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Optimizations in the Organization and Responsibilities of Local Public Order and Safety Structures Aimed at Improving Service Quality

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Abstract: *Our work examines the institutional evolution and transformations that have shaped the local public order and safety structures in Romania, from their establishment, with a focus on improving organization, duties, and the quality of services provided to citizens. We appropriately address the development of the Corps of Public Guards (CPG), initially created for the protection of goods and maintenance of public order, and its transformation into the Community Police, adapted to administrative-territorial units. The governmental motivation for establishing the Community Police, based on efficiency and modernization, is highlighted, and the legal provisions that defined its functioning are analyzed. We then explore the creation of the Local Police as a response to the shortcomings of the Community Police, such as lack of resources and inefficient coordination, presenting the advantages of a stronger legal framework. Examples of good local practices from 2023 illustrate the effective implementation of reforms. Solutions for institutional development and the career management of local police officers are also discussed, through continuous training and adaptation to current requirements. The conclusions emphasize the need for an integrated strategic vision to improve the quality of public services ensuring local public order and safety, and to strengthen citizens' trust in these structures.*

Keywords: *Corps of Public Guards (CPG, in Romanian: Corpul Gardienilor Publici); Community Police/Local Police; institutional framework; local police staff/officer; organization; regulations; competencies/duties; closer to the citizen.*

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Introduction

The public order desideratum is a perpetual one in any society, referring to that characteristic of society in which "safety, security, respect for citizens' rights, and the proper functioning of public services prevail." (Tamaş, 1993). The issue of maintaining public order and safety permanently is "a priority of the rule of law, involving the prevention and combating of antisocial acts through the means and methods available to the state. To ensure the social balance that defines the maintenance of public order and safety, the state must take permanent measures to monitor society as a whole and identify the most effective means and methods for preventing antisocial acts, disturbances, social upheaval, and acts that harm values protected by law." (Buzescu, 2016). In this context, the activity of local public order and safety structures is of particular importance, as it is meant to come to the strong support of the citizen and the resolution of his problems – related to the environment, urban planning, commerce, civil registry, etc. (Toma & Ştefţcu, 2020; Popa, 2013; Constantin, 2014; Trandafir, 2005). Moreover, considering the institution of local police, it actually represents "a service that operates alongside the local public administration authorities, constituting a decentralized service, not a deconcentrated one" and as its name suggests, "the activity of local police is carried out in the interest and for the benefit of local communities." (Vedinaş, 2017). The specialized literature shows us that this type of institution exists in several European Union countries, including the French municipal police, Belgian local police, Italian municipal police, or Spanish local police (Bulea, 2022). Also worth mentioning is the English Metropolitan Police, as well as the fact that each of these institutions is based on high values and long-standing traditions. In addressing our theme ("Optimizations regarding the organization and duties of local public order and safety structures aimed at improving the quality of services provided"), referring exclusively to national issues, the present work is structured as follows: (1) Introduction; (2) The first stage concerning the creation and evolution of a local interest institution *(CPG)* dedicated to the protection of goods and the defense of public order and peace; (3) Community Police, the result of the reorganization of the CPG into administrative-territorial units (with subsections 3.1 - The Romanian Executive's motivation for the adoption of the law establishing the Community Police, 3.2 - The main provisions of the Law on the establishment, organization, and functioning of the Community Police); (4) The creation of Local Police (with subsections 4.1 - Deficiencies and weaknesses observed in the activity of Community Police, 4.2 - Expected

advantages from the adoption of the Local Police Law, and 4.3 - Best practices at the level of a municipal local police structure / Suceava Local Police Directorate - 2023); (5) Improving the institutional framework for the organization and functioning of local police to ensure efficient career management for local police officers; and, finally, (6) Conclusions.

A first stage regarding the creation and evolution of a local interest institution (CPG) dedicated to the protection of goods and the defense of public order and peace

A fundamental initiative for consolidating public safety and property protection, through a well-regulated and coordinated system between local authorities and private or public beneficiaries, was represented by the Public Guards Corps (PGC). This institutional model laid the foundations for an efficient and adaptable mechanism for defending community interests. To explain this, we note that in Romania, starting in 1993, CPGs were established at the level of county councils and the Bucharest City Council as autonomous public institutions with legal personality, offering security and public order services based on a regulation approved by the Government (RP, 1993). The public guards were responsible for protecting economic and institutional targets, as well as maintaining public order. It is observed that these corps were organized according to the number of staff and categories established by regulation, with leadership provided by chiefs appointed by decisions of county or municipal councils, with the approval of the police. Their activities included contracting security services for public and private objectives, as well as participating in maintaining public order and peace. The staff (equated to public officials in performing their duties) was equipped with uniforms, protective gear, weapons, and other means established by regulations. The main duties of the CPG included: (i) Providing security services through contracts with beneficiaries; (ii) Equipping the staff with proper equipment and training them; (iii) Protecting and maintaining security equipment and weapons; (iv) Actively participating in crime prevention and maintaining public order; (v) Informing beneficiaries about the effectiveness of security measures and proposing solutions for improvement. The guards were responsible for protecting property, preventing crimes and other incidents, and responding promptly to emergencies. Among other things, they: (i) Monitored vulnerable points in the area of responsibility; (ii) Maintained the integrity of the protected objectives; (iii) Followed internal regulations regarding access and security; (iv) Informed authorities about any acts that could harm the property or objectives being protected (RP, 1993). In the performance of

