From the Persuasion of Theory to the Certainty of Law

A Multi-Jurisdictional Analysis of the Law of Community Policing in Europe

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Abstract

This paper analyses the legal bases of community policing under European Union (EU) law and the national laws of England, France, Germany, Italy, Romania and Portugal. Community policing arguably helps the police achieve efficient policing while respecting the requirements of the rule of law, a founding value of the EU, and can be a form of co-operation between the EU Member States under the EU legal framework for crime prevention. Moreover, the law in the selected jurisdictions supports four elements of the community policing model: (1) the public-police partnership in establishing policing strategies and priorities; (2) the public-police partnership for crime prevention and detection; (3) proactive and preventive policing; and (4) the police as providers of high quality services tailored to improve people's quality of life. These elements are interrelated and interdependent: their holistic legal articulation is necessary for their effective existence.

Keywords

1 **Introduction**

The functions of the police in Europe are ‘to maintain public tranquillity and law and order in society; to protect and respect the individual’s fundamental rights and freedoms; to prevent and combat crime; to detect crime; [and] to provide assistance and service functions to the public.’¹ The public contribute to these functions by, for example, reporting a criminal activity, submitting a piece of evidence, and practising citizen’s arrests.² The public-police partnership in preventing and detecting crimes is central to ‘community policing’,³ which is a smart and effective management and operational philosophy of policing.⁴ Communities often understand their safety and security concerns more than professionals and thus can be innovative in suggesting solutions.⁵ Community policing strategies, initiatives and practices also emphasise that policing is a service, is driven by consent and is preventive.⁶

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Arguably, community policing reduces the trust gap between the public and the police to an extent that encourages respect for the law in society. Yet, this model of policing has received criticism on grounds such as: it fails to prevent abuses of the police powers; it favours those interested in more policing over those who want more limitations to be placed on policing; it assumes that communities are made of homogeneous actors that share the same idea on the importance of policing; it is a form of ‘romantic delusion’ since the proximity it implies between the community and the police is not realistic; it may endanger public safety; and its actions face legality and legitimacy challenges.

This paper discusses the legal grounds of community policing under European Union (EU) law and compares its legal bases both in jurisdictions where the police traditionally enjoy a high level of public trust (e.g. England and Germany) and in jurisdictions where trust in the police is relatively low.

This is to increase the certainty as to the legality of community policing and to provide a better understanding of its different legality sources. The comparison further aims to show that community policing has legal bases even in jurisdictions where the public trust in the police is low and that the maturity level of the jurisdiction’s community policing legal framework is an important, though not determinative, factor in building the public trust in the police.

Section 2 discusses the legal bases of community policing under EU law. Section 3 discusses and compares the legal bases of community policing in England, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Romania (‘selected jurisdictions’), and Section 4 is a conclusion.

2 The Bases of Community Policing in EU Law

Community policing has two legal bases in EU law: the rule of law and the crime prevention framework.

a The Rule of Law

The rule of law is:

a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated and which are consistent with international human rights and standards.17

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15 Kääriäinen (n 14); S. Staubli, Trusting the Police: Comparisons Across Eastern and Western Europe (Bielefeld: Transcript-Verlag, 2017) 65, 152; Lobnikar, Sotlar, and Modic (n 14).
It is one of the founding values of the EU, along with the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and human rights in general. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has identified several elements of the rule of law including the principles of legality, legal certainty, proportionality and respect for several procedural guarantees, such as the right to be heard.

The police ought to uphold the rule of law by enforcing democratically enacted laws to maintain order in society while respecting human rights and avoiding arbitrary actions. The police guard and are guided by the rule of law, but they are prone to violate it when focusing on efficiency in carrying out their duties to the detriment of human rights. As Jerome Skolnick explains, the 'tension between the operational consequences of ideas or order, efficiency, and initiative, on the one hand, and legality, on the other, constitutes the principal problem of police as a democratic legal organization.'

