

# Special operations with respect to witness protection in the Czech Republic

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**Abstract**— The paper addresses the issue of special witness protection in the Czech Republic with respect to legal proceedings, organisational and tactical forms of protective actions implemented by the Police and the Prison Service towards persons admitted to protection programmes. The most significant legal acts regulating protective actions and operations adopted under the institution of an anonymous witness, special institution of witness protection and short-term protection have been drawn forward. Actions described in the paper constitute basic instruments of operational, exploratory and investigative work used by the Czech Republic Police in their fight against organised crime. The paper was written within the frame of a research project called “Understanding of Dimensions of Organized Crime and Terrorist Networks for Developing Effective and Efficient Security Solutions for First-line-practitioners and Professionals” (TAKEDOWN, H2020-FCT-2015, No: 700688).

**Index Terms**— the Police, the Czech Republic, witness protection, TAKEDOWN, Horizon 2020

## I. INTRODUCTION

Witness testimonies in criminal proceedings are usually perceived as basic and the most important proof of a case, that enable determination of the circumstances of the crime and its perpetrator. The significance of witness testimonials gains value in case of the fight against organised crime or investigative measures in case of the most serious crimes (Dworzecki, 2009). In such cases a threat to the witness’s life and health may occur. It lies in the hands of the state and its law enforcement agencies to ensure an adequate level of security and protection to important witnesses. In case of the Czech Republic the activities mentioned above are performed by the Police forces. The extent of international crime calls for organised and coordinated witness protection schemes what is advocated not only by the Member States of the European Union but also by other organisations across borders e.g. the

United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or non-governmental institutions e.g. Transparency International.

Testimonies of witnesses are regarded as the first adequate reaction to organised crime (Dworzecki, 2010). The description below presents legal and organisational aspects of witness protection in the Czech Republic. The information contained in the paper is of general nature and will be used as a reference only because the issues in tactical and technical terms are classified. The paper uses information obtained during interviews with officers of the Czech Republic Police who are experts in witness protection, or have previous experience regarding the issue.

The paper is addressed to individuals who scientifically and professionally deal with issues of widely understood security and public order, as well as students of law, internal security, criminology, management in dispositional groups, also to other persons who regard issue of security as particularly close.

The paper was written within the frame of a research project called Understanding of the Dimensions of Organized Crime and Terrorist Networks for Developing Effective and Efficient Security Solutions for First-line-practitioners and Professionals (TAKEDOWN, H2020-FCT-2015, No: 700688).

## II. LEGAL ACTS REGULATING SPECIAL WITNESS PROTECTION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In the Czech Republic there are numerous solutions concerning witness protection based strictly on trial related measures or on physical and material activities. The most popular form of judicial protection is the so called institution of incognito witness. Protective measures are also based on the institution of a special witness, and short-term individual protection. The witness protection programmes mentioned above were legally entered into Article 50 of the Act No. 273 of 17 July 2008 on the Czech Republic Police (Act No. 273 of



17 July 2008 on the Police of the Czech Republic). Although the indicated forms of protection have the same objective i.e. ensuring maximum protection of witnesses, they represent different institutional regulations, different forces are engaged and the difference is the degree of interference of services into the private life of protected persons.

Protective measures in preparatory and investigative proceedings also include day-to-day preventive actions carried out by the Czech police officers in their daily service. Practical steps related to security of individuals taking part in police or court proceedings include inter alia: patrol and intervention actions carried out by the police officers of prevention services, exploratory actions of criminal prevention including observation of the protected person's place of residence or special legal solutions, provided for in the Czech legal order e.g. administrative change of an official place of residence, transfer of protected individuals or deployment in a safe place of isolation. The above mentioned operations optimise the costs of protection because it is easier and more cost-efficient to maintain the level of security of the protected witness using the workforce already on duty in the area of his/her residence. In such a case physical protection conducted by police officers in plain clothes, armed with automatic weapons takes place ad hoc (Ad hoc mode is characterised by daily cycle of realisation of protective activities, that means that the police officers protect individuals under protection 8 hours a day at selected time intervals. Source: own description.) or in a time-controlled mode (Time -controlled mode includes protection taking place 8-12 hours a day at specific and fixed time intervals. Source: own description).