their duties, the public guards had the right to identify suspicious individuals, detain offenders in flagrante delicto, and use weapons according to the law. They could also identify contraventions and intervene in situations that disturb public order. Regarding the beneficiaries of the security services, they were obligated to monitor compliance with contracts and ensure the necessary technical equipment. County and local councils, as well as the police, had coordinating, advisory, and supporting roles in the proper functioning of the corps, with the police providing weapons, advising the personnel, and also contributing to their training and preparation. In terms of staff selection and training, we mention that public guards had to meet strict criteria regarding citizenship, integrity, and physical and mental fitness. They were required to undergo training courses and sign a service commitment, with early termination of service attracting financial penalties. The CPG received logistical support from local councils, and the funds necessary for their operation were obtained from fees paid by service beneficiaries; the income was used for self-financing, modernization, and rewarding the staff.

Community Police, a result of the reorganization of the Public Guards Corps (PGC) into administrative-territorial units

Romania's commitments to the EU and other international organizations led, in the year 2000, to the beginning of the process of demilitarizing the police and transferring some of its duties to other structures. The experience gained by the public guards as well as the requirements that Romania needed to meet in terms of legislative harmonization, as a result of negotiations for EU accession, provided strong arguments for creating a new structure based on the PGC — the Community Police — with expanded duties and competences in maintaining public order (RP, 2004a). On the other hand, some aspects derived from the realities in Romania at that time made a reform of the institutions responsible for ensuring public order, the safety of residents, and the protection of life and property necessary — regardless of the priority form in which they were situated (RP, 2001). At the same time, there was a growing need for participation in defending public order and safety, with the protection of goods belonging to economic agents — both those with majority state capital and those with private capital — being largely ensured by private security companies through their own managerial concept. This situation was even more relevant given that some individuals had moved democratic freedoms beyond the limits of legality, so that in localities, especially in municipalities and cities, street order and safety in peripheral

neighborhoods were severely affected. Added to this were deficiencies in maintaining cleanliness in localities, parks and gardens sometimes being devastated, sidewalks and roadways (areas of public interest) turning into garbage dumps, rubble, and other construction materials, cemeteries for abandoned vehicles, and unauthorized street trade proliferating unacceptably. Moreover, it had to be considered that, although the CPG had the status of a public institution, the formation of funds and assets was done independently, and their management and use were conducted under the conditions of a private legal entity, a situation not supported by the legal framework in force at that time.

The Romanian Executive's Justification for the Legal Adoption of the Establishment of the Community Police

The previously mentioned reform process involved both the Ministry of Internal Affairs *(MIA)* and the CPG. In fact, the Government Program for the 2001-2004 period (RG, 2001a) concerning the demilitarization of certain public structures through the transfer of their services to local authorities provided for the amendment of the CPG Law (RP, 1993) to transform this institution into a community police structure for public order at the level of administrative-territorial units. Furthermore, the Government Strategy for Accelerating Public Administration Reform (RG, 2001b) included the provision for "the establishment of community police for public order at the level of each administrative unit (village, town, city) by taking over specific duties from police inspectorates." The Romanian Police Law (Art. 49) stipulated that "The establishment, organization, and operation of community police for public order at the level of administrative-territorial units is regulated by law" (RP, 2002). The analyses carried out highlighted the need to complement the Romanian Police and Gendarmerie with new public order structures to address the complex issues of communities (RP, 2004a). Once created, the new forces were to operate in areas such as residential neighborhoods, alleyways between apartment blocks, peripheral areas, routes to public transport, parks, markets, cemeteries, schools, and other locations determined by local authorities. The classical police, subordinated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), was overwhelmed with tasks such as managing public cleanliness, clearing parking spaces, maintaining order in markets, fairs, and cultural and sports events, as well as overseeing street commerce. These administrative rather than police tasks could be more efficiently managed by local public authorities. The lack of sufficient resources for ensuring public order severely affected communities: parks, gardens, and cemeteries were

often vandalized, sidewalks and streets became makeshift dumping grounds for waste and abandoned vehicles, and unauthorized street commerce was widespread. In rural areas, the absence of communal security favored crimes against persons and property, and waste management was deficient, with garbage being thrown along riverbanks, leading to major health risks for both people and animals. Another problematic aspect was the lack of security for local public facilities – hospitals, health centers, schools, kindergartens, old age homes, orphanages, and museums – which either lacked professional security or depended on specialized companies, involving additional costs, or on inadequately trained and overburdened staff with other responsibilities (RP, 2004a). Additionally, the establishment of judicial executor offices generated difficulties in enforcing court decisions, such as evictions, aggravating the overall situation. In this context, the Romanian Government justified the creation of the Community Police by law, emphasizing the importance of professionalizing security services to reduce crime and ensure the protection of public interest objectives.

