

Ensuring Local Security: Cooperation of Municipal Wardens with other Entities

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The provision of security in local communities is the responsibility of various entities that have certain powers in the field of security provision. The primary task of municipalities is to take care of public safety and order, as well as the organisation of the municipality wardens. These have recently become a very important entity and factor in ensuring security in local communities. However, since security in the local community is a very broad category, several entities are needed to ensure it, as it is not fully covered by the responsibilities of municipal wardens. For this reason, it is important that security entities cooperate and connect with each other and thus effectively address security issues. These entities include, among others, the police, firefighters, rescue services, civil protection, inspectorates and the like. In the paper, research is carried out on the cooperation of municipal wardens with other entities that take care of security in the local community. The respondents answered various questions related to municipal wardens, their cooperation with other security entities in various fields, and also what obstacles they encounter in their cooperation. It highlights the advantages of effective cooperation and highlights the key challenges facing the modern security environment.

Keywords: municipal wardens, local security, cooperation, entities providing security

Introduction

One of the most important elements of humanity is security. It is important for human existence and quality of life. It also represents a component of quality of life and comprehends various aspects of existence and functioning in society and in nature.² Although the concept of security itself has an infinite number of definitions, a single one still does not exist.³ Historically, the concept of security was primarily associated with ensuring it at the state level, while the security of the individual was neglected. At the national level, security was primarily related to political and

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² ŽNIDARIČ 2004.

³ ČAS 2010.

military activity, or the study of the military power of the states themselves and their general arrangement. Over time, individual security has come to the fore, and so countries have focused on comprehensive security provision.⁴ Tičar (2015) is of the opinion that security must be accessible to everyone, he defines it as an inclusive public good.⁵ As a fundamental right it is defined in Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia.⁶

Ensuring security in the local community must be understood in the broadest sense, and we must be aware that the municipality and the state share responsibility for ensuring security in the local community.⁷ It is based on establishing partnerships that connect the state and local levels of government, public and private spheres.⁸ Local security itself ensures that order is ensured within the municipality, thereby protecting its population. Above all it depends on ensuring the safety of the individuals.⁹ In Slovenia, the provision of security at the local level is regulated in Article 21 of the Act on Local Self-Government [Zakon o lokalnih skupnostih (ZLS-UPB2), 2007]. In addition to the municipal wardens, local security is also taken care of by the police, inspectorates and private security services, as well as protection and rescue services.¹⁰

Municipality wardens have become an important entity in ensuring public and traffic safety, as well as public order and peace in the local environment. In 2006, the first step in defining and regulating law enforcement was adopted, namely the Municipal Law Enforcement Act [Zakon o bčinskem redarstvu (ZORed), 2006]. In 2017, it was supplemented with additional powers and responsibilities of wardens. Article 3 of the Act is particularly important, which defines the work areas and tasks of municipal wardens, which are also defined in municipal ordinances and municipal security programs. On the basis of the tasks and powers that the police officers have, they are included in the national security system of Slovenia.¹¹ Also, in certain areas of security, municipality wardens have the same powers as police officers.¹²

Cooperation and exchange of information between various entities whose task is to ensure security is extremely important for the comprehensive provision of local security. The practice of cooperation between different entities comes from abroad, but it is increasingly noticeable in Slovenia as well. Article 9 of the Act on Municipal Ordering (ZORed, 2006) is worth mentioning. It defines the cooperation between order management and the police. In addition to the aforementioned cooperation, other forms of cooperation are also important, which depend on the security situa-

⁴ GRIZOLD–BUČAR 2011.

⁵ TIČAR 2015.

⁶ Ustava Republike Slovenije (URS) 1991.

⁷ SOTLAR 2016.

⁸ MODIC 2015.

⁹ SOTLAR–DVOJMOČ 2015.

¹⁰ MEŠKO et al. 2020.

¹¹ SOTLAR et al. 2021.

¹² SOTLAR–DVOJMOČ 2015.

tion in a certain municipality, the organisation of the municipal wardens, the interests of the municipalities themselves, and the like.