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22 See also J. Prinsloo and B. Kingshott, 'Ethics in policing', Phronimon 5(1) (2004) 49–70 (arguing that the police culture emphasises efficiency); C. Banks, Criminal Justice Ethics: Theory and Practice (2nd edn, Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009) 23 (arguing that the abuse of the police powers is linked to police nature and culture).

Community policing aims to alleviate this tension. The public-police partnership may improve crime prevention and detection more than the work of the police alone. It changes the public’s perception of the role of the police from that of a force into a service provider, which encourages the public to communicate information that may facilitate crime prevention and detection. In this partnership, the public is actively involved in guarding the rule of law with the police. Indeed, to be effective, the rule of law must not only govern the state and its institutions but also be ‘part of the moral tradition of the community’.

Moreover, community policing is more akin to the ‘due process’ model of criminal justice, under which controlling crimes must not be at the expense of human rights, than to the ‘crime control’ model, which emphasises keeping criminals off the streets. Community policing focuses on protection, not control, and builds its programs on values such as accountability, transparency and respect for human rights. This approach changes the attitude of the public toward the police, and vice versa, to an extent that may encourage voluntary adherence to law. In this context, it is worth noting that ‘criminal law’s power to influence conduct may reside in large part in its normative rather than its coercive crime control mechanisms.’

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Scholars have expressed the concern that community policing may undermine the rule of law because of the problem-solving approaches it uses beyond the legal mandate of the police. The response to this is that the label ‘community policing’ does not by itself grant legality to policing activities that do not have grounds in law or are not respectful of the rule of law elements. Policing in collaboration with the public remains subject to the rule of law: the police remain accountable, and persons suffering a violation of their rights are entitled to the remedies prescribed by law.

b The EU Crime Prevention Framework

The EU legal framework for crime prevention is one of the legal bases of community policing. First of all, the European Parliament and the Council can ‘establish measures to promote and support the action of Member States in the field of crime prevention, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.’ Therefore, they can prescribe measures that strengthen co-operation between the Member States. Community policing might be a domain of co-operation, since it is one of the zones of convergence between the EU Member States’ policies in the area of crime prevention. In a communication to the Council and European Parliament, the Commission recommended that crime prevention policies be tailored at a local level, that the preventive measures involve a wide variety of actors and that local crime prevention policies be supported by co-operation measures at the EU level.


Second, the European Parliament and the Council can adopt directives that define crimes and sanctions in cross-border serious crimes. 37 These directives may establish crime prevention measures that are community policing oriented. For instance, the EU directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims 38 requires Member States to take, where appropriate, suitable measures ‘in cooperation with relevant civil society organisations and other stakeholders, aimed at raising awareness and reducing the risk of people, especially children, becoming victims of trafficking in human beings.’ 39 Community policing is an important approach to combat human trafficking and protect its victims.40

Third, the European Council is in charge of designing ‘the strategic guidelines for legislative and operational planning within the area of freedom, security and justice.’ 41 For instance, it adopted the Stockholm Programme (2010–2014) – an open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens – which emphasised effective crime prevention through the co-operation between authorities and citizens for the purpose of developing an area of


41 **tfeu** (n 33) Art. 68.
freedom, security and justice.\textsuperscript{42} Further, the European Council re-established the European Crime Prevention Network (\textit{EUCPN}) to develop and co-ordinate crime prevention aspects at the EU level and support crime prevention measures taken at the national and local levels.\textsuperscript{43} Some of the \textit{EUCPN}'s duties focus on the promotion of preventive policing and on encouraging the public-police partnership in crime prevention and detection. Particularly, it has a duty to ‘facilitate cooperation, contacts and exchanges of information and experience between actors in the field of crime prevention’\textsuperscript{44} and ‘be in close contact, through the national representatives and the contact points, with crime prevention bodies, local authorities, local partnerships and civil society as well as with research institutions and nongovernmental organisations [NGOS] in the Member States.’\textsuperscript{45}