The main provisions of the Law regarding the establishment, organization, and operation of the Community Police

The Law regarding the establishment, organization, and operation of the Community Police (RP, 2004b) stipulated that this institution is established at the level of administrative-territorial units - municipalities, towns, communes, and sectors of the Capital - through local council decisions, subordinated to their respective mayors, and that in its activities it cooperates with the Police (within the Ministry of Internal Affairs), the Gendarmerie, and other state institutions. The organization of the Community Police, "as a public service of local interest, specialized" (RG, 2005) involved the creation of directorates, services, offices, and departments, with the organizational structure and staff categories being determined annually by the same local councils (with the consultation of the Police within the Ministry of Internal Affairs). The scope of the institution had to be correlated with the allocated budget, the population number, the size of each administrative-territorial unit, and the recorded criminal/contravention rate within these areas. In terms of personnel status, we note that it consisted of civil servants - subject to the provisions of their Special Statute - and contractual personnel, who were subject to the general labor legislation provisions (RG, 2004). The duties of the Community Police are outlined in Figure 1.

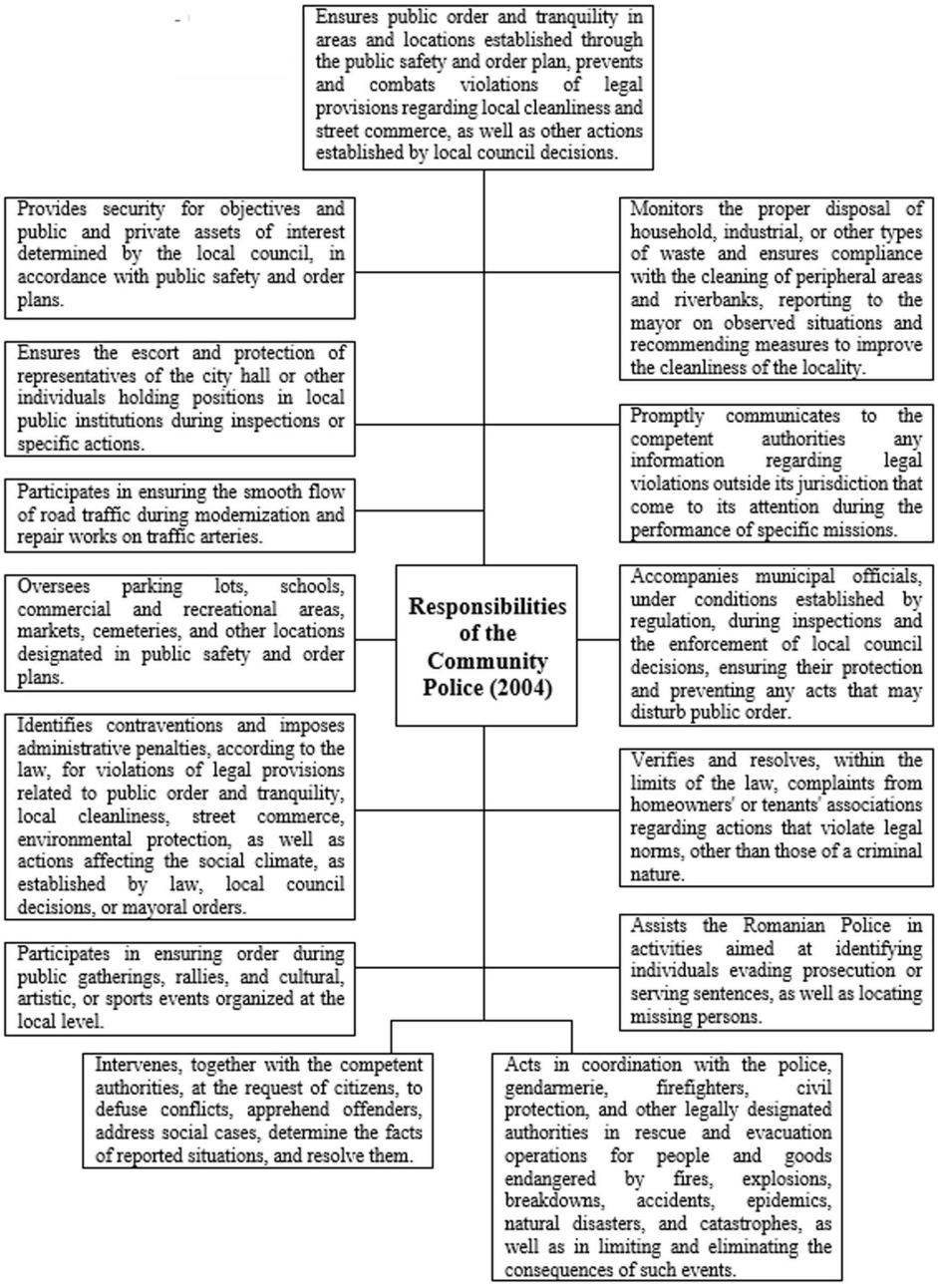


Figure 1. The responsibilities of the Community Police
(Prepared by the author based on: RP, 2004b)

The legislative act in question repealed the Law on the establishment, organization, and functioning of the PGC and the Government Decision no. 518/1993 approving the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the PGC. At the same time, it stipulated that: "The buildings, firearms, ammunition, specific technical equipment, and transportation means necessary for equipping the Community Police shall be transferred, where applicable, from the Public Guards Corps (...)"; "The rights and obligations arising from contracts concluded by the Public Guards Corps shall be assumed by the Community Police (...)"; "The financing of the current and capital expenditures of the Community Police is provided from the local budget and from its own revenues generated by the services rendered"; and "The recruitment of public officials for the Community Police, at its establishment, shall be done from the staff of the Public Guards Corps or other individuals who meet the conditions set out in the Regulation." (RP, 2004b). At the level of each administrative-territorial unit, a Local Public Order Commission is organized and operates with a consultative role, "consisting of the mayor, the local police chief, the representative of the territorial gendarmerie unit, the head of the community police, 2-4 counselors, and 2-5 community representatives, appointed by the local council, and is led by the mayor." (RP, 2004a).