Methodology

The empirical part of the paper is based on the quantitative method, a survey questionnaire made in the online tool 1KA. According to the research carried out at the Faculty of Security Sciences, we can summarise in more detail the cooperation of municipal wardens with other entities. The survey was sent to all municipal wardens' agencies in Slovenia on 12 June 2023, and again on 20 July 2023 due to a lack of responses. After a renewed call for participation, all 41 answers were collected.

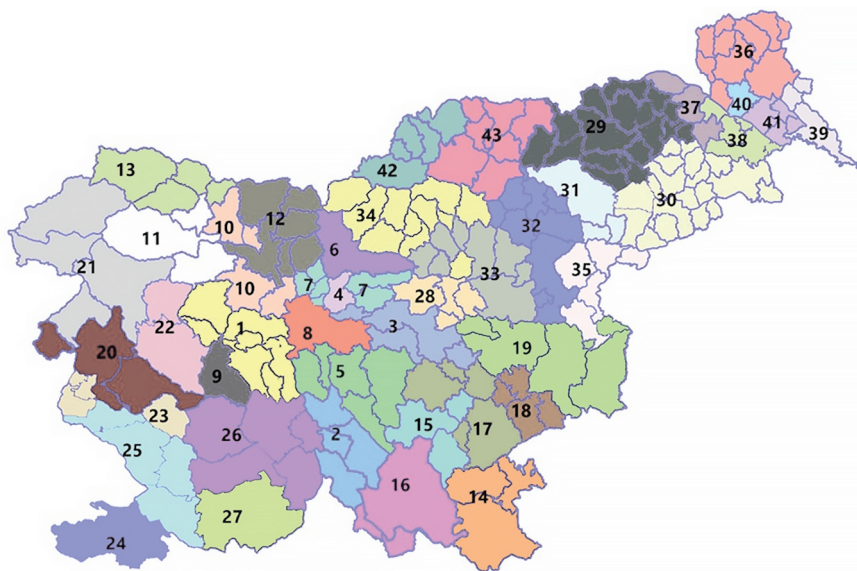


Figure 1: Geographical areas of 41 municipal warden agencies in Slovenia

Source: compiled by the author

We see the limitations of the research in the fact that the municipal wardens in Slovenia are overburdened, and because of this, the surveys were completed “in a hurry”. Considering this, we can say that we did not gain an in-depth insight into the topic.

Research

We were interested in which entities it is absolutely necessary to cooperate with. The respondents to the greatest extent (83%) point out that cooperation with the police is absolutely necessary, followed by the inspectorate (73%). As can be seen from Figure 2, the respondents often pointed out the necessity of cooperation with firefighters (51%) and rescuers (46%).

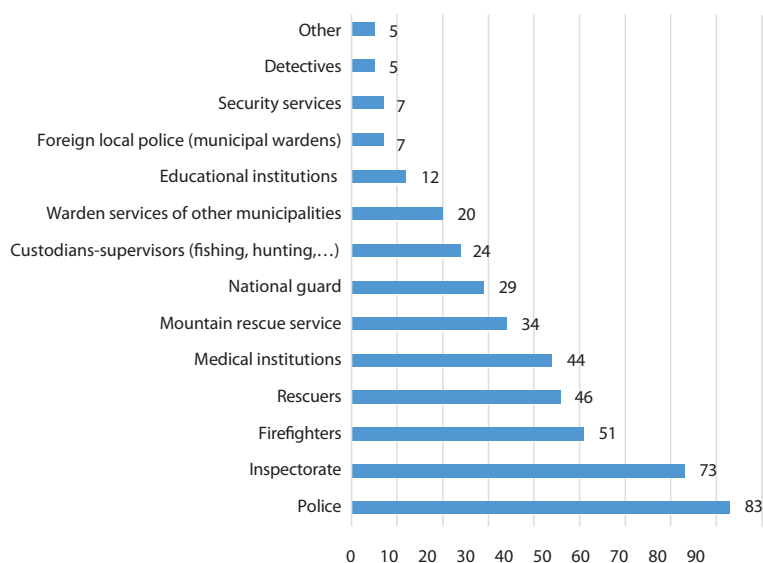


Figure 2: With which entities cooperation is absolutely necessary?

