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Comparative Aspects Regarding Local Police Services in Romania and France

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Abstract: This paper includes a comparative study on local police services in Romania and France and was designed to facilitate the understanding of the mechanisms of organization and operation of this public service in the two countries.
Throughout the paper, the pieces that make up this complex defence mechanism at the level of territorial administrative units, which are called local /municipal police, will be specified and presented.
The focus will be on the efficiency of the local police in Romania in relation to France (where it is called municipal police) and the level at which it stands as modernization and evolution in Europe.

Keywords: *Local Police, municipal police service, public services, local community, efficiency of the local police.*

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1. Introduction

The local police are public services within the communal or city halls, made available to the citizens. They are organized and operate on the basis of the decision of the deliberative authorities "of the local public administration, as a functional compartment within the specialized apparatus of the mayor or mayor general or as a public institution of local interest, with legal personality" (Romanian Parliament, 2014).

We specify that it is a decentralized public service. Specifically, this structure is run by a local entity and not a central one. It is not directly subordinated to a ministry or specialized body, this power belongs to the local public administration authorities at the level of communes, cities, municipalities or counties, as the case may be.

The article presents a comparison between the elements that make up the local police in Romania and the municipal police in France, in order to estimate the position we have in a public service structure compared to another country from which we took over this model of local police service, implemented and adapted to the needs and requirements of the Romanian population.

2. Establishment of local police services in Romania and France

In Romania, the structure of the local police is organized within the administrative-territorial units, adapted and modelled to the needs and requirements of the population. It is a structure established by the decisions taken by the local council regarding its organization and functioning, and operates under the aegis of the mayor. We mention that the local police officers are civil servants, being a structure that has many elements in common with the municipal police in France, closely following the French model in terms of rights, obligations and responsibilities they have. This new local police structure tends to improve and adapt to everything that means technology and speed in streamlining its activity.

As for the local police in France (which is called the municipal police), a model we chose in our comparative study, we want to highlight the modernity of this service and its expansion over the years, as well as the superior position it has gained within the state, but especially the respect he

imposed on French citizens in terms of his qualities of seriousness, devotion and honour to justice.

The local police system in Romania and France, its efficiency, as well as the disadvantages and advantages of the service will be highlighted through comparative tables between the two chosen countries. This public service tends towards modernity and improvement more and more, referring here to weapons, uniforms, training, higher education and perfecting, but also the integration of women in such structures, totally inaccessible until a few years ago.

Table 1. Establishing local/municipal police service in Romania and France

Establishing	
Romania	**France**
1993 – The Body of Public Guards 2004 – Community Police 2010 – Local Police	XVI-XVIII Centuries

Source: Authors' own conception

As can be seen, France laid the foundations of the local police as early as the XVI century (Police Municipale, n.d.a), and Romania followed much later, indeed, the French model.

We can motivate the discrepancy of over a century between the two structures established due to the level of development that France had, but also the Empires that ruled it, in relation to Romania, which has always been the centre of interest of wars in Europe. We could say that this fact is due to the unfavourable geographical position of Romania in the centre of Europe, the centre of fire of the fights between the great powers that disputed their territories. Romania has always been caught in the middle and constantly under defence, and this has hindered and made difficult its natural evolution in relation to other states.

Regarding the laws governing the two structures, we note that in Romania, the status of local police regulated and clearly presented by a law appeared only 11 years ago, more precisely in 2010, while in France it exists much earlier, which denotes the age and the importance that the municipal police has, but also that it has acquired in all these years.

Table 2 The current legal regulation of the local/municipal police services in Romania and France

The current regulation of the local / municipal police service	
Romania	**France**
Law no.155/2010 (Romanian Parliament, 2014)	Law no. 99-291 from April15, 1999 (Nationl Law in France, 1999)

Source: Authors' own conception

Regarding the classification of the two structures, we notice that the local police in Romania are subordinated to the mayor, while the ones in France are subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, being the third component after the National Police and Gendarmerie (Police Municipale, n.d.b). By law no. 2021-646 of May 25, 2021, the role of the local police in France is strengthened, as well as the collaboration with the national police and the gendarmerie (Nationl Law in France, 1999).

The Local Police in Romania are employed as civil servants, according to the Law no. 155/2010 (Romanian Parliament, 2014), unlike those in France, who are employed in internal security, being at the same level with the gendarmes and national police.

In France, the state attaches greater importance to the local police, given its inclusion in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and alignment with other state defence structures, contrasting with the position of the local police in Romania, which is subordinated to the mayor and the rigors of the local council, being a separate structure from the state defence forces in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, usually coming in support or complementing them, not to be at the same level or to have the same rights, duties and obligations.

3. Comparative aspects regarding the functioning of the local police services in romania and france

Referring to the missions of the local police, as we can see in the table below, the local police officers in our country have to perform only administrative missions, because they are employed as civil servants, the rest of the missions being performed by specialized structures within the Ministry of Internal. They are not trained and educated to solve court cases

as in the case of municipal police officers in France, who are responsible for solving both missions.

Table 3 Missions of local/municipal police services in Romania and France

Missions	
Romania	**France**
Administrative missions	Administrative and judicial missions

Source: Authors' own conception

As the name "administrative" tells them, these missions are related to the organization and maintenance of a favourable environment for the community they represent, from order, public peace and security of goods, safety on public roads to public health, while in France, municipal police , being a national defence structure, has in addition judicial missions, which deal with criminal cases, and requires a collaboration on a single line of subordination between the prosecutor and the police, cases that will be later transferred to the prosecutor's office (Police Municipale, n.d.c).

Both structures have in common administrative missions, regarding public order and safety, street signage, protection of green spaces of commercial units.