The above modes of protection belong to the category of physical protection. Generally, such activities are performed by police officers from local police stations with jurisdiction over the residence of the protected individual. The Special Actions Unit located in the Police Presidium in Prague is the only entity operating and coordinating protective activities throughout the country. In the most serious cases, police officers from the Special Action Unit are also responsible for physical protection (e.g. protection of courts, prosecutors' offices, protection of public places where it is known that the protected individual will be at a specific time).

The institution of incognito witness is usually applied during court proceedings only (it rarely takes the form of physical protection even if the witness is attending court proceedings) (E.g. in Poland, the incognito witness is, upon request of the court, protected by police officers of Departments or Teams for the Protection of Individuals at Risk of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters. Such protection includes taking a witness from a chosen, safe place of isolation, providing such a person with physical security and anonymity with respect to third parties, including parties to the proceedings, during a hearing and transport after the hearing to a safe place. It should be noticed that an anonymous witness both in Poland and in the Czech Republic during a hearing may contact the Chief Judge only by means of an individual wireless communication system. Source: an interview with M. Sz., the Chief (personal data to the author's exclusive knowledge), serving as an expert of the

Team for the Protection of Individuals at Risk of the Crime Department of the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Katowice.). In procedural documents the anonymous witness features only under the code name, and procedural steps conducted by the Police or the Prosecutor always take place without third parties participation.

Different forms of witness protection available in the Czech Republic include:

- patrol and intervention service conducted by police officers of prevention forces in the area of the protected person's place of residence, physical protective steps in the ad hoc or time-controlled mode;
- physical protective actions in the ad hoc or time-controlled mode, classifying the identity and protecting the image (protection during trial under the incognito programme), the protection is provided outside the permanent address of the protected person;
- patrol and intervention service at the witness's place of residence, physical protective steps (in different modes) and classifying the identity (protection during trial), especially when the witness's testimony constitutes an important evidence in extremely complicated and chronic proceedings conducted by central institutions of the Czech law enforcement authorities;
- individual witness protection and provision of multifaceted assistance by the Special Actions Unit of the Police Presidium in Prague.

### III. THE ANONYMOUS WITNESS AS AN EFFECTIVE FORM OF PROCEDURAL PROTECTION

The institution of incognito witness was implemented into the Act No. 141 of 9 December 1961 on criminal proceedings (Act No. 141 of 9 December 1961 on criminal proceedings), through the entry into force of the Amendment Act No. 292 of 10 November 1993 on amending and supplementing the Act No. 141/1961 on criminal proceedings, the Act No. 21/1992 on banks and the Act No. 335/1991 on courts and judges (Amending Acts No. 292 of 10 November 1993 on amending and supplementing of Act No. 141/1961 on criminal proceedings, Act No. 21/1992 on banks and Act No. 335/1991 on courts and judges). Currently, in the Czech Republic the most commonly employed mode of special witness procedural protection is included in Article 55 paragraph 2, of the Act 141/1961 on criminal proceedings. The text reads: 'If circumstances have been disclosed and result in a situation when the life or health of a witness and/or person/persons closest to him/them are at risk because of participation in criminal proceedings, or there is a threat to his/their constitutional rights, and the imposed risk cannot be removed in any other way, law enforcement authorities may classify the identity and image of the witness by providing the witness with a numeric code name, which is registered into procedural documents instead of his/her personal data, not entering the witness's personal data into procedural documents or their exclusion from documents of proceedings and disclosure of the data only to the exclusive knowledge of representatives of law

enforcement authorities and the responsible court. The witness is informed of the right to apply for the confidentiality in the proceedings and possibility of signing procedural documents with a false name and surname. If the need for individual protection escalates, law enforcement authorities immediately initiate necessary steps. Protection of special witnesses and their relatives is determined in the Act on protection of special witnesses and their relatives during criminal proceedings. If circumstances posing a threat to the witness and/or his family cease to exist, the authority leading the criminal proceedings cancels the secrecy of the witness's identity and image, and enters the witness's personal data into documents. Since then the witness uses his/her own name and surname. The above solution is not applicable to a witness whose identity and image was classified with reference to Article 102a'.

