

# Selection of Police Personnel: A Case Study of Slovenia

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*This paper presents the selection procedure (the entry requirements and eligibility criteria) and in this perspective, the organisational and educational characteristics of the Slovenian police. The aim is to present the results of research conducted in international environment and to compare its unique characteristics with the Hungarian practice.*

**Keywords:** *entry requirements, selection of police personnel, eligibility criteria*

## Introduction

The recruitment of police personnel is influenced by many factors such as the budget, the (generational) preferences of the applicants or even the nature of the selection procedure (the eligibility criteria).

Monitoring these factors and adopting them continuously according to the needs might be crucial in the hiring and later on in the performance of the organisation.

Analysing the police selection system of other countries can assist to understand different trends and also to give ideas of applicable methods which can help to improve an applied methodology.

This study is a part of a publication series (published in Hungarian papers) in which the selection procedure of other European countries (e.g. the Czech Republic, Poland, Malta etc.) were described in the same structure in order to create a comparing study.

It was hypothesised that the general principles of the selection procedure and the entry requirements of the police personnel are similar, but operate with country (territorial) specific characteristics.

The paper is to present a description about the selection procedure of the Slovenian police personnel, therefore, it will set aside a more critical and sharply expressed analysis. The latter will be published when all parts of the comparison study are performed and an analysis can be made about the elements that should be theoretically integrated in the Hungarian system.

The reason for analysing Slovenia was that the country is neighbouring Hungary and both of them have the same public administration model.

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The paper firstly describes the methodology, the organisational and educational characteristics of the Slovenian police. It continues with the presentation of the recruitment, the entry terms and the bars of application.

Finally, the selection procedure, namely the medical, the physical and the psychological standards will be described.

During the description, reference will be made to the differences and similarities between the Hungarian and Slovenian system characteristics.

## Methodology

To collect information on the entry requirements and on the eligibility criteria of the Slovenian police, in addition to the analysis of the relevant literature, a structured questionnaire was used which was divided in two main parts.

The use of standard questionnaire was necessary due to the fact that the literature published in English is limited, and most of the available English documentation is not up-to-date.<sup>2</sup>

As regards the questionnaire, the first part deals with the organisational structure and the educational system of the police to make a proper context for the characteristics of police selection.

The second part was related to the terms and bars of application, recruitment and eligibility criteria of the police.

The questionnaire has been sent to a Europol Slovenian Liaison Bureau<sup>3</sup> to ensure a detailed overview on the topic.

## Organisational Structure and Staff Number

The police of the Republic of Slovenia is overseen by the Ministry of the Interior and lead by the Director General of the Police.

The organisational structure of the police, like in Hungary, is hierarchically organised and structured on three main levels: local, regional and central.<sup>4</sup>

“Police tasks at the state level are performed by the General Police Directorate, which is the highest body within the police organization and is represented by the Director General of the Police, who is appointed by the Government and responsible to the Minister of the Interior. Since 2011, there have been eight Police Directorates (regional level) responsible for organizing police activities and criminal investigation and coordinating police activity at a local level. These are performed by police stations. There are different types

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<sup>2</sup> The use of questionnaire and its detailed description has already been published (Mogyoródi 2018). The response for the questionnaire was received in June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> It was considered the shortest route to address liaison officers with the questionnaire, bearing in mind that most of the questions were out of their scope, but had the possibility to collect the necessary information from the competent police units.

<sup>4</sup> There are 111 local police forces, 8 police directorates as regional force and one General Police Directorate on national level.

of police stations – (general) police stations, traffic police stations, border police stations, maritime police stations, airport police stations, mounted police stations, service dog handler stations, and police stations for compensatory measures.”<sup>5</sup>

In 2016, the Slovenian police applied 4,556 male and 907 female uniformed police officers, while the number of non-uniformed police personnel was 1,392 male and 302 female. Besides, 1,069 (877 female and 192 male) non-regular police employees formed a part of the whole staff of the police.

The total workforce of the organisation was 8,212 in which the average age of the employees was 41.2 years. According to the website of the Eurostat, in 2016 the ratio of the police personnel per 100,000 inhabitants was 398 which is slightly higher than the Hungarian.

Due to budgetary deficit, the number of – the employees of the police was reduced with more than 1,000.<sup>6</sup>

According to the provided response to the questionnaire, the most common reasons for the outflow were retirement and the consensual cancellation of employment.

## Educational System

“In 2012, the Slovenian police adopted new standards for police work in Slovenia. An entry level for first-line police post is going to be associate degree from Higher Police School and secondary education will not be sufficient any more. A new program combines the former 18-month course and the old Higher Police School curriculum and represents an attempt of Slovenian police to professionalize police work. According to the Police Act (Zakon o policiji, 1998), the Police Academy will cooperate with Universities to develop educational programs for managerial positions. In addition to training for first-line police officers, the Police Academy also offers a variety of comprehensive on-the-job training courses – e.g., training in area of police management and leadership for first-line police supervisors, for middle and for top management, an initial course for criminal investigators, and a list of short courses in the area of police specialities and human resource development.”<sup>7</sup>

The basic training program<sup>8</sup> puts emphasis not only on the education of the theoretical subjects, but on the practical training, as well. The students must undergo a 400 hours long practical training.