Creation of the Local Police

Considering the importance of improving the activities of the Local Police to support citizens and address issues related to the environment, urban planning, commerce, and population records, the process of drafting and finalizing the Local Police Law project was resumed in 2009. For this purpose, a specialized Working Group was reactivated bringing together representatives from various institutions and organizations, including: specialized departments of the Ministry of Administration and Interior, the National Agency of Civil Servants, the Ministry of Public Finance, associative organizations of local public administration (the National Union of County Councils in Romania, the Association of Romanian Municipalities, the Association of Romanian Towns, and the Association of Romanian Communes), as well as the National Federation of Local/Community Police Officers. Below, we explain relevant aspects by referring to the final text of the law in question, considering that it repealed certain normative acts—such as the Community Police Law and Government Decision No. 2295/2004 for approving the Framework Regulation for the organization and operation of the Community Police.

Deficiencies and Weaknesses Observed in the Activity of the Community Police

After more than five years of operation of the Community Police (RP, 2010a), it was found that its powers were insufficient, especially in county seat municipalities, where the complexity of operational issues, traffic management, urban planning inspections, and environmental protection required a broader approach. There were also difficulties caused by the lack of clear delineation between the responsibilities of the Community Police and those of other structures responsible for inspection and control, either under local public administration or within the Romanian Police or Gendarmerie. Limited financial resources represented another major issue, as revenues from security services failed to cover the costs necessary to establish and operate these structures. Another critical aspect was the low level of training of personnel, the absence of legal provisions in the field, and the lack of specific regulations regarding the use of firearms. These shortcomings, along with others, led the Romanian Government to initiate the drafting of the Local Police Law Project. This project was a priority included in the 2009–2012 Governance Program and emphasized the role of the Local Police as a complementary force in maintaining public order and safety, according to the Ministry of Interior's strategy for achieving this objective (RG, 2005).

Expected Benefits from the Adoption of the Local Police Law

The Local Police Law of 2010 significantly expanded the powers of this institution compared to the former Community Police, introducing new areas of competence, particularly in traffic safety and public order (RP, 2010a). The institution is organized by decision of the deliberative authority of local public administration and can function either as a department within the mayor's specialized apparatus or as a local public institution with legal personality, distinct from the National Police (RP, 2010b). Among the new responsibilities are protecting citizens' rights and freedoms, safeguarding public and private property, and preventing and detecting crimes. Additionally, the Local Police integrates departments within city halls responsible for inspection and control in fields such as construction, urban planning, environmental protection, and commerce, thereby enhancing its intervention capacity. It also supports community public services for population records, contributing to better enforcement of specific legislation. The Local Police staff consists of civil servants and contractual personnel, and officers from territorial units of the Romanian Police can be temporarily seconded to support the operationalization of these services.

Duties in traffic and public order are exclusively assigned to civil servants, whose training is mandatory and conducted in institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Administration and Interior or through authorized providers of adult professional training. The law includes clear regulations on the use of firearms, detailed in Chapter VI, entitled "Use of Equipment and Firearms" (RP, 2010b). Regarding financing, the current and capital expenditures of the Local Police are covered by own revenues and subsidies from local budgets. To reduce the risk of underfunding, the state budget law annually allocates funds from state budget revenues, based on specific cost standards, to support local budgets. Among the advantages of this legislative framework, it is noteworthy that, as early as 2010, the Local Police model had been tested as a pilot project in municipalities such as Bacău, Cluj, Oradea, and Piteşti, demonstrating its utility and efficiency in practice.

Best Practices in a Municipal Local Police Structure (Suceava Local Police Directorate - 2023)

In Suceava, the Local Police operates as a directorate without legal personality, integrated into the mayor's specialized apparatus, according to the decision of the Suceava Local Council. The directorate's central headquarters is located at 9 Petru Rareş Street, and its competences, regulated by normative acts issued by central and local public administration authorities, apply throughout Suceava Municipality (HCLM-SV, 2023). Established by Decision No. 25 of January 27, 2011, the directorate inherited the personnel and positions of the former Community Police, as well as the responsibilities of municipal departments overseeing construction discipline, environmental protection, and commercial activities. The Suceava Local Police Directorate is led by an executive director, supported by a deputy executive director, both appointed under the provisions of Emergency Ordinance No. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code, with subsequent amendments. Directorate services are coordinated by service heads, and in their absence, by designated civil servants. The duties and responsibilities of each position are detailed in job descriptions, prepared in accordance with current legislation and the institution's organization and operation regulations. The organizational structure of the Suceava Local Police Directorate is illustrated in Figure 2.