The described situation of the institution of incognito witness enables introduction of protection in the form of confidentiality of identity and image during court proceedings and other procedural operations. Such form of a witness protection is employed in situations when safety cannot be guaranteed otherwise, particularly by the Police usual preventive procedures. The authority conducting criminal proceedings is responsible for the assessment of danger for the witness and his/her family, and preparation of all documents according to the Act enabling protection in the form of confidentiality of identity and image. A real threat assessment is based not only on the witness's subjective opinion but also on information from other reliable sources. The witness's anxiety and fear of potential revenge from his/her enemies are not sufficient as far as the initiation of the institution of incognito witness is concerned.

The above solutions do not refer to the confidentiality of identity and image of individuals mentioned in Article 102a of the Act on criminal proceedings, which reads:

- A person who is an active officer of police authorities or foreign police authorities,
  - appearing in criminal proceedings as an agent under cover, or conducting a special operation, or
  - directly participating in operations with an agent under cover, or taking part in a special operation, is interrogated as a witness while at the same time concealing the identity and image.
- In exceptional cases, with a full guarantee given that as the result of the interrogation, no life or health risk will occur as regards the person mentioned in paragraph 1, neither will he or she be exposed or under any other threat related other to his/her service; additionally there will be no risk to the relatives, then the proceedings may be conducted with participation of the witness without concealing his/her identity and image. Such proceedings may only take place at the request of the National Prosecutor after prior opinion of the competent head of the organisational unit of the Police authority conducting activities with the participation of persons mentioned in paragraph 1.

It may also be the case that the witness fears of his/her own health and life and files a requests to the authorities to conceal his/her identity and image. However if after conducting threat

assessment the Police claims the absence of such threat, in such case, the Police forwards investigation documents regarding the threat to the authority supervising proceedings related to the witness. This authority examines the obtained information about the possible threat for the witness, and makes a decision whether to continue proceedings with the witness, or adjourn the trial till such threat disappears or appropriate protective actions are implemented. If proceedings cannot be postponed, the authority must order classification of the witness's identity.

The Act on criminal proceedings in Article 209 describes the way of interrogating the witness:

- The Chairman of the adjudicating panel ensures that the anonymous witness, who were not yet interviewed, had not been present during the hearings of the defendant or other witnesses. In case of an apprehension that a person without the status of anonymous witness in the presence of the defendant will not tell the truth because of the fear of loss of life or health (also with respect to relatives), the Chairman initiates steps to ensure the witness's safety by concealing the identity or removing the defendant from the courtroom during the witness's testimony. After returning to the courtroom, the defendant has to be acquainted with the witness's testimony and may refer to it, the Chairman of the adjudicating panel may ask questions, however the defendant must not have visual or aural contact with the witness during the hearing. If circumstances indicate that the witness identity has to be classified (Article 55 paragraph 2) the Chairman of the adjudicating panel adopts solutions which prevent disclosure of the identity of the witness.
- If the content of a witness's hearing obtained during court proceedings is the most important evidence in the case, and the witness's identity was classified pursuant to Article 55 paragraph 2, the court will take all the necessary steps to verify the credibility of the witness and his/her testimony.

The institution of incognito witness mentioned above is very frequently employed in the Czech Republic as a form of a witness protection during court proceedings. Unlike the institution of a special witness protection, which will be described in the further part of the paper, the institution of an anonymous witness does not interfere with the witness's or his/her family's private life, it is only limited to confidentiality of the witness's identity and image. Such arrangement must though correspond to the defendant's right to defence and a fair trial. This correlation may impose problems, particularly in situations when the testimony of the witness is the only decisive evidence critical for the trial.