3 \textbf{The National Legal Frameworks of Community Policing}

England recognised the idea of community policing early on, in the Metropolitan Police Act,\textsuperscript{46} which established a modern, centralised and unified police force in London.\textsuperscript{47} Echoing Sir Robert Peel’s Nine Principles of Law Enforcement,\textsuperscript{48} the Metropolitan Police Act emphasised preventive policing

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, Art. 4(a).
\item \textsuperscript{46} 10 Geo 4 c.44 (Metropolitan Police Act) (1829).
\end{itemize}
and the public-police partnership. Since then, the legal framework of community policing has significantly evolved in England and later developed in the other selected jurisdictions. In each jurisdiction, the law explicitly or implicitly supports at least three aspects of community policing: the public-police partnership, preventive policing and policing as a service.

Public-Police Partnership in Setting Policing Strategies and Priorities

The English legal system is a pioneer in supporting co-operation between the public and police in establishing policing priorities and strategies. In England, a local policing body has a duty to take the necessary measures for collecting views from the victims of crimes and the community members about policing. The local policing body has another duty to collect the views of both groups on the ‘police and crime plan’ before it is issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for a policing area or by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime for the Metropolitan Police District. This happens through online and offline surveys, workshops or focus groups. The police and crime plan sets out the police objectives for the financial year and the resources designated to achieve them in accordance with the national policing plan.

Furthermore, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 establishes Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and execute crime control strategies. CSPs include the local police, the local council, probation services, local health service bodies and emergency authorities. In each local government area, there is a strategy group in charge of preparing strategic assessments in addition to preparing and implementing a partnership plan on behalf of the

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50 Police Act 1996, c.16, s.96 (1) (a)-(b).
51 Ibid., s.96 (1A).
55 Ibid., s.6.
56 Ibid., s.5.
partners of the CSP. The partnership plan sets out the crime control strategy, the community safety priorities and the measures and resources necessary for implementation. The strategy group has a duty to engage the public in the preparation and implementation of the partnership plan. Thus, it must make arrangements to collect the views of community members about: ‘(a) the levels and patterns of crime and disorder and substance misuse in the area; and (b) the matters which [the partners of the CSP] should priorities when each are exercising their functions to reduce crime and disorder and to combat substance misuse in the area.’ The strategy group must seek views on those issues from persons representing the interests of as many different groups in the community as possible, especially groups that will likely be affected by the implementation of the partnership plan. Therefore, it must hold public meetings that join senior representatives of the authorities, members of the strategy group and community members.

Moreover, in England, the strategy group has a duty to consult the public in the process of preparing the strategic assessments, which are used in revising the partnership plan. A county strategic group will also use the yearly strategic assessments to prepare community safety agreements that describe how the different partners in the county strategic group will collaborate to implement the community safety priorities set out in the strategic assessments and how those partners may otherwise effectively collaborate to reduce the rate of crime and disorder in the county.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 decentralised the responsibility for policing in England. The police share the responsibility of fighting crime and disorder in the community with multiple local agencies. In this structure, the

57 The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007, s1 1994/1830, s.3.
58 Ibid., s.10–11.
59 Ibid., s.12 (1)–(2).
60 Ibid., s.12 (1).
61 Ibid., s.12 (2).
62 Ibid., s.12 (4).
63 Ibid., s.5, 6 and 12 (1).
64 Ibid., s.9.
role of the local community in policing is as important as the role of any other local agency involved in the CSP.  

The legal systems in France and Romania are the closest to the English system with respect to the emphasis on the public-police partnership in setting policing strategies and priorities. Each French municipality has a local council for safety and crime prevention whose role is to identify security and crime prevention goals, strategies and actions in collaboration with the local public and private entities, including community representatives. The work of the local council influences policing within the municipality and could influence policing priorities and strategies in other municipalities through the work of the Inter-communal Council for Security and Crime Prevention, which co-ordinates the security and crime prevention actions amongst the municipalities.

