



The history and present of preventive activities of the Municipal Police of the city Košice

História a súčasnosť preventívnych aktivít Mestskej polície mesta Košice

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Abstract:

Criminality is one of most important global problems. It interferes with social, security, economic, cultural and political spheres of life throughout society is therefore necessary to take all possible measures to prevent its growth. In practice, it's confirmed that prevention is essential and most effective. This article presents the preventive actions of the Municipal Police of the city Košice, its history, present and the prospects for its use in the fight against crime and other antisocial activities.

Keywords: *Criminality, safety, crime prevention, victims.*

Abstrakt:

Kriminalita je jedným z najzávažnejších celosvetových problémov. Zasahuje do sociálnej, bezpečnostnej, ekonomickej, kultúrnej i politickej sféry života celej spoločnosti. Preto je potrebné vykonať všetky možné opatrenia na zabránenie jej rastu. V praxi sa potvrdzuje, že aj v tejto oblasti platí osvedčené, že práve prevencia je najpodstatnejšia a najefektívnejšia. Tento článok prezentuje preventívne aktivity Mestskej polície mesta Košice, ich históriu, súčasnosť a perspektívy ich využitia v oblasti boja proti kriminalite a inej protispoločenskej činnosti.

Kľúčové slová: *Kriminalita, bezpečnosť, prevencia kriminality, viktímácia.*



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Introduction

The Municipal Police of the city Košice (hereinafter referred to as MP), according to § 3 paragraph 1) letter i) of Act of the Slovak National Council No. 564/1991 Coll. on Municipal Police, performs tasks in the field of prevention within the scope established by this Act. For the purpose of eliminating crime and other socially harmful activities, the MP organizes and conducts preventive security actions aimed at combating underage drinking, graffiti, vandalism, and eccentric youth movements. During these activities, the MP also uses a system of security cameras. In addition to these activities in the area of situational prevention, the MP is actively involved in other areas of prevention, focusing on children and youth, as this segment of the population is considered by the MP to be not only the most at risk but also the most impressionable and adaptable. For this reason, the MP conducts preventive activities mainly in kindergartens, elementary, and secondary schools. Similarly, the MP also pays close attention to the fact that elderly citizens – seniors – are also considered a high-risk group due to their age, while not forgetting middle-aged citizens.

1. History of preventive activities

The idea of preventive lectures, discussions, and staged plays focused on crime prevention, traffic education, etc., originated within the MP in May 2001. As a basis for implementing these preventive activities, station commanders of the MP were to use materials prepared by the MP in Nitra. This material consisted of a poorly copied informational brochure divided into two parts. The first part was intended for children, and the second part for adults. Each part ended with a test that the station commanders of the MP were to use at the end of the preventive activity. However, since no methodological guidance for the implementation of preventive activities was developed by the then leadership of the MP, coordination and cooperation among prevention entities were lacking, and there was no didactic technology, tools, or quality promotional materials available, the implementation of these preventive activities often remained theoretical. For these reasons, most of the station commanders of the MP at that time limited themselves to lectures and discussions about the activities of the MP, the misdemeanors act, and the city's generally binding regulations.

Preventive activities within the MP truly began to develop in the second half of 2005. During this period, as part of the crime prevention program and other socially harmful activities carried out by the MP, the Department of Education, Training, and Drills of the MP prepared and, in July 2008, updated four Microsoft PowerPoint presentations on the following topics:

- basic tasks of the MP,
- crime prevention for young people or how to protect oneself from potential danger,
- traffic education,
- crime prevention for seniors.

