

Summary

Research into the development of a framework for the consultations towards and elaboration of the national priorities of the police.

Every four years the minister for Security and Justice (S&J) decides on the national priorities for the police (np). Once established, the minister elaborates the np into targets for each police-region.

From the first of January 2013 the Police law has been changed. The management of the police has been centralized and the minister of S&J has become solely responsible. What didn't change however is the *command* over the police: this rests with the mayor and the public prosecutor of each municipality. The centralization of the management of the police enlarged the already existing tension between national policymaking by np and the local authority over the police. Local authorities feel threatened in their autonomy. This puts pressure on the deciding on and the elaboration of the np by the minister, in consultation with representatives of the mayors ('regional mayors') and the Procurators-general. For this reason these consultations should be set up carefully and well-balanced.

The Scientific Research - and Documentation centre of the department of S&J asked Decide, a research bureau, linked to the University of Groningen, to develop a *framework* for these consultations. This report gives an account of the results of the research into this question.

Starting point of the research was the decision making process that led to the current np for the period 2011-2014. By means of a series of interviews with staff members of the department of V&J, the police-organization, the Public Prosecutor and a number of mayors this decision making process was reconstructed and evaluated. Furthermore, the respondents were asked after their preferences with respect to the intended framework. In the approach taken by Decide the framework should have support of the main interest groups.

In the developing of the framework other insights were applied from 1. comparable decision making processes in other sectors and from 2. decision making theory. The researchers especially were interested in insights which would maximize support of the participants in the consultation process for the framework itself as well as for the outcome of the consultation process.

Based on the conclusions on subsequently the evaluation of the former decision making process, the preferences of the main parties concerned, the comparison with similar decision making processes, relevant insights in the decision making theory, the researchers formulated the following main guidelines for the consultation framework:

1. In general the framework should guarantee an adequate, careful and balanced decision making on the np.
2. A broad *support* for the np and for the elaboration into targets for the regions is crucial for an effective realization of ambitions. To enhance this, the structure of the framework should facilitate the pursuit of consensus between the parties involved: every party should be given access to a discussion on the np.
3. The process of deciding on, realization and evaluation of the np can best be approached as a continuous planning & control cycle. This also helps to preserve the motivation of the participants to realize the targets of the np, presumed that all parties involved participate in the decision making in all stadia of the cycle. One should aim at *interactive policy making* as much as possible ('coproduction'), especially with respect to the elaboration of the np in indicators for achievement and regional-specific targets.

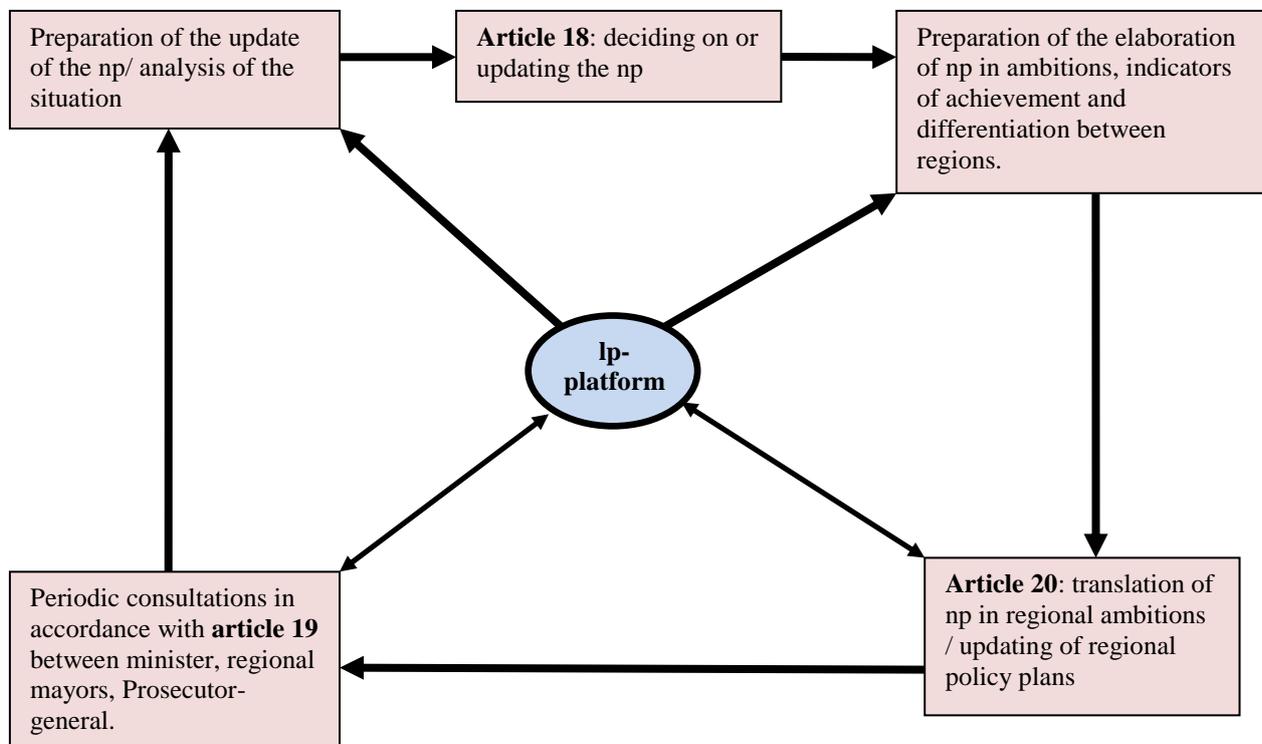
4. The evaluation and possible updating of the current np should take place more frequent than every four years. Considerations for updating could be political or professional.
5. The elaboration of the np in targets for each specific region should be given more attention and should differentiate between regions, taking into account regional differences. This should be done in close consultation with the police en the regional authorities.
6. The framework should institutionalize the input of professional expertise in the deciding on and updating of the np by the minister of S&J.

More specific, the researchers propose that the deciding on, elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the results of the np is embedded in a planning and control cycle. This cycle should last two years, instead of the present period of four years. This allows for more flexibility. Updates then are expected to become more marginal.

For a successful functioning of such a cycle the researchers propose the formation of a permanent np-platform, in which experts of different professional background (police, department, public prosecutors, mayors) discuss the issues in every phase of the cycle. This also will enlarge the support for policy decisions. The outcome of the professional consultations within the platform are input in the consultations between the minister, regional mayors and the Prosecutors-general about the updates and evaluation of the np.

Figure I shows the two-year planning & control cycle with a supporting role of the np-platform. The 'articles' refer to the Police law.

Figure I: two-year cycle of deciding on, elaboration, monitoring, evaluation and updating of the np; the articles mentioned refer to the new Police law.



The cycle then is made up of the following steps:

1. The np-platform analyzes and evaluates the situation with respect to the results of the np and national security matters in general. This results in an advice to the minister concerning the update of the np.
2. The minister decides on the definitive update of the np, after consultation with the regional mayors and the Prosecutors-general.
3. The np-platform elaborates the np in general ambitions, targets for each of the regions and the way in which the results are monitored. This results in an advice to the minister.
4. The minister decides, after consultation with the regional mayors and the Prosecutor-general, on the regional targets.
5. The regional policy plans are adjusted.
6. The regions/ local authorities incorporate the targets in their operational policy. The results are evaluated periodically by the np-platform, which reports to the periodical consultations between minister, regional mayors and Prosecutor-general in accordance to article 19, Police law.
7. After two years the situation is evaluated again by the np-platform.