Romania has adopted another model by which the public’s influence on policing strategies and priorities is implicit in the duty of the police to fulfil their mandate in collaboration with other state departments, non-governmental institutions and legal and natural persons. The law establishes in Bucharest and in each county the Territorial Authority of Public Order, which includes members representing the police and the community, to provide consultations on how to tailor policing services to protect the community interest. Mayors also have a duty to organise periodic consultation meetings with local community members to discuss the priorities of the local police. Furthermore, the studies of the Institute for Crime Inquiry and Prevention on crime control resemble another form of public consultation as they receive inputs from the community and education institutions.

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71 Ibid., Art. 17.


By contrast, there is no clear statutory duty to engage the public in establishing policing strategies and priorities in the other selected jurisdictions. The public may influence policing in Italy and Portugal to the extent that they may generally influence the government’s decision-making through the democratic channels prescribed by the Constitution and other relevant laws.\textsuperscript{74}

Unlike the other selected jurisdictions, Germany is a federal state: the federal parliament legislates on criminal law whereas the parliaments of the 16 states (Länder) legislate on state police matters.\textsuperscript{75} Therefore, the forms of the public-police partnership in setting policing priorities and strategies may differ from one state to another. In each state, the Ministry of Interior has the power to adopt the policies necessary for the achievement of its mandate and to sponsor initiatives to collect the views of the citizens on policing priorities and strategies.\textsuperscript{76} For instance, the Ministry of Interior in Baden-Württemberg has used questionnaires to collect the views of the citizens on local crimes, particularly their nature and patterns, location, community impact and control measures.\textsuperscript{77} This approach enables the local government to locate security problems in the community and prescribe community-tailored solutions.\textsuperscript{78} In addition, the Ministry of Interior can establish or encourage the creation of ‘crime prevention councils’, ‘crime prevention bodies’ and ‘partnerships for public order’ to facilitate public engagement in setting policing priorities and strategies.\textsuperscript{79} For instance, North Rhine-Westphalia has formed partnerships


\textsuperscript{75} Arts. 71–73 and 74 Abs. 7 GG. Although under the Grundgesetz criminal law is a concurrent jurisdiction matter, the Länder can only legislate ‘to the extent that the Federation [federal parliament] has not exercised its legislative power by enacting a law.’ Art. 72(1) Abs.7 GG. It is worth noting that the federal parliament has exclusive legislative competence in matters relating to the cooperation between the states and the federation regarding ‘criminal police work.’ \textit{Ibid.}, Art. 73 Abs. 1 GG.

\textsuperscript{76} See e.g. Art. 5 Verfassung für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen v. 28.06.1950, GV. NRW. 28 1950, 127.


\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Ibid.}.

involving the police and other local stakeholders for public order in its towns and cities.80 Notably, in this state, the police statute explicitly requires the police to establish an advisory board to: (a) promote the trust between the community, the local government and the police; (b) support the work of the police; and (c) communicate the concerns and wishes of the community to the police.81

The citizens’ participation in governmental decision-making in Germany through different democratic channels, such as citizens’ applications and assemblies, further facilitates the public-police partnership in establishing policing priorities and strategies.82 For instance, in Bavaria citizens have a ‘joint consultation right’ that requires the mayor to call for a citizens’ assembly at least once a year to discuss the municipality’s affairs.83 These assemblies enable citizens to share their opinions and concerns regarding the municipality matters,84 including policing.85

b Public-Police Partnership in Crime Prevention and Detection

The emphasis on the public-police partnership in crime prevention and detection is conspicuous in the legal frameworks of policing in England and Romania. The English police have a duty to make arrangements that secure people’s co-operation in crime prevention.86 In addition, the strategy group preparing the community safety partnership plan – discussed above – is required to consider the feasibility of engaging the public in crime control in their communities.87 Similarly, the Romanian police have a duty to co-operate with the local authorities and representatives of the community for the purpose of crime prevention and detection.88 For instance, the police have entered into a partnership with the Ovidiu Rom Association in order to implement crime