Source: compiled by the author

Table 1 shows the opinion of the wardens about the area in which cooperation with other security entities is absolutely necessary. The respondents believe that cooperation with the police (82%) and security services (73%) is necessary to prevent violation of public order and peace. The police is also highlighted as an important entity in the field of preventing violations in road and stationary traffic (82%). Cooperation with the inspectorate is most often mentioned in connection with environmental protection (87%). High percentage expressed the opinion that cooperation with custodians is necessary in the mentioned area (92%). Civil protection (87%), firemen (86%) and rescuers (73%) are most often exposed in the area of assistance in the event of natural disasters. Cooperation with medical institutions is most highlighted in the field of raising awareness among the general public (46%). The necessity of cooperation with the mountain rescue service was most often recognised in the field of environmental protection and assistance in the event of natural disasters (63% each). They believe that cooperation with foreign local police, educational institu-

tions and other law enforcement services is most important in the field of counseling (between 73 and 76%).

Table 1: The area of necessity of cooperation with other entities

Subject	Area								
	Violation of public order and peace (%)	Environment protection (%)	Violations in road and stationary traffic (%)	Assistance in case of natural disaster (%)	Ensuring general safety (%)	Ensuring the safety of pedestrians (%)	Counselling (%)	Cooperation with the community (%)	Other (%)
Police	82	38	82	18	79	62	50	71	12
Inspectorate	10	87	13	17	43	17	57	40	20
Firefighters	0	64	0	86	45	5	18	59	9
Rescuers	0	7	0	73	47	13	33	27	20
Medical institutions	0	0	8	38	23	0	38	46	31
National guard	0	43	0	87	43	0	22	52	9
Mountain rescue service	0	63	0	63	38	25	50	50	38
Custodians-supervisors	15	92	0	38	31	0	38	38	15
Warden services of other municipalities	32	27	32	14	32	23	73	41	23
Educational institutions	5	14	29	5	33	24	76	52	24
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	9	18	18	27	18	9	73	27	18
Security services	73	33	0	13	47	7	40	53	27

Source: compiled by the author

The limitations that appear in the field of cooperation with other entities are shown in Table 2. These are manifested mainly in the area of lack of staff, which is the most pronounced limitation in cooperation with the police (79%) and the inspectorate (59%). Restrictions in cooperation are also evident because the municipal wardens do not have an established center for operational communication, which most significantly limits cooperation with the mountain rescue service (44%), the police (43%), firefighters (40%), rescuers (38%) and medical institutions (36%). In the section other, the respondents mentioned overloading of offices, large amounts of own obligations of other entities, etc.

Table 2: Restrictions on establishing cooperation with other entities

Subject	Area				
	Lack of staff (%)	Lack of technical equipment (%)	The municipality does not have an established center or operational communication (%)	The municipality has no interest in cooperating with other entities (%)	Other (%)
Police	79	11	43	7	11
Inspectorate	59	12	24	6	35
Firefighters	20	7	40	7	40
Rescuers	15	15	38	8	38
Medical institutions	18	18	36	9	36
National guard	35	12	29	0	47
Mountain rescue service	11	11	44	33	11
Custodians-supervisors	18	9	27	27	18
Warden services of other municipalities	21	0	29	21	36
Educational institutions	33	0	33	33	11
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	18	0	27	45	9
Security services	11	0	33	33	22
Detectives	11	0	33	44	11
Other	50	0	50	50	50

Source: compiled by the author

The answers to the question about the frequency of participation in Table 3 were divided into the categories of never, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. On a daily basis, 53% of municipal wardens cooperate with the inspectorate, followed by cooperation with the police (12%). They most often cooperate with the police on a weekly and a monthly basis (in 41% and 38%). On an annual level, they cooperate to varying extents with all other entities, with the majority of them cooperating with firefighters (50%), police officers from other municipalities (47%) and rescuers (44%). The vast majority of municipal wardens never cooperate with the mountain rescue service (95%) and detectives (86%).