These presentations started being used by MP officers during interactive lectures and discussions, along with computer equipment, video projectors, various promotional materials, and demonstrations of equipment, gear, and weaponry. [1]

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2. Prevention of victimization

In the field of victimization prevention, specifically crime prevention aimed at ensuring people do not become victims of crimes, the MP focuses primarily on elementary and high school youth. This type of victimization prevention is implemented through lectures and discussions at elementary and high schools. It involves preparing children and youth to adopt and apply preventive measures to reduce their risk of becoming victims of crime. These measures include situational prevention strategies as well as personal preventive or safety behaviors, including appropriate responses in situations where they or others may be threatened by crime. This element of activating youth to protect their property, life, and health is the most characteristic aspect of victimization prevention as understood by the MP. [2]

Similarly, the MP takes a proactive approach in the social sphere by implementing social programs aimed at promoting activities that benefit children and youth at risk of social-pathological phenomena (such as unemployment, drug addiction, etc.). Through regular lectures and discussions integrated into the curriculum of elementary and high schools during ethics classes, the municipal police strive to create a genuine dialogue with young people. The goal of these activities is to engage young people in decision-making on matters that directly affect them, recognizing their participation in solving their problems, and treating them as partners. [2]

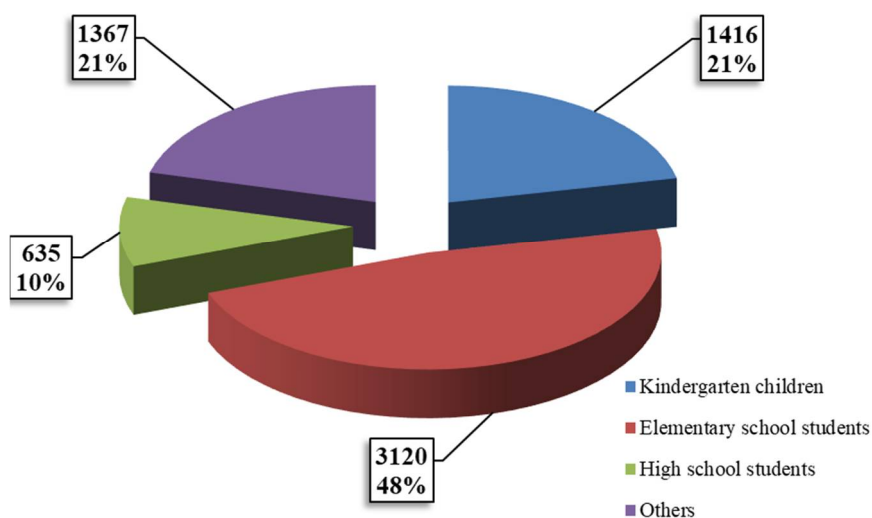


Fig. 1 Number of prevention targets from 2020 to 2023 [2]

From 2020 to 2023, the MP conducted a total of 231 lectures (discussions) spanning 308 instructional hours on topics including: „Traffic education”, „Crime prevention for children and youth I and II”, „Crime prevention for seniors”, „Human trafficking prevention”, „Basic tasks of the MsP”, „Extremism”, and „How and why to say NO to drugs.” [3]

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The number of prevention objects is shown graphically in fig. 1. A total of 6 538 people attended the lectures, of which 1 416 kindergarten children, 3120 elementary school students, 635 high school students, 1367 people from orphanages and other institutions. [2]

3. Evaluation of selected indicators of the activity of the MP

Between 2020 and 2023, MP officers handled a total of 148,983 infractions and administrative offenses, including:

- infractions related to generally binding regulations (VZN): 27 765,
- infractions related to traffic safety and flow: 96 810,
- administrative offenses related to traffic safety and flow: 5 816,
- other infractions: 18 592.

Among these:

- 60 783 infractions were resolved through on-the-spot fines totaling 1 027 430€,
- 5 426 administrative offenses were resolved through summary proceedings totaling 377 157 €,
- 6 902 infractions and administrative offenses were handled through reporting, transfer, or clarification reports, etc.,
- 75 872 infractions were resolved preventively, i.e., through warnings either at the MP unit or at the scene of the infraction. [2]

Tab. 1 Shares of infractions and administrative offenses handled by individual MP stations from 2020 to 2023 [2]

MP Station	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
MP - Juh	4377	5045	5008	4991	19421
MP - KVP	2602	2602	3534	3457	12195
MP - Nad jazerom	1166	2992	3074	3668	10900
POJ	1923	952	1492	1186	5553
MP - Sever	3602	4304	4287	5297	17490
MP - Stred	7075	7077	8156	10444	32752
MP - Šaca	861	1149	844	862	3716
MP - Ťahanovce	2425	2971	3004	2808	11208
MP - Východ	1642	2454	1966	2211	8273
MP - Západ	4918	5888	8184	8485	27475
Total	30591	35434	39549	43409	148983