The European Court of Human Rights repeatedly presented its view regarding the case of allowing the use of evidence such as anonymous witnesses in the process, especially in organised crime cases. Apart from the admission in the proceedings of evidence from the testimony of an anonymous witness, the Court claimed each time that the defendant's right to defence must be preserved by the possibility to ask questions, at least in a written form, and the opportunity for the accused to address the testimony of the witness. Over the years, the position of the Court on the evidence has been changing, and according to the

author of the publication, currently it is neither clear nor linear. The author presents a view that in order to preserve the right to a fair trial and benefit from the evidence from anonymous witness at the same time, the following conditions must be met:

- there must always be factual and fundamental reason behind classifying the identity of a witness;
- the witness's testimony is the only and decisive evidence in the case;
- there must always be available solutions to enable interference in law by the defendant and his right to defence and fair trial.

#### IV. SPECIAL WITNESS PROTECTION AS A PROFESSIONAL FORM OF ACTIONS WITH PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE AT RISK

The next form of witness protection includes the so called special institution of a witness protection introduced to the legal system of the Czech Republic by the Act No. 137 of 29 March 2001 on special witness and other people protection during criminal proceedings (Act No. 137 of 29 March 2001 on special protection of a witness and other persons in connection with criminal proceedings). According to the above Act, nonstandard protection operations are undertaken, in order to ensure physical security to individuals under protection programmes. In the Czech Republic such actions are implemented on average 10 times per year (Hrudka Lt. Col., 2017). The Act defines forms of protective operations: physical personal protection, assistance in case of a change of place of residence, assistance in starting a new life in a new place, assistance in change of identity. Moreover, within the provisions of the Act, police officers perform operations that consist of control activities towards protected individuals in compliance with the terms of the protection programme.

Activities under the institution of special protection of a witness are carried out by the Police of the Czech Republic, and in cases related to persons detained by the Prison Service of the Czech Republic (Act No. 555 of 10 December 1992 on the Prison Service and the Judiciary Guards of the Czech Republic). Both formations are legally obliged to cooperate within the framework of security programs. The state administration institutions are obliged to cooperate with the Police and the Prison Service to the extent necessary to achieve the objectives included in the special protection of the witness and other persons in connection with criminal proceedings. In order to protect the identity of witnesses or to change their identity, after creation of a new identity for the witness, the Police use central information systems to authenticate the new information about the witness. To this end, changes are introduced in databases concerning origin, place of residence, education, place of work, family members etc. The true information is erased or, alternatively, the access to particularly sensitive data concerning the witness and his family is blocked. There is a possibility of the so-called shallow interference in the databases of selected institutions, in the context of authenticating 'the legend' under which the witness covered by the security program is currently being known. When creating a new identity for the protected person, the use of their personal

data is allowed.

Special protection may be implemented if:

- the endangered person agrees to the form and conditions of the proposed protective actions and to the partial use of his/her previous identity;
- the Minister of Interior approves the application for special witness protection submitted by the Police, the Court or a representative of law enforcement agencies. An application for special protection is submitted through the Minister of Justice.

The Police must provide the person at risk with all information they possess about potential threats to their life and health or the dangers to their relatives. The way the Police communicates information about the threat should take into account the age of the person at risk and the degree of his/her intellectual development. In addition, the Police officers inform the person about the inclusion into the security program and the reservation that all information obtained during protective actions is subject to the Act on the protection of classified information (Act No. 412 of 18 October 2005 on the protection of classified information and information security principles). The fact of being informed about the secrecy of the protective measures to be implemented is confirmed by the witness covered by the protection program by signing an appropriate statement.