Table 3: The frequency of cooperation with the listed security entities in the local environment

Subject	Frequency				
	Never (%)	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	Yearly (%)
Police	0	12	41	38	9
Inspectorate	0	53	28	13	6
Firefighters	20	0	10	20	50
Rescuers	41	0	0	15	44
Medical institutions	54	0	0	12	35
National guard	18	4	14	21	43
Mountain rescue service	95	0		5	0
Custodians-supervisors	42	4	8	12	35
Warden services of other municipalities	19	3	6	25	47
Educational institutions	33	0	4	26	37
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	71	0	0	0	29
Security services	42	0	8	15	35
Detectives	86	0	0	5	9
Other: road maintenance workers	75	0	0	25	0

Source: compiled by the author

As can be seen from Table 4, the opinion regarding the frequency of cooperation with other entities is, in most cases, sufficient. They want more cooperation with the police (36%) and warden services of other municipalities (21%). Most municipal wardens do not cooperate with the mountain rescue service and detectives. In a very low percentage (8% each), the wardens do not want to cooperate with foreign local police and detectives.

Table 4: Opinion regarding the frequency of municipal wardens' cooperation with the listed entities

	Opinion regarding the frequency of cooperation				
Subject	Insufficient, we would like more cooperation (%)	Sufficient (%)	We would like less cooperation (%)	We do not cooperate with the listed entity (%)	We do not wish to cooperate with the listed entity (%)
Police	36	64	0	0	0
Inspectorate	6	94	0	0	0
Firefighters	10	70	0	20	0
Rescuers	11	46	0	43	0
Medical institutions	4	54	0	42	0
National guard	13	70	3	13	0
Mountain rescue service	0	20	0	76	4
Custodians-supervisors	16	36	0	44	4
Warden services of other municipalities	21	62	0	14	3
Educational institutions	4	67	0	26	4
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	19	19	0	54	8
Security services	12	46	0	42	0
Detectives	4	16	0	72	8
Other	0	0	0	100	0

Source: compiled by the author

On a scale where 1 means very unsuccessful, 2 unsuccessful, 3 not even unsuccessful-not even successful, 4 successful and 5 very successful, we wanted to get an answer regarding the opinion of the municipal wanders on the effectiveness of cooperation with other subjects (Figure 3). According to the respondents, the effectiveness of cooperation with other entities is highest in cooperation with national guard, as they rate it with an average score of 4, followed by the firefighters, the police, educational institutions, the inspectorate and rescuers, which were assessed with an average score higher than 3.5.