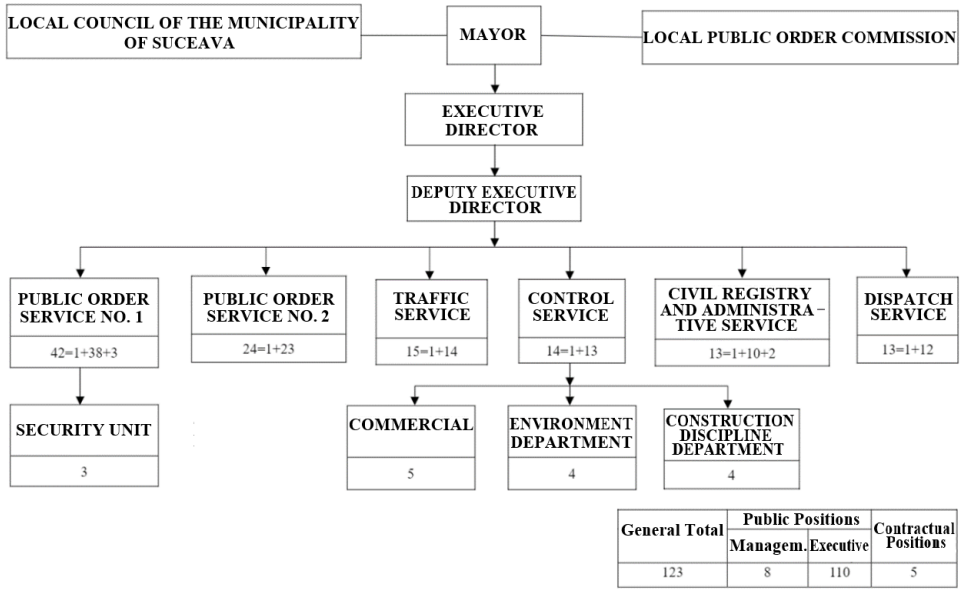


Figure 2. Organizational chart of the local police of Suceava Municipality
Available at: https://politialocalasuceava.ro/organizare, as of December 31, 2024

The work schedule for local police officers involved in maintaining public order, managing traffic, and video surveillance is a special one. It is structured into three shifts of 8 hours each, carried out daily: Shift I: 06:00 – 14:00; Shift II: 14:00 – 22:00; Shift III: 22:00 – 06:00. For local police officers assigned to vehicle patrols (shift supervisors, their assistants, or their substitutes), the schedule is organized into two 12-hour shifts: Shift I: 06:00 – 18:00; Shift II: 18:00 – 06:00. Depending on operational needs and the organization of patrol units, the schedule may be adjusted or split, strictly adhering to the legal regulations in force.

The salary levels of the Suceava Local Police personnel are detailed in Tables 1 and 2, in accordance with the applicable legal framework on salary transparency as of September 30, 2024.

Table 1. The salary level achieved by the personnel of the Local Police of Suceava Municipality (Public management positions - 30.09.2024)

Job Title	*Level of Education*	*Rank*	*Base Salary (Lei) (Art. 11 - L. 153/2017*	*Meal Allowance No. 6 - Annex to GO 26/1994 and Art. 2 of HCLM 231/2023*
Executive Director	S	II	16,830	48 lei/day
Deputy Executive Director	S	II	14,298	48 lei/ day
Head of Service	S	II	13,033	48 lei/ day

Available at:
https://www.primariasv.ro/dm_suceava/site.nsf/atasament/BD2EB214C37B234AC2258BA8003B91EE/$FILE/Transparenta%20veniturilor%20salariale%20la%2030.09.2024.pdf?Open

Table 2. The salary level achieved by the personnel of the Local Police of Suceava Municipality (Specific execution functions - 30.09.2024)

Job Title/Professional degree	*Level of Education*	*Class*	*Gradation*	*Base Salary (Lei) (Art. 11 - L. 153/2017*	*Meal Allowance No. 6 - Annex to GO 26/1994 and Art. 2 of HCLM 231/2023*
Senior local police officer	S	II	5	9,676	48 lei/day
Senior local police officer	S	II	4	9,440	48 lei/ day
Senior local police officer	S	II	3	9,210	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	S	I	5	7,983	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	S	I	4	7,788	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	S	I	3	7,598	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	S	I	2	7,236	48 lei/ day
Assist. local police officer	S	I	5	6,369	48 lei/ day
Assist. local police officer	S	I	3	6,253	48 lei/ day
Assist. local police officer	S	I	2	5,955	48 lei/ day
Assist. local police officer	S	I	0	5,275	48 lei/ day
Senior local police	SSD	II	5	8,206	48 lei/ day

officer					
Senior local police officer	M	III	5	6,737	48 lei/ day
Senior local police officer	M	III	4	6,573	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	M	III	5	5,374	48 lei/ day
Chief local police officer	M	III	4	5,243	48 lei/ day
Rookie local pol. officer	M	III	0	3,813	48 lei/ day

Available at:
https://www.primariasv.ro/dm_suceava/site.nsf/atasament/BD2EB214C37B234AC2258BA8003B91EE/$FILE/Transparenta%20veniturilor%20salariale%20la%2030.09.2024.pdf?Open

