizens has increased from 3% to 6%.

In response to the increase in the number of serious offences against citizens, the police districts transferred personnel from areas of lower priority to areas that comprised this type of offences, and charged more offenders. However, the study indicates that the police have not transferred enough personnel to balance the increase in reported cases concerning serious offences against citizens. At the same time, the percentage of charges relating to this type of offences has dropped more than charges relating to cases investigated at the police's own initiative and less serious criminal cases.

The study indicates that case processing time for cases concerning serious offences against citizens has increased, although considerably less than for minor crimes such as theft, handling of stolen goods and crimes investigated at the initiative of the police. The study also shows that the Danish National Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions on several occasions, and most recently in September 2017, have urged the police districts to give higher priority to investigations of violence and rape.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles rank five types of assignments that are to provide the basis for the priorities made daily by the police districts.

AUTOMATIC SPEED CONTROL

Automatic speed control is carried out from manned vans fitted with a camera and speed indicator. This type of control is generally not carried out by police officers and is therefore usually not included in the statistics on reported offences.

PERCENTAGE OF CHARGES

The percentage of charges is calculated as the number of charges made in a specific period compared with the number of reported offences received during the same period – irrespective of the timing of the reported offence.

The Danish National Police have informed Rigsrevisionen that they do not agree with the methodology employed in our classification and estimate of serious offences against citizens. The Danish National Police do not measure the performance of the police against the guiding principles based on a classification of offences. Instead, they argue that the actual, material content of the individual cases determine whether they can be classified as serious. Rigsrevisionen agrees that our figures on serious offences against citizens may include cases that are not considered serious, just as serious offences may have been omitted, but notes that the Danish National Police consider the offence codes selected and included in our estimate relevant. Rigsrevisionen therefore concludes that the classification of serious offences against citizens provides an indication of the extent to which the results achieved by the police reflect the intention of the guiding principles.

The study shows that police response time has risen from 2014 to 2017, and the citizens' safety has dropped from 2016 to 2017.

The development in the seven priority areas shows that the police have succeeded in continuing the efforts in some, but not all of the areas stipulated in the multi-annual agreement for 2016 to 2019.

In the areas concerning economic crime and illegal cabotage, the results have not been maintained, as the percentage of charges has dropped while case processing time has increased.

Case processing time for burglary and cybercrime has also increased, but the police have succeeded in, respectively, maintaining and increasing the percentage of charges for these offences. At the same time, the police have met its objective of reducing the number of reported burglaries, which is now lower than it has been for several years.

In the area of gang crime, the performance measurement indicates that the police have continued their efforts from 2015 in 2017, and have improved their performance in particularly vulnerable neighbourhoods. Since the number, content and nature of the targets set change, a comparison over time should be made with caution.

No indicators are available to shed light on the efforts made and results achieved by the police as regards the last politically determined priority area: organised crime and cross-border crime. However, the Danish National Police have informed Rigsrevisionen that efforts have been continued within the framework of the two joint task forces in Eastern and Western Denmark.

Lastly, the study shows that the Danish National Police have adjusted total border control staffing on an ongoing basis and reduced the use of police man-years considerably by calling in assistance from the Danish Home Guard and the Defence, and training and deploying police cadets. However, the adjustments made by the Danish National Police far from match the decrease in the number of refugees seeking asylum in Denmark and illegal immigrants entering the EU.

ILLEGAL CABOTAGE

Cabotage is the transport of goods between two locations in the same country by a transport operator from another country. The EU has defined a set of rules governing cabotage that determine, among other things, the documentation requirements and how many cabotage operations that may be carried out within a given period.