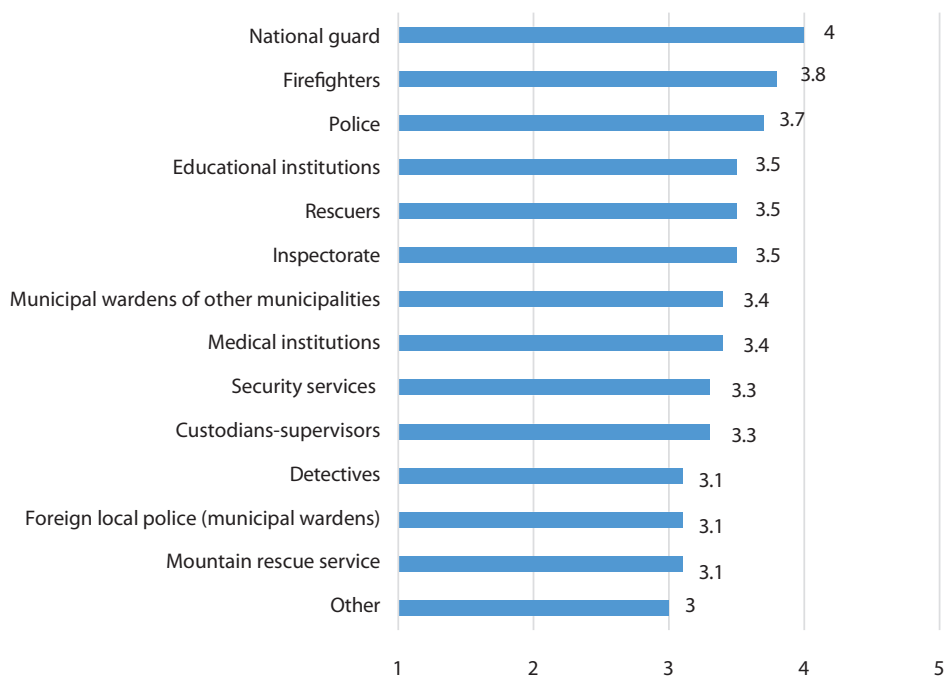


Figure 3: Evaluation of the effectiveness of the cooperation of the municipal wardens with other entities

Source: compiled by the author

Most often, the purpose of cooperation is related to joint patrols (94%). Wardens most often cooperate with firefighters (87%) and the national guard (88%) with the aim of intervening in natural disasters. In 60%, they state to cooperate with rescuers in the case of dealing with incidents involving injuries. The most common form of cooperation between wardens and medical institutions are seminars (36%). In order to protect the environment, they cooperate with the inspectorate (90%). The stated purpose of cooperation is also the most common in the case of cooperation with custodians-supervisors (79%). In order to participate in various police projects and seminars, they cooperate with educational institutions (83%) and police services of other municipalities (52%) (Table 5).

Table 5: *The purpose of the cooperation of municipal wardens with other entities*

Subject	Purpose of cooperation (%)					
	Joint patrols (%)	Natural disasters (%)	Injuries (%)	Environment protection (%)	Seminars, projects (%)	Other (%)
Police	94	26	15	47	18	21
Inspectorate	32	19	19	90	35	19
Firefighters	0	87	9	48	4	22
Rescuers	0	53	60	13	20	20
Medical institutions	0	21	36	0	36	14
National guard	0	88	21	38	13	25
Mountain rescue service	0	50	20	20	0	50
Custodians-supervisors	36	21	0	79	7	36
Warden services of other municipalities	13	4	0	17	52	48
Educational institutions	0	0	0	11	83	44
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	8	8	8	8	42	58
Security services	17	17	17	25	17	58
Detectives	0	0	10	0	30	60
Other	0	0	0	0	0	100

Source: compiled by the author

Table 6 shows that the need to cooperate with the police most often arises before the start of the new school year in the context of safe school routes (79%), in the area of traffic regulation and control of public order and peace (76% each). In other areas, which are mostly related to environmental issues and work according to municipal decrees, the need to cooperate with the inspectorate (66%) is most often mentioned. In cases of mass accidents, the greatest need for wardens is to cooperate with national guard (62%) and firefighters (52%).

Table 6: The need for the cooperation of municipal wardens with other entities

Subject	Need for the cooperation							
	Regulating traffic during events (%)	Control of public order and peace (%)	Night duty (%)	During the school holidays (%)	Before the start of the school year (%)	In case of mass accidents (%)	Never (%)	Other (%)
Police	76	76	21	18	79	24	0	18
Inspectorate	6	28	0	0	16	6	9	66
Firefighters	24	4	0	4	12	52	20	24
Rescuers	0	8	4	0	4	32	32	32
Medical institutions	5	0	0	0	0	33	48	24
National guard	0	0	0	0	0	62	12	31
Mountain rescue service	0	0	0	0	0	16	68	21
Custodians-supervisors	5	14	0	5	0	5	38	43
Warden services of other municipalities	11	11	4	4	7	11	25	57
Educational institutions	4	4	0	4	38	0	29	42
Foreign local police (municipal wardens)	0	5	0	0	0	0	55	40
Security services	23	23	5	0	0	0	45	3
Detectives	0	0	0	0	0	0	68	32
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0

Source: compiled by the author

We asked the respondents whether they would like to point out examples of good practices in the field of municipal wardens with other security entities in the local community (Figure 4). The respondents most often cite good practice in the area of joint patrols and rounds, especially with the police. They also highlight joint patrols with inspectors and custodians-supervisors. In this way, the effectiveness of controls is improved and staff shortages are reduced. In the field of traffic regulation and control, wardens point out good practice in the field of traffic regulation and control during events and preventive actions of speed measurement and other preventive activities.