Regarding the results of the activities carried out by the Suceava Local Police Directorate in 2023, it is noted that (ATOP-SV, 2024), through the measures implemented at the structural level and the activities conducted, the Directorate's leadership achieved the main objectives for 2023, as established by Local Council Decision No. 36 of January 26, 2023. The activities undertaken aimed to fulfill the general objective of increasing public safety and strengthening the sense of security among citizens. When setting the indicators and objectives for 2023, the results of 2022 were evaluated, and improvements were made in most functional departments. A statistical overview of antisocial acts observed in 2023, concerning public order, tranquility, and traffic, is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of the findings of the Suceava Local Police Department on order, public peace and traffic (2023)

C. No.	*Penalties for minor offences / offenses*	*Summary for 2022*	*Compared to statistics 2022/2021 (infl. +/0/-)*	*Summary for 2023*
1	Penalties for minor offences applied	9,057	-2,251	6,806
2	Fines	4,179	-1,257	2,922
3	Written warnings	1,381	-495	886
4	Verbal warnings	3,290	-454	2,836
5	Written warnings + penalty points	207	-45	162
6	Offences	10	-2	8
7	Value of minor offences applied	1,840,330	+137,181	1,977,511

Available at: https://cjsuceava.ro/2024/atop/2024_rap.pdf

Statistics on requests, notifications and complaints that were handled in 2023 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Requests, notifications and complaints handled by the Local Police Department (2023)

C. No.	*Name*	*Summary for 2022*	*Compared to statistics 2022/2021 (infl. +/0/-)*	*Summary for 2023*
1	Reports received in letter format	808	+130	938
2	Telephone reports via dispatch	1,577	+856	2,433
3	Requests for release of video recordings	478	+202	680
4	Subpoenas handed out	203	-20	183
5	Reports displayed	484	-110	374
	Total	3,550	+1,058	4,608

Available at: https://cjsuceava.ro/2024/atop/2024_rap.pdf

With reference to the 2023 results of Public Order, Tranquility, and Guard Services No. 1 and 2, their activities during the reporting period were carried out in accordance with the Plan established at the Directorate level for the respective year. In this context, priority was given to specific activities aimed at preventing, identifying, and penalizing criminal and contraventional offenses in the areas of public order, tranquility, and citizen safety. The primary focus of the personnel within the Public Order, Tranquility, and Guard Services was to implement measures ensuring public order and tranquility during events such as cultural, sports, and religious activities organized throughout 2023. The personnel from the Directorate's own patrol units, as well as those from joint patrols with the Suceava Municipal Police, participated in specific actions according to Action Plans developed jointly with officers from the Municipal Police and the County Gendarmerie Inspectorate. Measures were also taken to enhance the safety of pre-university students by ensuring the presence of local police officers during peak hours when students were arriving at and leaving school. A summary of the actions undertaken by Public Order, Tranquility, and Guard Services No. 1 and 2 within the Suceava Local Police Directorate in 2023 is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the actions carried out by the Public Order, Peace and Security Services No. 1 and 2 within the Suceava Local Police Department (2023)

C. No.	*Actions carried out*	*Summary for 2022*	*Compared to statistics 2023/2022 (infl. +/0/-)*	*Summary for 2023*
1	Maintaining public order and peace in the areas and places established by the Public Order and Safety Plan of the Suceava Municipality - Daily monitoring with at least 3 patrols 24/24h	5 daily patrols	-	5 daily patrols
2	Maintaining public order in the immediate vicinity of public educational institutions during the period in which they were open	5 school units	-	5 school units
3	Accompanying personnel from the mayor's specialized apparatus, from public institutions or services of local interest when carrying out specific checks or actions	326 actions	+170	496 actions
4	Identifying beggars, children without parental or legal guard supervision, homeless persons and entrusting them to the public social assistance service in order to solve the problems	158 finding	-109	49 finding
5	Ensuring public order and peace during rallies, marches, demonstrations, processions, (…), which take place in public space and involve crowds of people	172 events	-63	109 events

Available at: https://cjsuceava.ro/2024/atop/2024_rap.pdf

Referring to the 2023 results of the Public Roads Traffic Service, it is noted that, in accordance with the Protocol concluded with the Suceava Municipal Police - Traffic Bureau, local police officers from this service performed their duties in collaboration with specialized structures of the Romanian Police through joint patrols, individual patrols, and fixed points, where they monitored assigned areas to prevent traffic congestion. As expected, their activities were carried out in line with the Plan established at the Directorate level for 2023. A summary of the actions undertaken by the Public Roads Traffic Service within the Suceava Local Police Directorate in 2023 is presented in Table 6.

Tabel 6. Summary of the actions carried out by the Traffic Service on Public Roads within the Suceava Local Police Department (2023)

C.	*Actions carried out*	*Summary*	*Compared to*	*Summary*

No.		*for 2022*	*statistics 2023/2022 (infl. +/0/-)*	*for 2023*
1	Participation, together with bodies of the Romanian Police, in ensuring traffic measures caused by public gatherings (…) involving crowds of people	53 actions	+12	65 actions
2	Support provided to the territorial unit of the Romanian Police in taking measures to ensure traffic flow and safety	365 daily	-	365 daily
3	Ensuring, in the case of accidents resulting in victims, the guarding of the scene of these accidents and taking the first necessary measures to preserve traces, identify witnesses and perpetrators and transport victims to the nearest health facility	91 events	+22	113 events
4	Determination of contraventions and application of sanctions for violation of the rules applicable to stopping, parking, parking of vehicles and prohibited access	365 daily	-	365 daily
5	Determination of contraventions and application of sanctions for violation of the rules applicable to the maximum permitted weight and access on some public roads	365 daily	-	365 daily
6	Verification of compliance with road rules by pedestrians, cyclists, moped drivers and animal-drawn vehicles	365 daily	-	365 daily
7	Verification of compliance with legal rules regarding public passenger transport in the taxi	48 actions	-	48 actions
8	Application of legal provisions regarding the legal regime of vehicles without owners or abandoned on land belonging to the public or private domain of the Municipality of Suceava	24 actions	-	24 actions