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The shares of infractions and administrative offenses handled by individual MP stations for the period from 2020 to 2023 are presented in Table 1 and graphically depicted in Figure 2. The total number of infractions and administrative offenses handled by the MP from 2020 to 2023 is graphically depicted in Figure 3. [2]

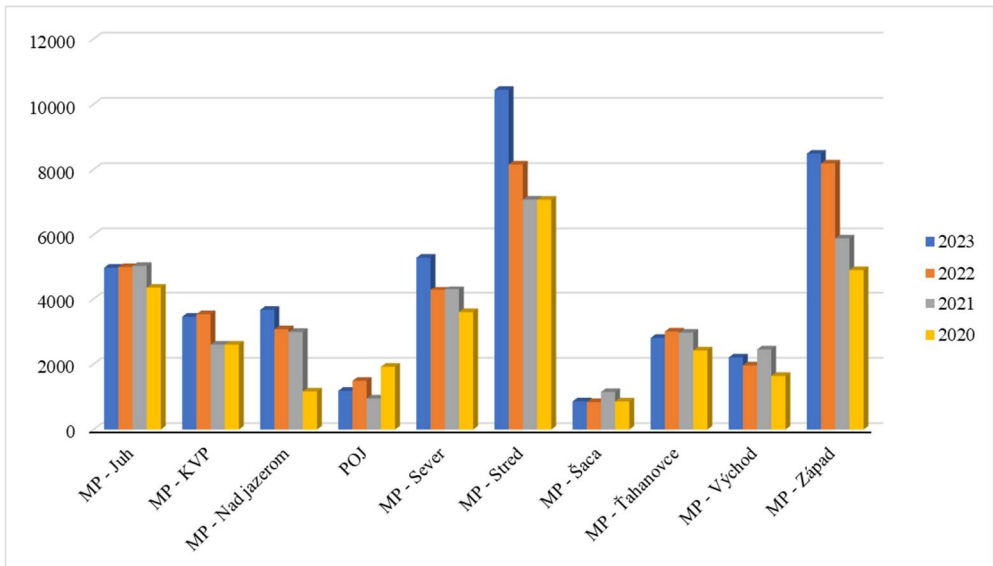


Fig. 2 Shares of infractions and administrative offenses handled by individual MP stations

from 2020 to 2023 [2]

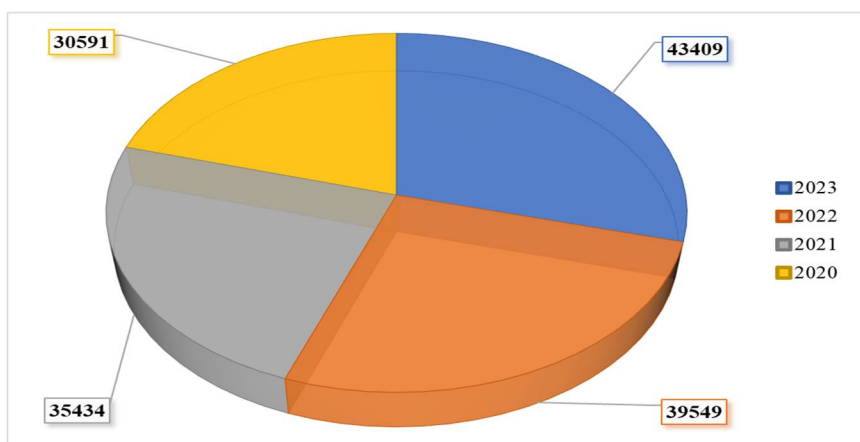


Fig. 3 Number of infractions and administrative offenses handled by the MP from 2020 to 2023[2]

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4. Camera system

Since 2006, the MP has been developing the Integrated Municipal Camera System (IMKS) within the framework of a security project, utilizing a technologically advanced and homogeneous environment. [4]