If there is a real and immediate threat to the life and health of the witness or his/her family, the Police, with the consent of the Police President of the Czech Republic (substantive equivalent of the Polish Police Commander in Chief) implements physical protection measures even before the application is approved by the Minister of the Interior. A similar algorithm is possible in case of a threat to an inmate, and in this situation protective measures are implemented by the Prison Service after obtaining the consent of the General Director of the Prison Service. Protective measures can also be implemented without the consent of the person at risk, if their state of health prevents such consent. If the endangered person is a minor, a mentally handicapped person or a person who does not have full capacity to perform legal acts, the consent for the implementation of the protection program may be granted by the legal guardian. If it is not possible to inform the person about the real threat and about the realities of the security program, such information shall be immediately transferred to the legal guardian. In the event of a conflict of interests of an endangered or protected person with its legal guardian, the consent for application of special protection measures is taken by the statutory representative (parent, guardian, one of the spouses). In the situation of a direct threat to the life and health of the witness, the Police and the Prison Service undertake immediate special protective measures, even before obtaining the written consent of the legal guardian or statutory representative.

The duties of the person under protection include:

- compliance with special protection conditions;
- compliance with instructions of the Police and the Prison Service officers;
- obligation to inform the Police and the Prison Service officers about any new circumstances affecting special

protection activities.

Protective activities are terminated if the protected person withdraws his/her written consent or if the Minister of Internal Affairs does not approve the application for protection. In addition, the Minister of Internal Affairs decides to terminate activities of special protection if the premises about the life and health risk of the witness and persons close to him/her cease to exist. The Minister may decide on the termination of special witness protection activities if the protected person:

- refuses to cooperate in the course of criminal proceedings in connection with which the witness was granted protection;
- during the protection period, the protected person has committed an intentional crime;
- fails to follow instructions of the police officers carrying out protective activities;
- breaches the obligation to keep confidential information on protective measures.

The protected person is notified of the termination of the protection in writing by the police unit that has implemented protective measures. The decision on the termination of the special protection of the witness, is transmitted by officers directly to the persons concerned. A copy of the decision with the signature of the protected person or the signature of its legal guardian or statutory representative remains in the materials of the special witness protection program. The above decision, which should be forwarded to the protected person not later than 15 days from the moment it becomes legally valid, is not subject to appeal. Until delivery of the decision to the relevant person, the Police and the Prison Service are still carrying out protective activities in a form adequate to the current information on the threat.

The Police and the Prison Service in connection with the conducted special protective activities, are entitled to process personal data of the witness and his/her immediate family in accordance with Act No. 101 of 4 April 2000 on the protection of personal data. As part of the protective activities, a police officer may:

- enter a facility in which the protected person may be in danger and inspect this facility and persons in it, as well as vehicles located in this facility;
- prohibit access to the facility or its part, until the activities involving the protected person are completed or the information obtained shows that there is no threat to the life and health of the protected person.

The facility can only be inspected after the consent from the owner or manager of the facility is obtained. The surveillance of persons staying in the facility takes place on general principles resulting from the rights of officers included in the Act on the Police of the Czech Republic. The personal control should be carried out by an officer of the same sex as the controlled person, but in case of a justified suspicion that the controlled person may carry a weapon or other dangerous tool, the control may be carried out by an officer of the opposite sex. If there is a suspicion that the controlled person may have a weapon or other dangerous tool in the anatomical openings of the body or inside the organs of the body, the control should be

performed by a health care professional prepared for this type of activity. As part of the control of persons in the inspected premises, police officers have the right to:

- determine the identity of persons entering and leaving the facility under inspection;
- verify the entitlement of those persons to stay on the premises of the inspected facility;
- search any items brought in and carried out from the facility e.g. luggage etc.;
- stop vehicles entering and leaving the facility and search them;
- take a weapon from a person legally entitled to possess it for the time of stay in the facility where the protected person is also located;
- prohibit access to the facility or part thereof where the protected person is located.

During the inspection of the facility, the activities should be attended by the owner or the person managing the facility or other authorized person indicated by them. The facility may be inspected without the consent and knowledge of the facility owner or manager, if there is a reasonable suspicion that this facility is likely to pose a direct threat to the life and health of the protected persons. After completing the inspection of the facility, the police officer should notify the owner or manager of the facility, and if this is not possible, the Police must secure the inspected facility, until the moment of arrival of the authorized person.