Available at: https://cjsuceava.ro/2024/atop/2024_rap.pdf

The review of the official reports referenced earlier allows us to conclude that, overall, the activities of the Suceava Local Police Directorate carried out in 2023 demonstrated effective cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) structures and efficient collaboration with local authorities. The integrated approach to action ensured the fulfillment of objectives outlined in its own programmatic documents as well as in the Strategic Plan of the Suceava Territorial Public Order Authority.

Improving the institutional framework governing the organization and functioning of local police, aiming to ensure efficient career management for local police officers

The law I referred to earlier (RP, 2010b), which has been in force since January 1, 2011, could not have taken into account all the social and economic changes impacting the complexity of the areas in which the contribution of local police personnel is necessary. During this time, a series of issues have been identified in the activity of the analyzed institution, stemming from the lack or ambiguity of the norms. Beyond all this, driven by the desire to increase public safety for citizens, there is a need to reconsider the normative framework regulating this field, providing clarifications regarding the status of local police officers, aiming for full professionalization of the function, as well as a better identification of their competencies and a more unified approach to the organization and implementation of legislation across all local police structures (MDLPA, 2023a). The debates surrounding the drafting of the draft law for a new local police law have highlighted several aspects (RP, 2023a). First, the necessity to establish the role and position of this institution within the national public order and safety system, also revealing a lack of coordinated activity across local police structures through democratic institutional mechanisms for periodic activity evaluation, setting policies, identifying regulatory needs, defining action directions, etc. Furthermore, two additional issues create difficulties: the absence of a legal framework for central authorities with competencies in the field to provide methodological guidance for local police activities, and the lack of a unified framework for the conduct of activities and actions/missions by local police officers. Any future improvements must consider the need for professional training of local police officers in all areas of competence, updating operational approaches for missions, as well as the right to hold and use specific equipment. Additionally, it includes the revision of the food allowance (including updating its value) and clarification of the competencies and limits of action within each area of local police competence. As a result, a draft law has recently been developed, aiming to improve the legal and institutional framework regarding the organization and functioning of local police, focusing on ensuring efficient career management for local police officers, as well as modernizing the continuous training and professional development system for them (MDLPA, 2023b). Once adopted as law, this draft will cover the following (RP, 2023b): (i) Establishment at the central level (within MDLPA/ Ministry of Development, Public Works, and Administration) of a

public administration institution that will fulfill regulatory functions, monitor the uniform application of specific legislation, and provide methodological guidance. Also, a "Consultative Council for Local Police would be set up, comprising representatives of central public institutions with responsibilities in the local police domain, associations of local public authorities as representatives of employers, professional associations of local police officers, and representative trade unions in the field." (RP, 2023b). The Consultative Council for Local Police would have as essential responsibilities the development of public policy proposals and strategic development directions, identifying the professional training and equipment needs, as well as analyzing and initiating necessary changes in the regulations specific to local police activities. To strengthen the role of Local Police within public order structures, it is proposed to define it as a dual system of public order and safety. This approach implies reinforcing cooperation between the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and those of the Local Police, as well as sharing competencies in public order and safety, according to the National Public Order and Safety Strategy 2023–2027 (RG, 2023). For daily public order maintenance actions, continued close collaboration between the Local Police and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) forces is essential. This partnership involves the exchange of information and mutual access to operationally relevant databases, as well as compliance with the legal framework regarding operational activities. Regarding the training and professional development of local police officers, it is proposed to establish a system of initial and ongoing training as follows: (i) Initial training: Completion, within one year of employment, of courses—lasting 4 months for public order and traffic— and 6 weeks for specialized areas (construction discipline, environmental protection, commercial activities, population registry, communication, and public administration). Continuous professional development will be based on participation in 10-day courses, organized every three years, for the professionalization of the local police function. To clarify the public functions within the Local Police, it is proposed to explicitly define the local police officer position as a specific public function, by introducing norms that emphasize the particularities of this role and regulating leadership positions as specific public functions. Additionally, to ensure greater territorial impact, the possibility of organizing Local Police services at the County Council level is foreseen, through decisions made by the deliberative authorities, upon the proposal of the County Council President. Regarding control and verification mechanisms, it is proposed that if the mayor or county council president believes that the activities of the Local Police are not in compliance with legal requirements