As we can see in the following table, the local police and municipal police departments are varied. In France, these departments are in a larger number and specialized in several fields of activity compared to those in Romania. In our country they are called structures, and in France they are called brigades. Both structures ensure public order and peace, directly serving the needs of citizens. Both countries focus on helping animals, patrol dogs and horses. In Romania, the local police structures / departments comprise six areas, while in France their number is much higher and reaches a figure of nine specialized brigades, which denotes a much higher degree of efficiency in solving problems. The greater the number of structures / departments for a wider range of issues, the more local management will be able to cover all needs, even the most exceptional (Police Municipale, 2020).

Table 4. The Structure of Local Police Services in Romania and France

Departaments	
Romania	**France**
1.Public order and security of property structure	1. Cycling brigade
2.Traffic on public roads structure	2. Nautical brigade
3.Discipline in constructions and street signalling structure	3. Mountain cycling brigade
4. Protection of the environment structure	4. Pound brigade
5. Commercial activity structure	5. Dog brigade
6. Structure with atributions in the records of persons	6. Equester brigade
	7. Island brigade
	8. Public transportation brigade
	9. Nocturnal security brigade

Source: Authors' own conception

As for the conditions that a candidate must meet in order to be admitted to the position of local police officer, respectively municipal police officer, these are similar in both countries.

Table 5. Conditions to be recruted

Conditions to be recruted	
Romania	**France**
• To have Romanian citizenship and domicile in Romania	• To have French citizenship or to be a citizen of European Economic Community
• To speak and write Romanian language	• Not to have judicial record
• To be at least 18 years old	• To be at least 18 years old, with the mention that the upper age limit does not exist
• To have full exercise capacity	• To meet all qualifying conditions in accordance with the employment framework, that varies from one cathegory to another
• To be healthy to aply for the public	• To be healthy to aply for the

civil service, state certified on a basis of a specialized medical examination	public position, state certified on a basis of a specialized medical examination
• To meet the study conditions provided by law for the civil service	• To enjoy civil rights
• To meet the specific conditions for holding the civil service	• To respect the national oath
• Not to have been dismissed from a public position or due to disciplinary reasons in the last 7 years	• To be psychologically fit for the job
• Not to be convicted of crimes against humanity, the state, or the service authority or in connection with the service	• Not to have comited crimes against the state
• Not to have carried out political police activity as defined by law	• Not to have carried out political police activity
• To hold a high school diploma with a baccalaureate degree	• To have an approved diploma of level V (CAP, BET)
• To have seniority in the specialty of studies from 0 years for beginner to 9 years for senior professional	• To have a mandatory one-year internship
• To have the ability to work in a team and in the field	• To have the ability to work in a team and in the field
• To be willing to work overtime, on public holidays and under stress	• To be willing to work overtime, on public holidays and under stress
• To be medically, physically and mentally fit.	

Source: Laws on Local / Municipal Police Services in Romania and France

As we can see, one criterion is the existence of a clean criminal record, which means that the person in question did not commit particularly serious acts that endangered the social environment or society. Obviously to present a diploma attesting to the completion of secondary education, respectively baccalaureate level V (CAP OR BET), because it is necessary to know some basic information in any field of activity, especially in a field which represents the state, public institutions and the most important element, the citizen.

Another similar criterion concerns the physical and mental health of the candidates. In such a physically demanding field, where daily local police deal with people who defy the law and the system, sometimes being violent

and aggressive, they must have an impeccable physical condition, but also the mental state at the highest level to act as correctly and as far as possible with minimal damage.

Teamwork is an indispensable link in this chain of criteria, because the team is everything in one structure. The main purpose of teamwork and the so-called camaraderie is to weld the relationships at the staff level, but also to know each other so well in order to be extremely efficient in the field. Communicating teammates to an intervention can lead to a quick success, because they spend a lot of time together, and everyone knows their professional qualities and defects, so in the field they know exactly what to do and what are the steps that everyone should follow.

4. Conclusions

The article presents a comparison between the elements of the local police system in Romania in relation to the one in France, through some tables, which highlight the pros and cons of the two structures. Following the comparison, we outline the idea of more than obvious similarity between the two local police structures, both in Romania and in France.

In Romania, the local police service is well structured and based largely on the French model, with multiple common elements, which is constantly evolving and tends to align with European standards in defence and security. Even if the endowments of local policemen are sometimes not the best or the legislation does not cover certain interpretable issues and most of the times to the detriment of the status of local policeman, we can conclude that the centre of interest targeted by all local police structures in Romania is to come to the aid of the citizen and to constantly anticipate his needs in terms of safety and personal protection. The most important pawn in the game between society and local law enforcement is the citizen.

In France, we conclude that the municipal police is extremely important and respected in the eyes of citizens, but also with a well-preserved history and steeped in social knowledge. Overall, the structure of the municipal police is a developed one and always in step with the news in the field of defence, both at the basic level, in terms of facilities and working conditions, and at the higher level, in terms of legislation, where we can say that it protects them from

possible unfavourable situations and grants them a wide range of rights. This aspect is also supported by the inclusion of the municipal police in the national defence structure together with the Gendarmerie and the National Police, as a third category (Police Municipale, n.d.c).

In conclusion, both in Romania and in France, local and municipal police officers are primordial at the local level, because they most often make contact with citizens and know very well the problems, as well as those who create them, allowing, through their work, for the other structures to deal with more complex cases, related to crimes, escapes or prosecutions. Local police are the "pioneers" for the other law enforcement agencies.

We conclude that, following the comparative study conducted between the local police services in Romania and France, the two are based on common elements and principles, and the difference is the way the two have evolved over time under different leadership, contexts and legislative frameworks. In France, the influence of the western part of Europe is clearly evident: a greater openness to the new and innovative, to which Romania still tends and tries to adhere day by day.

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