During the theoretical education, the Police Academy lectures subjects related to the police work. The courses cover: the role of the police within the state and the society,

<sup>5</sup> Meško et al. (2013) 265.

<sup>6</sup> In 2012 9,218, in 2013 8,355, in 2014 8,271, in 2015 8,188, in 2016 8,187, in 2017 8,186 employments were allowed. A proposal was lodged by the police to increase the number of police personnel with at least 300 additional employments.

<sup>7</sup> Meško et al. (2013) 270.

<sup>8</sup> In 2016, 100 students entered the study program.

communication skills, police powers, misdemeanour acts, criminal law, practical procedures and skills, crime act investigation, management studies like organisation and leadership.

## **Recruitment and Eligibility Requirements**

The recruitment campaign and the entry requirements are published on the central website of the police and on the website of the Ministry of Public Administration, as well. The applicants can get acquainted with the role, the duty and the tasks of the police through different catalogues and brochures which are available for all the candidates on the website of the police.

The members of the Slovenian police are civil servants; their employment, the terms and bars of application are regulated by law.

To apply for the Police Academy the applicant must be a Slovene national<sup>9</sup> who has a permanent residence in the European Union, successfully completed any secondary school level programme or a programme that is comparable, must have no conviction for any intentional crime or a crime punishable by more than 3 months imprisonment, must not be a member of any political party<sup>10</sup> and must have a valid B-category driving licence. It should be highlighted that there is no age limit to join the police.

For all the candidates, there is a vetting procedure (scrutiny) which is regulated in the Police Organisation and Work Act<sup>11</sup> and performed with the prior written consent of the candidates. In case the consent is not given by the candidate, it is considered that the candidate does not meet the entry conditions.

The proper physical fitness and mental health are also conditions of the application which are examined and established in the further procedures of the recruitment competition.

Candidates must lodge their application with a single written application form with all necessary appendixes.

Annexes are as follows: signed application form, statements on educations, filled questionnaire and consent for security vetting, consent for obtaining information from official records.

## **The Selection Procedure<sup>12</sup>**

Complying with the terms of application, the candidate will be invited to undergo further examinations.

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<sup>9</sup> A dual citizenship is a bar of application.

<sup>10</sup> The candidate must give a written statement of not being a member of any political party.

<sup>11</sup> The Slovenian abbreviation of the act is: ZODPol.

<sup>12</sup> The procedure and the terms of employment in the Slovenian Police are regulated by the Police Organisation and Work Act and the Civil Servants Act.

All the applicants must undergo the security vetting, the physical fitness test, the psychological evaluation and the medical examination. Besides, an interview with the selection committee is also a part of the procedure which is performed at the end of the procedure.

In the sequence of the examinations, the first element is the physical fitness test which is followed by a psychological evaluation. The third part is the medical examination and the procedure ends with the selective interview.

Before presenting each stage, it must be highlighted that approximately one of three candidates fails at each stage of the selective procedure.

All the candidates who lodged an application must be informed about the result of the selection. Those who were unsuccessful at any stage, should be immediately informed. The selected applicants should be informed after finishing the procedure.

Recently, there have been several changes in the structure of the procedure. The interview used to be carried out by a committee<sup>13</sup> but in 2009 it was reintegrated in the selection procedure. After this, in 2015, the procedure of security vetting was changed.

Before 2016, candidates could be unsuccessful in one of the physical fitness tests, but currently the candidates shall pass all the tests. For the time being (at least according to the given response for the questionnaire), the Slovenian police have no intentions to change anything in the structure of the selection procedure.

Generally, from 5 to 10% of the selected candidates are unable to finish the police officer's training.

## Physical Fitness Test

The physical fitness test conducted at the Police Academy is composed by the next elements: long jumping, Cooper-test (2,400 meter run), 60 meter sprint, backward passage of obstacles and pull ups.<sup>14</sup>

## Psychological Assessment

After the successful physical assessment, the next step of the procedure is the mental examination that verifies the candidates' mental characteristics, personal traits, the level of cognitive functions, mental abilities, emotional stability, motivation, verbal abilities, the functions and proper personality traits. In addition, psychomotor abilities and the absence of psychopathological symptoms are evaluated. The tests shall be assessed by psychologists employed by the Police.

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<sup>13</sup> A Personnel expert, the competent police captain and a psychologist.

<sup>14</sup> Concerning the physical tests detailed information can be found at: [www.policija.si/index.php/delovna-podroja/655-preizkus-telesnih-zmogljivosti-in-kriteriji](http://www.policija.si/index.php/delovna-podroja/655-preizkus-telesnih-zmogljivosti-in-kriteriji). Candidates can collect 20 points by each test, altogether 100 points maximum.

During the written psychological examination EPQ-R,<sup>15</sup> FPI<sup>16</sup> and PIE<sup>17</sup> general questionnaires and one questionnaire for intellectual abilities are applied.

In the third phase of the selection procedure which is the medical examination, the candidates shall also undergo an oral interview which is performed by a psychologist. The objective of the interview is to get anamnesis and other relevant data<sup>18</sup> on the interviewee.

