



CARDS

Country

Albania

Implementation period

2003-2004

Funding

€6.6 million

Results

Modernising the management of police services, and training them in the use of modern policing techniques

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Partners

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Modernising the police service

Assistance for restructuring

Albania's police forces have suffered from years of under-funding and struggle with outmoded equipment. Furthermore, they are still going through a process of reorganisation to meet the changing needs of the volatile region. To do the job effectively and efficiently, they need to adopt modern equipment and update their methods to make use of this.

The fight against organised crime and the policing of Albania's porous borders are just two of the major challenges facing the police forces in the country. With support from the EU's CARDS programme, a team of 15 police experts from eight different EU Member States have been working with local forces in Albania to modernise their working practices and organisation.

Catching criminals

The focus of the project is on the relationship between the police forces and the justice system. The police are receiving assistance to introduce and develop modern methods of crime investigation and crime prevention. It is critical that the work of the police in investigations is fair and impartial, in order that trials can be conducted efficiently and fairly.

Maintaining public order and improving the security of the lives of ordinary citizens is another aspect covered by the project. Furthermore, the protection of the country's borders, to deter illegal immigrants and emigrants, is an important aspect of maintaining a stable society. Where borders are insufficiently secured, there is a significant risk of infiltration by organised crime gangs, which may smuggle weapons, merchandise or even people in and out of the country.



Management

Given the limited resources available within the project, it is inevitable that the focus should be on improving standards and practices at the senior levels within the Albanian police forces. Rank and file police officers will find it difficult to adopt new methods if these are not fully understood and supported by the senior officers and management, so it is critical that they are trained in the new methods. Raising professional standards across the police is the underlying aim of the project, and this implies improving the management of human, material and information resources at all levels of the police services throughout the country.



Police academy

In a related project, the EU has also supported the complete refurbishment of the Tirana training centre of the Albanian State Police. Suffering from years of neglect, the buildings were no longer wind- and watertight, and much of the fittings and furniture were either broken or simply dangerous. As such the centre was not in a state fit to provide the all-important training required by the police.

With a budget of one and a half million euros, the project has renovated and re-equipped the training centre, including the associated dormitories and canteen facilities. The trainees that use the centre will now work in a much more professional atmosphere, with access to all necessary facilities. Even more importantly, they will benefit from a higher sense of self-esteem: that the job of police officer is valued by society and that the facilities provided for them to do their job reflect that.