or if complaints are received regarding legislative violations, they may order internal investigations through subordinate control structures, as well as request support from decentralized public services of ministries to resolve problematic situations. Regarding the responsibilities of the mayor/county council president in organizing and functioning of the local police, the following is considered: "(a) appoint, sanction, and decide on the suspension, modification, or termination of the service/employment relationships of the local police personnel, including its chief, when the local police is organized within their own specialized apparatus, and only for the chief inspector of the local police and their deputies when organized as a public institution of local interest; (b) submit to the deliberative authority the necessary resources for the local police; (c) guide, supervise, control, and analyze the activity of the local police; (d) ensure the implementation of the local/county council's decisions regarding the organization and functioning of the local police; (e) evaluate the activity of the local police; (f) provide reports to the deliberative authority regarding the functioning of the local police; (g) submit to the deliberative authority the regulation for the organization and functioning of the local police, as well as the procedures and criteria for organizing the competition for the position of chief inspector of the local police; (i) periodically organize consultations with members of the local community regarding the priorities and activities of the local police; (j) receive and address complaints regarding deficiencies found in the activities of the local police; (k) empower local police officers as inspectors in any situation where this capacity is granted to the mayor/county council president." (RP, 2023b). The new regulatory text (found in the draft) provides for the explicit regulation of food allowances for local police officers, eliminating the need for the Ministry of National Defense to communicate their value. The update to the food allowance value will be established by a Government Decision, adopted upon the proposal of the MDLPA. Regarding the provision of lethal weapons, given the principles governing the activity of the local police, including the prevention principle, and the implications of using lethal weapons, the equipping of Local Police structures with such equipment will require approval from the Prefect Institution and the territorial structures of the Romanian Police. The decision will be based on the analysis of local crime indicators and the severity of criminal acts in the area. To standardize equipment, considering that the current equipping of the Local Police varies significantly between localities, the new regulation (RP, 2023b) aims to establish a unified framework for the equipping of Local Police structures, so that they can provide services according to the same standards at the

national level. Clarifications are also made regarding the institution's duties and competencies. The legislative changes adapt the fields of competence of the Local Police to normative developments and on-the-ground realities, meaning that activities such as accompanying staff from the mayor's office, protecting the forest fund, or assisting judicial officers will only take place upon their explicit request, not as routine activities. On the other hand, the role of the local police officer in carrying out prevention activities is reinforced as part of ensuring community safety. Specific duties have also been introduced to support authorities in limiting and eliminating the effects of natural disasters. These changes aim to adapt the activity of the Local Police to the current needs of communities and improve the quality of public services offered. As a new element, we note the expansion of competences in several key areas. Thus, in the field of object guarding, in addition to protecting property, responsibilities related to securing valuables, including during their transportation, have been included. Regarding traffic on public roads, duties related to traffic management and the extension of the prerogatives of local police officers have been introduced in accordance with current legislation (RG, 2002). In the area of construction discipline, the regulations now differentiate between works carried out without a building permit and those carried out without complying with the respective permit. At the same time, in the environmental protection sector, the duties of local police officers have been clarified, including procedures for identifying contraventions and notifying the competent authorities, regulations that also apply to commercial activities.

Conclusions, Limits of the research and Future directions of study

The present paper provides a significant contribution to understanding the evolution and optimization of local public order and safety structures, opening new perspectives for further research and the implementation of strategic measures to ensure higher-quality services for citizens. The Local Police represents a modern structure dedicated to maintaining public order and safety, having a direct impact on the level of security and peace in communities. This institution meets the needs of citizens by addressing various issues related to environmental protection, urban planning, commercial activities, and population registration management. The optimizations discussed in the paper and the new approach regarding the reorganization of the Local Police aim to significantly improve the quality of services offered. By expanding the inspection and control duties, a significant increase in the efficiency and quality of public services provided by local administrations is anticipated.

The paper "Optimizations Regarding the Organization and Responsibilities of Local Public Order and Safety Structures Aimed at Increasing the Quality of Services Provided" highlights a complex evolutionary path of public safety structures in Romania, from the CPG to the institutionalization of the Local Police. The major conclusions of the research emphasize the historical role and contribution of the CPG in laying the foundations for modern public safety structures, adapted to the needs of the community. The creation of the Local Police, based on clear regulations, was a decisive step for the professionalization of public safety structures and their closer relationship with citizens. This stage responded to the demands for efficiency, flexibility, and institutional competence. The implementation of best practices within the Local Police, exemplified by the Suceava Local Police Directorate, demonstrates the ability of local structures to respond to modern challenges. The need for efficient career management for local police officers is extremely important to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the institutional optimization process. For this reason, the paper highlighted the necessity of strengthening the institutional framework and regulations, considering the need to respond to the demands of a constantly changing society, where emphasis must be placed on well-defined competencies, efficient organization, and proximity to citizens.

Limits of the research

The geographical focus – at the national level (without a detailed comparison with other similar models from European countries), regarding the research of the applicable institutional framework, and from an applied perspective – focusing only on a municipal structure, albeit representative (Suceava Local Police Directorate), constitutes a first limit of this research. Expanding the analysis and making comparisons with other similar models from European countries, possibly presenting statistical data on the impact of institutional transformations on the quality of services provided, could offer a more complete picture of the situation.

Future directions of study

Certainly, besides the need to research similar models from European countries, it is also necessary to study the local police structures from other regions of the country to identify differences and regional best practices. Additionally, our attention will focus on research related to the creation of integrated programs that ensure high-quality continuous training, professional satisfaction, and adaptability to future requirements, as well as

exploring how digitalization and emerging technologies can support the activity of local public order and safety structures.

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