

Thematic contribution

"Turning the police into a public service."

The return of the security issue

Safety is currently the third most important topic for the French (after Health and the Environment)¹. Thus, **6 out of 10 French people consider the current situation regarding the safety of goods and people to be bad.** with physical assaults in the street being the top priority, sexual assaults second, and drug trafficking third.

A phenomenon difficult to measure

For the moment, the only data available on the issue of insecurity are those of the police and gendarmerie, published monthly by the statistical service of the Ministry of the Interior. If the figures explode in July 2020, + 15% homicide, + 21% assault and battery, + 38% burglary, it is above all because they are related to the cumulative figures of the previous quarter, that is to say during the confinement, where the acts of delinquency collapsed. Thus, **if we compare the 2020 figures with those of the previous year, on the**

At the same time, there is no significant increase in the phenomena in question. For example, police and gendarmerie data recorded 248 homicides in July 2019 and 240 in July 2020. Beyond the figures for delinquency, **the former Socialist Minister of the Interior Bernard Cazeneuve spoke of "diffuse violence, which is increasingly unacceptable and less and less well felt by the French"**².

A double crisis of confidence

The crisis of confidence is twofold: it is played out **between the forces of law and order and the population, but also between the Government and the French.** Thus, if in 2015, 80% of the French

¹ ELABE survey of August 31, 2020

² Proposals made on August 31 on BFM-TV

declared that they trust the police: in 2020, only 66% of **French citizens trust the police.** down 14% in five years³ Today, **one French citizen in three no longer trusts the police.**

Faced with this, it is also the confidence in the Government and its ability to ensure the security of the French people that is being questioned. The violence within the yellow vest demonstrations, for example, was experienced as an opposition of the State with the population. A poll of August 31, 2020 revealed that only 27% of French people today trust Gérald Darmanin to respond effectively to security problems (ELABE poll). Finally, after 40 years of work on the functioning of the police, the lack of structural reform is being felt. **The creation of 10,000 police posts alone cannot constitute a security policy.** Let us also recall that the White Paper on Internal Security, initially announced for January 2020, was successively postponed in September and then in mid-November.

The socialist message: make the police "a public service" again

In this debate, the socialists must be a force for proposals. It is urgent to rebuild the police as a true public service. **It is the key to a legitimate police force, anchored in society, at the heart of justice and social equality.**

On the occasion of the Rendez-vous de la gauche, organized in Blois in August 2020, speakers and activists were able to dialogue around the question "how to reconcile the Nation with the forces of law and order? ». Today, these exchanges allow us to put forward the following 10 proposals:

PROPOSAL 1. TO PROMOTE A DAILY POLICE FORCE

Resume experimentation with community policing and/or develop everyday security policing (PSQ): in France, the police are more of an intervention police force than a community police force. Created in 1998 by the Jospin government, community policing was abolished by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2003. On February 8, 2018, the PSQ was launched by Emmanuel Macron. However, the elected representatives regretted that the mechanism was limited to an increase in the number of personnel. The PSQ lacks a clear framework and precise objectives: "today it is more of a concept than a public policy incarnate.

³In comparison, confidence in the Army fell by only 7%.

⁴Guillaume FARDIE

PROPOSAL 2. PUT AN END TO SARKOZY'S NUMBER POLICY

Better define police priorities: today prefects must report on more than 48 priority indicators per department. This excessive number of priorities undermines the clarity of the police's objectives.

Ask the question of the suppression of certain missions: for example, the suppression of identity checks as in 1981-1982.

PROPOSAL 3. INCREASE CONTACTS WITH CITIZENS

Experimenting with citizen participation in the police force: The satisfaction rate of citizens in France is dropping survey after survey. However, in other countries, the image of the police is tending to improve. This is the case in Germany, for example. In England, county "chiefs of police" are elected by the people. Citizens participate in certain commissions or in the follow-up of investigations to verify by guarantee of neutrality. Such an inclusion could be experimented in France.

Integration in the neighborhood councils: the police/gendarmerie are punctually invited to participate in the neighborhood councils. However, it is the commissioners and officers who attend these meetings; it could be proposed to send the police/gendarmes in the field to these meetings instead on a daily basis.

Meeting to present the results to the population: possibility to organize several times a year neighborhood meetings to inform the population of the actions of the police / gendarmerie. Dialogue with the citizens / going beyond a judgment on the police beyond the figures on delinquency.

School education: raising awareness in schools about the role of the police, meetings with students.

PROPOSAL 4. STOP CHOOSING BETWEEN MEN AND MEANS

The budget devoted to the wage bill must not be to the detriment of the budget allocated to equipment: If the electoral promise to create 10,000 positions is for the moment kept⁵, it is to the detriment of the budgets devoted to equipment.

PROPOSAL 5. PUTTING REFLECTION BACK INTO THE HEART OF THE POLICE FORCE

Creation of a body for reflection within the police: currently, there is no official body for reflection involving researchers, police officers, etc., even at the level of police academies. However, this is the case everywhere in Europe. Reflection on the police cannot rely only on private consultants.

PROPOSAL 6. RETHINKING POLICING TECHNIQUES

Going back to the change in doctrine in 2018: there were three key principles in policing: specialization of police officers, gradation of the means used and distance from the population. Since the movement of the yellow vests, police officers have been sent to demonstrations without the necessary training, with heavy equipment and almost systematic contact with the population.

Review the use of weapons and methods of apprehension.

PROPOSAL 7. IMPROVE INITIAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Diversify internships in initial training: particularly in associative circles, **with the justice system**, etc.

Initial training: today the young police officers have 8 months of continuous training in school, then 16 months of training in a first service (tutoring). Three proposals: increase the time of training in school + improve the follow-up time.

⁵ As a **reminder:** the number of posts increased between 2002 and 2004 when Nicolas SARKOZY was Minister of the Interior, then when he became President he cut 13,000 posts. During the five-year term of François HOLLANDE: 9,000 posts were created.

during the internship/mentoring period which is uneven + reintroduce certain topics at the time of training such as the values of the Republic, confrontation, etc.

Ongoing training: Increase budgets for ongoing training, as a reminder that 1 in 3 police officers do not conduct the shooting sessions necessary to maintain their skills (CC report, 2008).

Management training for officers and commissioners: to offer officers and commissioners initial and continuing training in management and sociology.

PROPOSAL 8. RE-CANVASSING POLICE OFFICERS IN THEIR TERRITORIES

Re-enforcing police officers in their territories: today 80% of young provincial police officers are assigned to the Ile-de-France region, with one supervisor for every 15 young people in certain departments.

PROPOSAL 9. IMPROVE RECRUITMENT

Recruitment: quantity over quality / reset the level of recruitment.

Recruitment: Today there are approximately 20,000 candidates for the peacekeeper competition. Whereas 600 candidates were once recruited, 3,000 are now being recruited: a candidate who is successful today would not have been recruited five years ago. This is why it is proposed to raise the level of requirements for the exams.

PROPOSAL 10. GUARANTEE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE NMI

Outsourcing of the IGPN of the Ministry of the Interior