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Police Powers and Accountability in a Democratic Society

Editorial

Safety and security are among the main interests of citizens. The legitimacy of the nation state is for this reason closely related to the position of the police (and of the army). Especially in democratic states a precarious relation exists between police powers and the democratic control of the police. At the beginning of the twenty-first century there are several developments which put tension on this relationship. The growing unification of the European countries, the growth of organised crime, migration movements and the severity of the crime problems as such are some of the major challenges for nation states and their power institutions. The effects of these developments on the position of the police have to be carefully weighed and judged.

The editors of the *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* are quite happy to present an issue on this subject. They could do so because the Council of Europe organised its Twelfth Criminological Colloquium on 'Police Powers and Accountability in a Democratic Society'. The colloquium took place in Strasbourg, from 24-26 November 1999. It generated a fine set of papers which we can present – in an adapted version – in this issue, thanks to the generous permission by the Department of Crime Problems (Penology and Criminology Division) which was responsible for the organisation of the Colloquium. The extended papers will later be published in the Council of Europe Series *Criminological Research*, including the General report and the Recommendations by the general rapporteur J. Kersten.

The introductory report of *Joachim Kersten* is included in this issue as the first article. It gives a comprehensive overview of the other articles. In the *Current Issues* section a study on the victims of women trafficking from Central and Eastern Europe is presented by *Jan Nijboer and Judith Vocks*.