80 Feltes (n 77).
82 For a discussion of all the forms of citizens' direct and indirect participation in decision-making in Germany, see Council of Europe, Structure and Operation of Local and Regional Democracy: Germany (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1998) 16–17.
83 Art. 18 Abs. 1 Gemeindeordnung für den Freistaat Bayern v. 22.08.1998, GVBl. 21 1998, 796.
84 Ibid., Art. 18 s.3.
85 Art. 38 1 Verfassung des Freistaates Bayern v. 2.12.1946, GVBl. 23 1946, 333.
86 Police Act 1996 (n 50) s.96 (1)(a).
87 The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007 (n 57) s.13.
88 Law 218/2002 on the Organisation and Functioning of Romanian Police (n 70) Art. 22(1).
prevention projects to counter juvenile delinquency and child victimisation among the Roma population.89

Establishing a partnership with the public for the purpose of crime prevention and detection generally falls within the discretionary powers of the Ministry of Interior and/or the police organisations in the other selected jurisdictions. The Portuguese Public Security Police (PSP) have a broad mandate of ensuring the safety and security of the communities that fall within their jurisdiction and, while doing so, they must co-operate with other forces and public authorities, especially local government authorities.90 The Integrated Programme of Proximity Policing, combining the different crime control projects and initiatives of the PSP,91 has created a stronger link between the police and the communities they serve by increasing the presence of the police in the community,92 providing policing services tailored to the needs of the local communities and providing policing services in collaboration with the private and public local bodies.93 Under this programme, the PSP have created proximity policing teams responsible for preventing domestic violence, detecting potential crimes and providing support to crime victims.94 Proximity policing teams rely on trained proximity police officers for the purpose of improving the safety culture in the community.95 They perform different forms of patrol,

90 Law No. 53/2007 Approving the Organizational Structure of the Public Security Police, 31 August, Art. 6(1).
92 Fernandes (n 91); CERD (n 91).
93 Fernandes (n 91).
respond to minor safety problems in the community and detect potential local security problems.  

96 In the course of their activities, they co-operate with the community members, whether natural or legal persons, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local authorities.  

Similarly, the Italian Ministry of Interior has the power to develop community policing programmes, such as neighbourhood watch programmes, in order to engage the public in crime prevention, facilitate crime reporting and improve the relations between the police and the communities they serve.  

98 At the local level, the Mayors of the municipalities oversee policing, issue regulations for public order and security within their municipalities and promote collaboration between the local and national police.  

99 Because of this broad mandate, they have the power to propose security and safety initiatives that promote collaboration between the police and the community for the purpose of crime prevention. For instance, some municipalities have hired former police officers to patrol public parks and schools.  

100 This level of the public’s involvement in crime prevention and detection also echoes the situation in France, where individuals can volunteer to assist in joint patrols with the police, become involved in social mediation and deliver crime prevention education.  

101 The volunteers do not exercise public power prerogatives.  

In Germany, the public-police partnership in crime prevention and detection originates from the same legal and institutional framework of the public-police partnership in setting up policing priorities and strategies at the state level: specifically, the crime prevention councils, crime prevention bodies and partnerships for public order.  

104 These bodies create ‘an inter-agency
approach to crime prevention’ according to which the police and the justice agencies may collaborate with other public and private partners in preventing crimes.105 Moreover, the federal government collaborates with the governments of the states under the umbrella of the Crime Prevention Forum, which adopts the philosophy that crime prevention is also a society’s duty and, accordingly, engages many public and private actors in its work.106

The public-police partnership in crime prevention and detection emerges not only from policing statutes but also from other laws, such as criminal law. For instance, the failure to report a crime is a criminal offence in Germany, Romania, France and Italy.107 The criminal law in Germany, France, Italy, Romania and Portugal establishes a duty to rescue.108 Additionally, the criminal procedures law in these jurisdictions, and in England, allows citizen's arrests: the legal authorisation of everyone to arrest a person caught in a criminal act or being pursued because of a criminal act, subject to specific conditions provided in the law.109