As a part of the interview, if necessary, psychologists can additionally apply clinical psycho-diagnostic assessment<sup>19</sup> to exclude psychopathology. Besides, the previously taken questionnaires can be repeated to establish the level of sincerity.

Relating to the intellectual abilities, a minimum of the average level is required. Concerning personal traits, proper communication skills, a moderate extraversion, empathy, emotional stability, behaviour control, emotional intelligence and a proper level of aggression are expected.

Ratings of eligibility are divided into four groups: very suitable, suitable, less suitable and unsuitable.

## Medical Examination

The medical examination<sup>20</sup> is intended to establish compliance to the medical requirements for the occupation of police position.

The extent of such examination for police officers is subject to regulations for active workers' health care in the Republic of Slovenia.

Based on the several legal acts and policies<sup>21</sup> which are related to the medical aspects of work, the Ministry of the Interior adopted an internal act therein specifying the kinds, extent, content, deadlines and the manner of performance of the preventive medical examinations of the civil servants.

In general, the medical examination shall be oriented toward: the anamnesis on work, family, social and personal characteristics, examination of previous medical documentation (curative files from the personal physician), clinical examination with the basic biometry (body weight, body height, body mass index), basic laboratory blood tests and urine, radiography of the chest organs (according to the judgement of the authorised physician), respiratory function test (quick spirometry), circulatory system (12 channel electrocardiogram), visual functions test, hearing examination,

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<sup>15</sup> Eysenck Personality Questionnaire.

<sup>16</sup> Functional Performance Inventory.

<sup>17</sup> Psychologically Informed Environment.

<sup>18</sup> Previous mental and physical health, alcohol and drug addiction, family life, psychopathology of the nuclear family, course of education and previous work experiences, reactions in stressful situations, motivation, emotional stability, communication skills and flexibility.

<sup>19</sup> Frequently used means are PAI, MMPI 201, Ro-P, IVE.

<sup>20</sup> Conducted within the Department for Safety and Health at Work, Office for Organization and Personnel, Secretariat of the Ministry of the Interior (MNZ), which is registered as an authorised contractor of the occupational, traffic and sports medicine.

<sup>21</sup> Regarding the aim of this paper, I do not set out all the relevant legal acts.

psychological examination (according to the judgement of the authorised contractor of the occupational medicine), other directed examinations and tests that are necessary to establish the health status, working abilities and the risk factors of working.

## Selective Interview

The selective interview is also a stage of the selection procedure which is performed by the above-mentioned selection committee.

The objective of the interview is to establish the candidate's motivation, ambitions and interests, knowledge, skills, abilities and personal traits, as well. Based on the interview, the selective committee evaluates the suitability of the candidate.

## Security Vetting

This procedure is to establish the possible security reservations for the employment in the Police. The security vetting is being conducted with the written consent of the candidate. The procedure of security vetting is being conducted by the Department of the Director General of the Police.

## Conclusion

The structure of the Hungarian and Slovenian police are quite similar, however, the educational systems are fundamentally different. The Slovenian police operates only vocational education which gives a good grip on the system, while the Hungarian police also has a tertiary education for the police including Masters and PhD faculties. Further, the Slovenian system focuses on acquiring practical knowledge and the relevant skills.

Concerning the hypothesis, it can be established that the main principles of the selection procedure and the entry requirements are the same. The similarities and differences are summarised in the below displayed charts.

*Table 1: Entry requirements. Source: Table drawn by the author*

	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>
Nationality	Hungarian	Slovenian
Age	Minimum 18 years, maximum the age of retirement minus 10 years	No age limit
Education	high school diploma for non-commissioned officers and higher education degree for the commissioned officers	successfully completed any secondary school level programme or a programme that is comparable
Additional requirement	-	B-category driving license

Table 2: Eligibility criteria. Source: Table drawn by the author

	Hungary	Slovenia
Medical	Compulsory examinations regulated by law	Compulsory examinations regulated by law
Psychological	Clinical-based	Clinical-based
Physical	Compulsory: 2,000 meter run Four optional exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push-ups</li> <li>• Hand-climbing</li> <li>• Bench press</li> <li>• 4 x 10 meter shuttle run</li> <li>• Standing jump</li> <li>• Sit-ups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long jumping</li> <li>• Cooper-test (2,400 meter run),</li> <li>• 60 m sprint</li> <li>• Backward passage of obstacles, pull ups</li> </ul>

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## **ABSZTRAKT**

### **Rendőrök kiválasztása: esettanulmány Szlovéniáról**

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*A cikk a szlovén rendőrség kiválasztási eljárásáról, így a bemeneti követelményekről és az alkalmassági vizsgálatokról, illetve ennek tükrében a szervezeti és képzési jellemzőkről szól. Célja, hogy a nemzetközi környezetben végzett kutatás eredményeit prezentáljam, illetve az egyes jellemzőket összehasonlítsam a hazai rendszerben alkalmazottakkal.*

**Kulcsszavak:** bemeneti követelmények, rendőrök kiválasztása, alkalmassági kritériumok