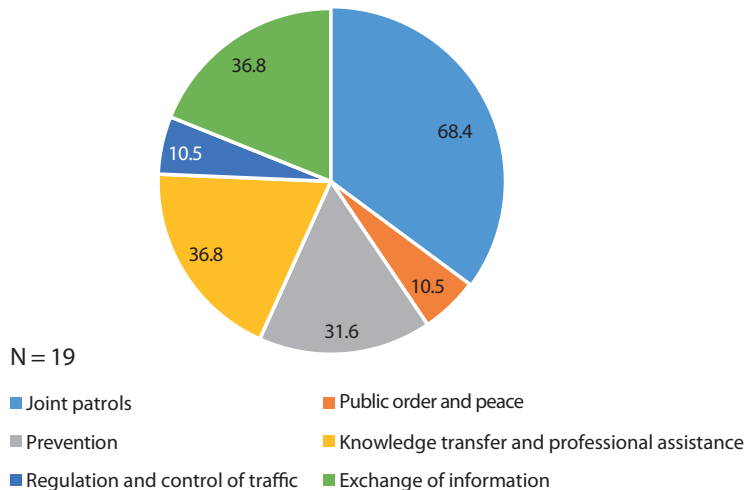


Figure 4: Examples of good practices with other entities (%)

Source: compiled by the author

In addition to examples of good practices, we asked the respondents a question about possible bad practices (Figure 5). The majority did not answer this question, from which we conclude that cooperation with other entities is at least at a satisfactory level. Most of the bad practices stem from the fact that all services are chronically understaffed.

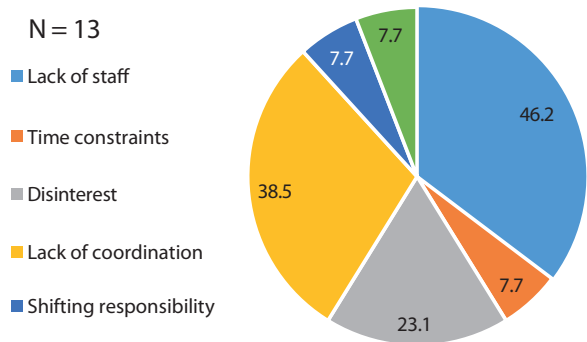


Figure 5: Examples of bad practices in cooperation with other entities (%)

Source: compiled by the author

Figure 6 shows responses regarding the need for municipal wardens to strengthen and upgrade cooperation with other entities in the future. Most often, in 82.4%, respondents expressed the need to strengthen cooperation with the police, state inspections (29.4%), security services and custodians-supervisors (17.6% each).

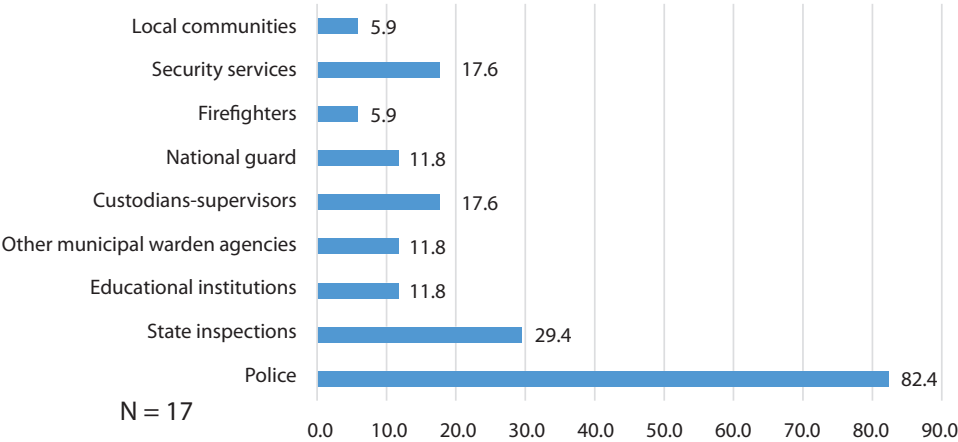


Figure 6: Assessment of municipal wardens regarding the need to strengthen cooperation in the future (%)