105 Jasch (n 79).
107 Section 138 S.1-3 StGB; Art.266, C. Pen.; Art. 434–1 C. pén.; Arts. 331, 361, 362 cod. pen. Besides criminal law statutes, other statutes may impose an obligation to report crimes. See e.g. Art. 11 Gesetz zur Ergänzung der Bekämpfung der Geldwäsche und der Terrorismusfinanzierung (Geldwäschebekämpfungsergänzungsgesetz- GwBekErgG) v. 13.08.2008, BGBl. I 2008, 1690 (requiring financial institutions to report financial transactions involving property or assets reasonably suspected to be a product of a crime or related to terrorism financing). There is no general duty to report crimes in England, since the Criminal Law Act 1967 abolished the offence of ‘misprision of felony.’ C. Gosnell, ‘Damned if You Don’t: Liability for Omissions in International Criminal Law’, in: W.A. Schabas, Y. McDermott and N. Hayes (eds), The Ashgate Research Companion to International Criminal Law: Critical Perspectives (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) 101–132. Nonetheless, there are statutes, such as the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, c.29, that impose a duty to report specific crimes. Similarly, the Penal Code of Portugal does not include a general duty to report crimes but criminalises one’s failure to disclose information he/she has relating to money laundering activities. See Penal Code, Decree-Law No. 400/82, 23 September 1982, art. 368-A.
109 Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, c.60, s.24A (1)-(2); Art. 73 C. pr. pén.; Art. 383 cod. proc. pen.; Código de Processo Penal, Decreto-Lei n.º 78/87, de 17 de Fevereiro Decreto-Lei n.º 78/87, de 17 de Fevereiro 1987, Art. 255(1)(b); Section 127 StPO. Art. 310, C. Proc. Pen.
Preventive Policing

Preventive policing refers to the approach in which ‘the police, acting on their own initiative, develop information about crime and strategies for its suppression.’110 It is the first principle in Sir Robert Peel’s Principles of Law Enforcement: ‘[t]he basic mission for which police exist is to prevent crime and disorder as an alternative to the repression of crime and disorder by military force and severity of legal punishment.’111 Crime prevention is one of the values and missions of the police in the selected jurisdictions,112 for it reduces victimisation and the cost of the criminal justice system.113

Preventing crimes requires understanding of their root causes and an evidence-based approach to addressing them.114 In this respect the Home Secretary issues crime prevention strategies identifying drivers of crimes and measures to counter them in England.115 Similarly, the federal Commission on Police-Based Crime Prevention in Germany and the Territorial Authority of Public Order established in Romania’s capital and counties are important fora

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111 Peel (n 48). See also V.E. Kappeler and L.K. Gaines, Community Policing: A Contemporary Perspective (New York: Routledge, 2015) 378 (arguing that preventive policing is an important element of the community policing paradigm).
for crime prevention research.\textsuperscript{116} The recommendations and manuals of these bodies are designed to help police departments develop effective crime prevention programmes. In contrast, Portugal does not have a national-level body for crime prevention.\textsuperscript{117} However, in recent years, it has taken noticeable steps in building its crime prevention capacity. By its fifth National Plan against Domestic Violence (2014–2017),\textsuperscript{118} Portugal aims to provide a comprehensive strategy for crime prevention and victim protection. The plan has five strategic areas under each of which a number of measures are to be applied: ‘(1) Prevent, raise awareness and educate; (2) Protect victims and promote their integration; (3) Intervene with perpetrators; (4) Train and qualify professionals; (5) Investigate and monitor.’\textsuperscript{119}