The BOSCH Video Management System was selected as the foundation for the IMKS, which was later expanded with the modern and conceptually open BOSCH Building Integration System. These systems have been gradually expanded through various projects (City of Košice, IKD, MET...), and currently, more than 220 IP elements (IP cameras, IP encoders, etc.) are connected to the IMKS, with a recording capacity of nearly 300 TB. The IMKS predominantly uses Bosch AUTODOME IP PTZ cameras, Bosch DINION IP fixed cameras, and Bosch FLEXIDOME IP fixed cameras in dome housings. [4]

All existing fixed cameras and AUTODOME IP PTZ cameras in the 7000 series are equipped with intelligent video analysis functions necessary for processing image data in the Smart City system. The current IMKS system features a robust solution in accordance with the iSCSI standard for storing video recordings from cameras, including metadata from intelligent video analysis, making them suitable for further use in the Smart City and BigData systems of Košice. The currently installed capacity is approximately 300 TB in a RAID 5 configuration. The IMKS solution exclusively uses manufacturer-supported professional iSCSI disk arrays (BOSCH DIVAR), meeting current data backup and cybersecurity requirements. [3, 4, 5]

To monitor the security situation in the city of Košice, the MP has 319 security cameras at its disposal. Of these, 3 cameras are installed in the Košice-Barca district, 17 cameras in the Košice-Dargovských Hrdinov district, 13 cameras in the Košice-Džungľa district, 38 cameras in the Košice-Juh district, 2 cameras in the Košice-Kavečany district, 6 cameras in the Košice-Košická Nová Ves district, 5 cameras in the Košice-Krásna district, 13 cameras in the Košice-Luník IX district, 9 cameras in the Košice-Nad Jazerom district, 22 cameras in the Košice-Sever district, 9 cameras in the Košice-Sídlisko KVP district, 14 cameras in the Košice-Sídlisko Ťahanovce district, 88 cameras in the Košice-Staré Mesto district, 17 cameras in the Košice-Šaca district, 7 cameras in the Košice-Ťahanovce district, 2 cameras in the Košice-Vyšné Opátske district, and 54 cameras in the Košice-Západ district. [2]

However, the camera system itself is not a panacea and cannot, by itself, prevent the commission of criminal and other socially harmful activities. When CCTV systems are deployed in the most problematic parts of the city, it often soon becomes evident that crime simply shifts from these areas to places where CCTV cameras are not installed. Therefore, the MP strives to deploy and fully utilize CCTV technology as widely as possible within its capabilities. It should be noted that even the best and most powerful cameras cannot cover every area with their lenses. There will always be some so-called „blind spots“. Therefore, CCTV system resources are deployed as efficiently as possible to the most preferred parts of urban agglomerations, based on the occurrence of undesirable illegal activities. [5]

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Conclusion

For many contemporary families, it is characteristic that they do not have their own cultural program. Activities such as reading books, playing board games, singing, or engaging in music are increasingly neglected. These activities are often replaced by television, video, and recorded music, leading to a suppression of interpersonal communication. Many parents mistakenly believe that these substitutes are appropriate for upbringing. However, both adults and children need proper upbringing. Children, in particular, require rich social contacts with both adults and their peers for their successful development. When such interactions are lacking within the family, children tend to seek these contacts outside the family, which does not always have positive outcomes (e.g., wandering, drugs, alcohol, etc.).

Based on experiences from previous years in crime prevention, MsP officers, in cooperation with other prevention entities, can effectively influence citizens, especially children and youth. The goal is not only to prepare the future generation for changes in the quality of relationships between citizens but also to provide direct guidance on dealing with situations that life brings today. The aim is also to be able to advise citizens, particularly children and youth, to always find alternative solutions to their problems concerning personal health and property protection, solutions that do not involve breaking the law. Ultimately, they should be allowed to freely decide which of these solutions they choose. It is essential to note that, despite the best intentions and efforts, neither police units nor educators can, for understandable reasons, substitute the primary educational institution, which is the family.

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