Source: compiled by the author

Research results

The aim of the survey was to find out which entities the municipal wardens must cooperate with, in which areas cooperation is necessary, why, and the like. It was established, as has been emphasised several times, that cooperation between the municipal wardens and the police is the most common. We can also mention that the tasks of the wardens are similar to the tasks of the police in the areas of ensuring public order and peace and in the field of road traffic. Through mutual cooperation, the two entities can also reduce the lack of staff that is present in both services, and in addition, it is also important for reputation and visibility in the community that the wardens and the police cooperate closely with each other. As already mentioned, the cooperation of the wardens with other entities providing security depends primarily on the security needs of the municipality itself, which is specified in municipal documents, since this is not defined in the law or foreseen. It depends on the municipalities themselves what is the need for cooperation between the wardens and other entities. Municipal wardens can only operate in the areas in which they have powers and authorities, so in the case of natural and other disasters and emergencies, cooperation with national guard, firefighters and rescuers is essential. In the

field of counselling, exchange of good practices and opinions, the cooperation with wardens of other municipalities, foreign local police and educational institutions is also important. We would also like to mention that, most likely due to the differences between the areas of work, cooperation with detectives is almost non-existent or was not highlighted in the survey.

In the questions related to the necessity of cooperation of the police service, cooperation with the inspectorate was also highlighted, which is also the entity with which municipal wardens most often cooperate on a day-to-day basis. Although this seems surprising given the close cooperation between the municipality wardens and the police, this is mainly due to the fact that both the wardens and the inspectorate are part of the municipal administration. This is precisely why their cooperation is important, as good relations, ensuring security in the municipality and exchanging information are in the interest of the municipal administration. In the area of animal protection, however, cooperation between wardens, inspectors and police officers is intertwined.

The respondents also pointed out limitations that make it impossible to upgrade cooperation, and as they say, the problem is mainly in the lack of personnel in all entities that ensure security. They also pointed out the fact that most security forces do not have an established communication centre. This presents a problem especially when cooperating with emergency services. In the survey, the respondents also mentioned that the field of operation of wardens outside of local jurisdiction during emergency situations is not well regulated and needs changes. The problem is mainly that, according to the current legislation, municipal wardens can only work in the territory of their municipality.

Conclusion

In our paper, we studied the cooperation of the municipal wardens with other entities providing security in the local community. The respondents highlighted their opinion regarding the importance of cooperation with other entities, different areas of cooperation, limitations in cooperation and the like. As has been mentioned several times, the cooperation of the municipal wardens with other entities is extremely important, regardless of whether it is stipulated by law or whether it is only envisaged between law enforcement and the police. The problems of the municipal wardens were also identified, which is largely a lack of staff, lack of knowledge of presence and powers, bureaucratic obstacles, technical equipment, etc. Improvements and changes are possible in all of the mentioned areas, which would greatly contribute to the operation of police forces, their cooperation with other entities and the security of the local level. Legal changes are also necessary, which would clearly define the legal definitions.

In order to improve the cooperation of the municipal wardens with other entities in ensuring local security, it is necessary to legally define the tasks, the course of

cooperation and other important segments, which include all entities that could cooperate with each other. We mentioned that the lack of staff is a problem. Elimination of this obstacle or an increase in staff would also improve and enable cooperation with other entities. It would also be necessary to consider legislative changes that would foresee and define the cooperation of the municipal wardens with other entities providing security at the local level, and not only with the police. By strengthening the awareness of local authorities about the actual importance of police officers, the view of their operation would change, which would in turn lead to a greater interest in the cooperation of other entities with police officers.

The key is above all the awareness that cooperation between different entities is necessary, as it ensures local security, which makes individuals safe from various factors, accidents, consequences and the like. In addition, we also believe that joint education and training of entities can be very useful, and the population of the local community itself should also be educated about the operation of these organisations, as they themselves could contribute to higher security in various circumstances.

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