Preventing offending by children and young persons is an important part of preventive policing.\textsuperscript{120} For this reason, the English police have a duty to collaborate with the different actors in the youth justice system, such as the local probation and health authorities, to prevent offending by children and young persons.\textsuperscript{121} The establishment of local multi-disciplinary youth offending teams responsible for addressing youth offending locally is an important form of this collaboration.\textsuperscript{122} The prevention of the juvenile delinquency is particularly the focus of crime prevention in Portugal,\textsuperscript{123} where municipalities adopt

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{116} Mohanty and Mohanty (n 106) 87–89.
\bibitem{118} Resolution of the Council of Ministers 102/2013, Official Journal No. 253, 1st series, 31 December 2013.
\bibitem{122} See Crime and Disorder Act (n 54) s.39 (1)-(2), s.39 (7) and s.40(3); Arthur (n 121).
\bibitem{123} Kulach, Whiskin and Marks (n 117) 30.
\end{thebibliography}
social programmes to address the socio-economic causes of crimes and PSP teams raise awareness amongst students of issues such as alcohol, drug abuse, discrimination and equality. The PSP provide training to the officers on such topics and collaborate with public and private actors in the development of those training sessions. The Romanian police also have powers to collaborate with educational institutions and NGOs to train and educate the public about the measures for countering juvenile delinquency. In Germany, the federal Commission on Police-Based Crime Prevention acts as a research centre to produce grass-root initiatives for crime prevention. Further, several states have developed neighbourhood watch groups to patrol schools and public parks. State laws regulate the work of these volunteer groups and give them some powers, including the power to ask a suspicious individual to leave the area. Also, the law in both Italy and France provides bases for volunteers’ involvement in crime prevention activities.

In all the selected jurisdictions, the police can exercise several traditional powers necessary for crime prevention, such as the power to stop and search or the power to detain.
Policing as a Service

The police and other public institutions must deliver high quality services in order to maintain their legitimacy. Policing as a service is also a characteristic of community policing that requires the police to take measures to improve the public’s quality of life, in addition to the traditional role of crime control. A clear reflection of this duty is the ‘Best Value’ regime in England, under which the police and several other local authorities must ‘secure continuous improvement in the way in which [their] functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.’ In other words, the police are providers of responsive and high quality services tailored to meet society’s needs. They are accountable to the public they serve and thus must consult with them on particular issues such as the future of any of the services in the policing area, the assets allocated to the services and the services’ impact on the community. Besides achieving ‘Best Value’ in their services, the English police have a duty to: (1) endeavour to deliver services tailored to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being


135 Cabinet Office, Modernising government (London: The Stationery Office, 1999) 41; Leishman, Loveday and Frank (n 66) 3 (noting that the Best Value duty views the police as a service provider); Newburn (n 67) 118 (arguing that the Best Value regime negates the ‘policy solution’ to policing and encourages competition.).

in the communities they serve and seek to achieve a social value in their public service contracts; (2) co-operate with local authorities to improve the well-being of children; and (3) design and exercise their functions in a manner that reduces socio-economic inequalities and eliminates direct and indirect discrimination.

The role of the police as a service provider is limited and less developed in the legislative and regulatory frameworks of the police in Germany, France, Italy, Romania and Portugal. Specifically, crime prevention bodies and partnerships usually provide society welfare services in the course of their efforts to prevent crimes in Germany. The police’s involvement in improving the people’s quality of life in France, Italy and Portugal mainly takes the form of victim and vulnerable group support programs. And, although the Romanian law requires the police to act ‘in the interest and support of the person, the community and public institutions’; ‘display solicitude and respect for any person’; and ‘continuously improve their professional and general training level’, the nature of these duties reflects the focus on the demilitarisation of the police more than on the improvement of the people’s quality of life.

