

Abstract

Guarantee of a minimum level of basic police service

Whereas the objective of the police reform was to provide the population with a basic police service of the same quality nationwide, it appears two years later that this objective cannot be met unless additional measures are taken.

The Court of Audit of Belgium has noted the following:

- 1) The federal standards defining a minimum level of basic police service are inadequate to ensure a service of the same quality nationwide.
- 2) The federal authority has not made sure that the minimum staff assigned for each police zone was sufficient to provide this minimum level of service. According to the Court's estimates the standard regarding the minimal staff is insufficient to ensure this in more than one out of four police zones.
- 3) As policemen are assigned to local police forces only on a voluntary basis, there is no guarantee that the staff needs in the zones will be met, even if these zones are already short of staff. The measures taken to address this problem are either incomplete or temporary.

The Court also noted that no federal service has been instructed to set up a monitoring system to check whether police zones comply with the standards regarding both the minimum level of service and the minimal staff requirements.

The various deficient approaches the Court has pointed out can impair the efficiency of the local police.