

Communications in the fight against crime

The rule of law is one of the focuses of reform across the enlargement countries. This requires not just political will, but also hardware - which is why the European Union has supplied communications equipment to the Ministry of the Interior in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Police services in the country now enjoy secure and reliable communication between one another, in line with the norm in EU member states. The EU has provided a digital radio communication system known as TETRA (short for 'Terrestrial Trunked Radio'), which boosts the day-to-day efficiency of police organisations responsible for public order, traffic, and border controls, as well as special police units.

WIDE COVERAGE

This is part of the EU's overall efforts to raise police standards and make the police force more effective and accountable. The EU is supporting the Ministry of Interior in establishing this secure police radio system and proper lines of communication between the border police and inland police. The €5 million project that has just finished is the second phase of TETRA, extending and upgrading the network that the EU started to put in place with a €9 million project in 2006-2008. The TETRA-based network now offers mobile coverage of up to 87% of the territory, and hand-held coverage of 60%. As a result, police services are able to manage and coordinate their operational activities throughout the country more efficiently. The priority objectives are to complete coverage of the main European transport corridor through the country, to improve coverage of the border region with Albania, and to provide coverage in the Pelagonia region in the south-west of the country.

The technical assistance included full oversight and support for design, procurement and implementation. In addition to thousands of radios, the project also provided switching and dispatching centres, base-stations, and microwave links between them. Decisions were needed on where to locate radio masts - often requiring installation on rocky mountain-tops to ensure maximum reach for signals. Surveys were conducted for more than 50 potential sites, and in the end 26 new base stations were constructed, and 11 existing stations improved. Full authorisation documentation was prepared for selected sites in an often complex legal environment. The project also included monitoring of implementation, and assuring the system worked properly after commissioning.

IMPROVED POLICING

The results can be seen in improved policing of main highways, green border lines and international border-crossing points. Now the country is in a stronger



position to detect and combat illegal activities - with a positive impact on the country's image, on its attraction as a place in which to invest, and on the quality of life of its citizens. The system offers possibilities for

further extension, as well as options for including additional emergency services such as ambulance or fire departments.

PROJECT DETAILS –

TETRA II - Digital radio communication system for the Ministry of Interior

Partners:

Ministry of Interior, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
VialtoConsulting, Hungary
Hytera Mobilfunk GmbH, Germany

Total cost in €:

5 million

EU Contribution in €:

100%

Start date:

July 2010

End date:

February 2013

Results:

Almost full country-wide coverage for digital radio communications among police forces

Techniques:

Equipment procurement; training; technical assistance in installation and monitoring