If there is a founded suspicion that an attack may be planned on the protected person or on his/her property, the Police is obliged to undertake, to the extent necessary, activities consisting of determination of the so-called safe area of isolation for the protected person and cutting off this zone from public access for the time necessary to neutralize the threat or organize a security escort. To this end, officers may use all technical equipment provided by the Czech Police, as well as technical special measures commonly used in physical protection of persons.

If there is a suspicion that the person obliged to keep the information secret does not comply to this obligation, especially when as the result of proceedings the threat to protected persons or police officers carrying out protective activities is increased, officers may use operational techniques in order to verify these suspicions, including wiretapping at the protected person's place of residence, eavesdropping on the telephone, checking electronic and traditional correspondence etc.

As part of the activities covering the institution of special protection of a witness, officers are entitled to set up a business and can apply for a license to run a regulated economic activity, in accordance with applicable regulations. To this end, police officers use operational work resources, including legalization documents, underground measures, technical protection measures and financial resources from the special fund of the Police.

The concept of a legalization document, in the legal reality of the Czech Republic is used to hide the true identity of the protected person or a police officer. Legalization documents are issued by the Police or the Ministry of Interior with the consent

of the Minister. Legalization documents may be issued to the protected person covered by a protection program or to a person who is no longer protected by a special witness protection institution only with the consent of that person. The legalization document cannot be an MP or senate card, ID card of the President of the Czech National Bank, ID of an employee of the Supreme Audit Office, ID of a judge of the Constitutional Tribunal, ID of a judge, a public prosecutor's ID and a document in the name of a deceased person. State administration bodies, at the request of the Police or the Ministry of Interior, introduce changes (for a definite period) in the IT systems and issue legalization documents within the scope of their own rights, while maintaining the full secrecy of the activities undertaken. The register of issued legalization documents is kept in the Ministry of Interior.

The underground measures used by the Czech Police in protective activities are things and objects used to effectively carry out the tasks entrusted. The term technical protection embraces, among others: alarm systems, anti-robbery systems mounted in the place of stay or in a protected vehicle, CCTV systems as well as devices for secretive location.

Financial resources from the special fund of the Police are utilised by police officers conducting security programs under the institution of special witness protection on accommodation of the protected person in a place of isolation, his/her boarding, public and business travel as well as on other necessary goals arising during carrying out protective activities. The special funds of the Czech Police are not subject to the regulations governing the management of the state's financial resources. Officers responsible for spending money from a special fund are required to spend it prudently and economically. The rules governing the management of special funds are determined by the Minister of the Interior at the request of the President of the Police of the Czech Republic.

The Police and the Prison Service officers are obliged to respect the severity and dignity of protected persons, strive to ensure maximum protection for those persons, to act in such a way that protected persons are not in any immediate danger. The above mentioned officers cannot expose protected persons to unnecessary risk, and interfere in the sphere of their private life and in their constitutional rights. They may not exceed the level necessary to achieve the objective intended as part of the implementation of the protection program. The State Treasury, which in this respect is represented by the Ministry of Interior, bears the financial responsibility for any material damage as part of the institution of special witness protection.

As part of international cooperation, information on the protective activities under way may be transferred without the mediation and consent of the competent state authority. If there is a need to use an officer from another country within the institution of special witness protection, which is allowed by bilateral agreements and agreements between the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries, with the consent of the President of the Czech Republic Police and the statutory representative of the foreign formation represented by the police officer, this solution is possible (Sotolář and Půry, 2003). In such a case, the foreign officer has rights under Act No.

137/2001. The coordinator of the foreign officer as part of the protective activities is a police officer designated by the President of the Police of the Czech Republic. The Czech Police, with the consent of the person covered by the security program, may apply to another state for assistance in coordination and implementation of protective activities outside the Czech Republic. The Police may, with the consent of the Minister of Interior, include protective measures for persons who will be protected by another state or judicial authorities. The sine qua non condition is also the consent of the person whose protective activities are to be affected.

