4.1 Final publishable summary report

4.1.1 Executive summary

Recent European Social Survey datasets comprising of 21 European countries and minority group members from 66 countries of origin, revealed that individuals who feel that they belong to a discriminated group have less trust in the police than individuals who do not perceive group discrimination. Such macro data analysis is in line with COREPOL research findings. COREPOL research has a European dimension which points at the necessity to establish more accountability regarding police work in EU member states.

Across modern societies research findings leave no doubt that minority populations are at a higher risk of being exposed to problems with the police. Additionally, they have less trust in law enforcement. Although police are not solely responsible for failed integration processes, they are a central player in what could be called the micro-politics of integration. Police can add to the 'otherness' of minorities and even reinforce it, or they can act as a human rights agency and serve and protect minority communities and their vulnerable members, mostly women and children. Even more, they can also help the communities to understand the work and the tasks of police and citizens in civil society. Most important, they can help to strengthen the norms and the fabric in civilized cultures, even among people who live in segregated circumstances.

After incidents of spectacular crime and violence committed by persons of a migrant or minority origin, parts of the general public, of politics and the media tend to reinforce the notion of 'otherness' of **all** minority persons and new citizens. Measures to control migration ('send them home') are set high on the agenda of public concerns. Occasionally, this may foster expectations that law enforcement should proceed with more strictness, or somehow take care of crime and disorder associated to minority neighbourhoods. Police work in some minority quarters is often difficult and can be frustrating due to the fact that it is a 'mixed bag'. The enforcement of the norms of civil society, the prevention of violence and victimization, the maintenance of public order, and the solving of crimes, taken together this can create real challenges to the forces of order. However, police are not the main culprit when it comes to the failures of European integration politics. Police need more support to professionally carry out what is needed and has to be done with regard to minority problems. To carry out community policing in problematical areas and circumstances is a task that asks for a shift of paradigm: The often somewhat fictitious image of police as the 'crime-fighting' force has to make space for an understanding of police as a service and central actor for the protection of Human Rights.