137 Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, c.3, preamble.
139 Equality Act 2010, c.15, s.1 (1). s.4, 13, 19, 26 and 27.
140 Feltes (n 77) 223.
141 See e.g. Ord. n° 12–351 du 12 mars 2012, art. L111-1; Law No. 112/2009, 16 September 2009; Ordinance 220-A/2010; Resolution of the Council of Ministers 102/2013 (n 118). See also State Report (n 95) 26–27 (noting that the PSP has offices designated for supporting the victims of domestic violence); Fernandes (n 91) (noting that the PSP forms victim support teams); CEDAW (n 94) (noting that the National Republican Guard (GNR) has special offices in which female officers provide help women victims of domestic violence); Capobianco (n 126) (arguing that providing support and advice to victims of crimes establishes confidence in the police and encourages crime reporting).
143 Ibid., Art. 41(b).
144 Ibid., Art. 41(c).
145 See ibid., Art. 1(1): (‘The police staff consists of civil servants with special status, armed, who usually wear a uniform and exert responsibilities established by law for the Romanian Police, as a specialised state institution’); Abraham (n 73) (arguing that the Romanian police are a service provider). Law No. 155/2010 on Local Police (n 72) requires the local police to provide social assistance to some groups, such as vulnerable homeless and parentless children. However, its impact on encouraging the local police to improve their services
4 Conclusion

In 1829, Sir Robert Peel wrote: ‘[t]he police are the public and the public are the police.’146 Today, community policing is a popular model of policing and an active topic of research. Community policing focuses on establishing a multi-purpose partnership between the public and police. It adopts the philosophy that ‘prevention is better than cure’. Additionally, it emphasises the role of the police as providers of high quality services that contribute to people’s quality of life.

Community policing has legal bases in both EU law and the laws of the selected jurisdictions. It facilitates the function of the police to enforce the law in a manner consistent with the rule of law, which is a founding value of the EU. Further, the European Parliament and Council can take steps that promote collaboration between the Member States in the field of crime prevention. In this respect community policing can be an important field of co-operation, given its popularity in the EU Member States. It can also be one of the policing programmes for combating cross-border serious crimes, on which the European Parliament and Council may adopt directives that define crimes and sanctions.

Community policing has legal bases in both the jurisdictions where the police enjoy a high level of public trust and the jurisdictions where public trust in the police is low. However, the maturity level of the jurisdiction’s community policing legal framework is an important, though not determinative, factor in building this trust. In the selected jurisdictions, community policing’s legal bases exist in a complex matrix of laws, regulations and policies, which are not always explicit in articulating its elements. Albeit not necessarily under the banner of community policing, the law in the selected jurisdictions requires, or supports, at least one of the main elements of this policing model. First of all, the English and Romanian legal systems establish a clear and explicit duty that requires the police to involve the public in setting policing priorities and strategies. In contrast, involving the public in this task is generally implied or optional in the laws of the other selected jurisdictions. It is therefore recommended that these jurisdictions follow the English model by establishing a clear statutory duty that requires the police to engage the public in establishing policing priorities and strategies.

Second, in England and Romania the police have a duty to take measures to secure the public’s co-operation in crime prevention and detection, whereas

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146 Peel (n 48).

seeking this support falls within the discretionary powers of the Ministry of Interior and/or the police organisations in the other selected jurisdictions.

Third, England, Germany and Romania have in place a legal and institutional framework that facilitates studying the root causes of crimes and how to address them, especially amongst youth. The preventive policing philosophy is also visible in the Portuguese fifth National Plan against Domestic Violence and in the programmes for neighbourhood watch groups in Italy and France. These three jurisdictions, however, should adopt further legal and institutional measures that increase the enforcement of preventive policing, especially to combat offending by children and young persons, such as the establishment of national bodies that design and supervise the implementation of comprehensive crime prevention programmes.

Finally, the law in England establishes the police as providers of responsive and high quality services tailored to meet society’s needs. Conversely, beyond crime control, the police’s role in improving the people’s quality of life is narrowly constructed in the other selected jurisdictions to focus on helping vulnerable groups and victims of crimes. To remedy this situation, these jurisdictions should establish a duty that requires the police to tailor their services, to the extent possible, to improve the quality of life in the communities they serve and to collaborate with other actors in the community for this purpose.

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