Due to the fact that possibilities of safe resettlement of the person covered by the institution of special witness protection are significantly limited in the realities of the Czech Republic, because in this small country criminal circles are perfectly familiar with each other, cooperation with neighbouring countries is very often used, especially with Slovakia, which significantly increases the security level of the protected people. Every year, the Czech Police implements about 10 protection programs within the institution of special witness protection, and the costs associated with these activities are at the level of 50 million korunas.

#### V. ACTIVITIES OF THE CZECH POLICE WITHIN THE SO-CALLED SHORT-TERM PROTECTION OF PERSONS

This form of protective measures was included in § 50 of Act No. 273 of 17 July 2008 on the Police of the Czech Republic, and to the current tactics of police activities. The short-term protection of persons was introduced by instruction No. 11 of the President of the Czech Republic in 2011. This form of protective measures is addressed to a narrow circle of people who are in serious danger. According to this regulation, every police officer is obliged to provide immediate physical protection in the event of a direct threat to the life and health of the person, and his/her intervention lasts until the implementation of extended activities in this area. Also the relatives of the endangered person may be protected. The activities of short-term protection of persons can be taken practically immediately after obtaining information on the threat for a specific person/persons, and their implementation is decided by the Voivodship Commander of the Police on the basis of a request by the officers of the criminal and investigative service subordinate to him/her. The Unit for Combating Crime organized by the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic in Prague is also entitled to submit an application. Whenever the decision to initiate actions is made in the context of short-term protection of persons, other possibilities of neutralization of the existing threat are analyzed.

As part of the short-term protection of persons, four forms of protective actions can be implemented:

- physical protection, taken by the Police in a place where people are at risk of being in danger or carrying out activities aimed at neutralizing the existing threat;
- temporary change of the place of residence of the protected person, consisting in his/her transfer to police facilities or facilities under control of the Police;

- the use of technical security measures, including alarm, anti-assault, deterrent systems at the place of residence, whereabouts or in vehicles belonging to the protected person;
- preventive and informational activities undertaken by all field units of the Czech Police responsible for maintaining public safety and order.

Short-term protection of persons is carried out for 60 days. If there are circumstances indicating the need to prolong the protective measures, the protection may be extended for a definite period of time. The protection is carried out by organizational units subordinate to the Voivodship Police Chief in whose jurisdiction the protection is provided. The State Protection Unit of the Constitutional State Officials (equivalent to the Polish State Security Service) is responsible for execution of protective programmes in the territory of the entire country.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The security of citizens is understood as the entirety of conditions and institutions protecting the life, health and property of citizens, and thus the nationwide property, system and sovereignty of the state against phenomena dangerous to the legal order. The need for security has become one of the most important values, and is also the main correlate of relations between people in small and large social groups. Therefore, the sine qua non condition for broadly understood public security should be the effective functioning of all services and institutions operating within it. Immanent, and, in many situations, the key element in combating crime, is the operational-reconnaissance and investigative work carried out by the police officers in all European countries. Effectiveness of combating the most serious forms of crime, including organized crime, depends on determination, professional skills and available procedural and operational forms of activities used by officers (Gołębiewski, 2008).

Out of all Czech dispositional groups, the Police disposes of the most comprehensive catalogue of tasks and competences, the full-time status, the level of training of officers and specialized equipment and organizational-tactical solutions that enable efficient actions for the safety of citizens. Undoubtedly, such organizational and tactical solutions include actions taken to ensure the protection of witnesses, both in the process and in the physical dimension. Proper implementation of forms of special witness protection is an important element in the fight against crime, in particular organized crime, in the territory of the Czech Republic. The complex role of the Police in the society may be demonstrated by the fact that the Czechs, like any other contemporary, democratic and developed society, expect from this formation, on one hand, a reactivity to all manifestations of infringing the legal order, and on the other a certain kind of trustworthiness, especially in cases of interfering in the freedoms guaranteed to citizens by the Constitution. This antinomial dualism of the public perception of the role of the Police is a real challenge for all the representatives of this largest uniformed formation in the Czech Republic.

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