

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Report to the Federal Parliament: Federal Police support to the local police zones in order to maintain public order

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**Supporting the local police zones when they have to maintain public order not only belongs to the Federal Police core business, but it has also grown over the years. The Belgian Court of Audit has examined whether the Federal Police acts professionally when providing that kind of services. The Court has concluded that, although the objectives are consistent and clearly set, there is little information about their implementation. The Dirco's (i.e. the officers responsible for coordinating the support missions) have limited means and powers at their disposal. The Federal Police endeavours to be customer-driven while performing its support missions, but the local zones must actually do with the support they can get. The Federal Police does not have statistics about the support provided.**

Supporting the local police zones when they have to maintain public order is one of the core functions of the Federal Police. As a matter of fact, it has grown in importance as events, Brussels' international influence and the ongoing terrorist threat are on the rise.

The Court of Audit has examined whether the Federal Police acts professionally when it comes to support. It has analysed whether it is performing its support missions effectively, whether tasks are clearly divided and well-coordinated, whether it is customer-driven and whether it has the right management tools to do it.

The audit showed that the objectives of the Federal Police in terms of support are consistent and clearly set, but that there is little information available about their implementation. The objectives are in line with those of the national security plan and the policy briefs of the Minister of Home Affairs. However, a comprehensive vision of integral security is lacking.

The officers responsible for coordinating support missions (Dirco's) have inadequate means nor enough power to fulfil the key role they should play within their district. The Dirco's should dispatch optimally the traffic, railway, waterway and air police units in order to support zones in their district, but are not supervised. Daily operations mainly depend on their persuasion skills. Moreover, all members of the Federal Police do not agree regarding the authority Dirco's should have on the decentralised entities of the Federal Police intervention force (CIK) and on the intervention force's central unit (i.e. the federal intervention reserve of the Federal Police).

The solidarity mechanism between police zones (Hycap) – that is coordinated by the Federal Police – reveals some shortcomings. Some zones provide proportionally more Hycap than others. Dirco's are not empowered to compel a zone which refuses to provide Hycap. Neither can they impose uniformity between zones regarding training and equipment levels.

The Federal Police strives to be customer-driven. Nevertheless, its support function is still mainly defined by the offer and zones can only get the support that can be brought. These limits are not only due to savings, but also to the organisational structure and culture instituted within the Federal Police. The great zones invest themselves in specialised means, which leads to different kinds of material, equipment and procedures.

Demands for support are not always based on a comprehensive risk analysis. Mostly, the Federal Police sit on the fence when it comes to judging the appropriateness of the support. It endeavours to meet demands as much as possible in tandem with the zones.

The law on charged police services not being implemented (which lays down that event organisers shall pay for the requested support), all support missions completed in order to maintain public order are free.

As support is one of the Federal Police's core missions, it should be able to provide figures about it. Despite of its awareness, the Federal Police has little overview on the support's cost.

The Court of Audit recommends to develop management tools to monitor support, to define more precisely the competences related to the support decision-making processes and to set standards helping to decide whether support should be given or not. It also recommends to take time to think about the core missions of the Federal Police as well as about the financing standard of the local zones.

The Federal Police agrees with the Court's conclusions and recommendations. The Minister of Security and Home Affairs also largely concurs. He intends to review and reform significantly the general capacity that can be mobilised as well as the solidarity mechanism within the integrated police in order to guarantee an increased operational capacity and a better quality in the future.

The report is available in French and Dutch on the Court's website: ([www.courtfaudit.be](http://www.courtfaudit.be)).