
Work of Ljubljana's Municipal Warden Service – From Repression to Prevention and Collaboration

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Purpose:

This article highlights the work of Ljubljana's Municipal Warden Service (MWS), emphasizing the application of criminological knowledge in both preventive and repressive efforts.

Design/Methods/Approach:

We performed both qualitative and quantitative analyses using data from the SUDMR and PowerBI apps, employed by municipal wardens to track preventive actions and map repressive measures.

Findings:

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in both repressive and preventive actions of municipal wardens, with 115,453 measures implemented and 2,752 hours allocated to preventive work in 2022. The majority of repressive measures targeted road-related offenses. Community-oriented work and engagement were prioritized, especially in the densely populated city centre, focusing on road traffic and vulnerable road users. Integrating the apps used by MWS with criminological knowledge supports future planning, implementation, and justification of measures, as well as urban planning. Besides, mutual cooperation and exchange of information between MWS and other stakeholders are key to comprehensive security provision in the local environment.

Research Limitations/Implications:

A key limitation is that we only analysed repressive and preventive measures conducted by the MWS Ljubljana in 2022.

Practical Implications:

Applying criminological findings to municipal warden work is effective. Utilizing hot spot displays supports informed decision-making and preventive strategies. In instances where general prevention methods and misdemeanour procedures prove ineffective in ensuring public safety and preventing violations, particularly findings from the field of prevention, community policing and plural policing, can be useful.

Originality/Value:

This study is pioneering with a unique approach, utilizing new methodologies and perspectives to explain and validate the work of municipal wardens.

Keywords: Municipal Warden Service, City of Ljubljana, criminological findings, prevention, repression, local safety and security

UDC: 351.742(497.451.1)

Delo Mestnega redarstva Ljubljana – od represije k preventivi in sodelovanju

Namen prispevka:

Članek se osredotoča na delo Mestnega redarstva Mestne občine Ljubljana (MR MOL) in poudarja uporabo kriminološkega znanja tako pri preventivnih kot pri represivnih ukrepih.

Metode:

Izvedli smo kvalitativno in kvantitativno analizo podatkov iz aplikacij SUDMR in PowerBI, ki ju uporabljajo mestni redarji za spremljanje preventivnih dejavnosti in kartiranje represivnih ukrepov.

Ugotovitve:

V zadnjih letih je prišlo do pomembnega povečanja tako represivnih kot tudi preventivnih ukrepov mestnih redarjev, z izvedbo 115.453 represivnih ukrepov in 2.752 urami preventivnega dela v letu 2022. Večina represivnih ukrepov se je nanašala na kršitve v prometu. Pri slednjem pa je bil poudarek na skupnosti in sodelovanju, zlasti v gostem mestnem središču, pri čemer je bila pozornost usmerjena v cestni promet in ranljive udeležence v prometu. Integracija aplikacij, ki jih uporablja MR MOL, s kriminološkim znanjem podpira načrtovanje, izvajanje in utemeljevanje ukrepov ter urbanistično načrtovanje okolja. Za celovito zagotavljanje varnosti v lokalnem okolju pa je ključno medsebojno sodelovanje in izmenjava informacij med MR MOL in ostalimi deležniki.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Ključna omejitev je, da smo analizirali le represivne in preventivne ukrepe, ki jih je izvedlo Mestno redarstvo Ljubljana v letu 2022.

Praktična uporabnost:

Uporaba kriminoloških spoznanj pri delu mestnih redarjev je učinkovita. Uporaba prikazov »vročih točk« je podlaga za utemeljeno odločanje in preventivne strategije. V primerih, ko generalna prevencija in prekrškovni postopki ne zagotavljajo učinkovite javne varnosti in preprečevanja kršitev, so lahko zelo koristne zlasti ugotovitve s področja prevencije, v skupnost usmerjenega policijskega dela ter pluralne policijske dejavnosti.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Ta študija je izvirna zaradi edinstvenega pristopa, ki uporablja nove metode in perspektive za razlago in utemeljevanje redarskega dela.

Ključne besede: mestno redarstvo, Mestna občina Ljubljana, kriminološka spoznanja, preventiva, represija, varnost v lokalni skupnosti

UDK: 351.742(497.451.1)

1 INTRODUCTION

In any setting, disorder, crime, violence, and victimization persist, requiring intervention to prevent harm to individuals, property and environment. This is crucial for local residents who face these issues regularly and experience their impact on safety and well-being. Recognizing the challenge of managing these issues at the state level, authority has been devolved to local governance. Article 21 of the Local Self-Government Act (“Zakon o lokalni samoupravi (ZLS-UPB2)”, 2007) designates municipalities and mayors with the responsibility of overseeing general local security, encompassing the organization of municipal warden service (local police service) and maintenance of order and peace within the municipal bounds. Sotlar et al. (2021) stress a comprehensive approach to local security measures. Municipalities wield authority in national security subsystems: internal affairs, protection and rescue, and defence. Modern law enforcement involves and community safety intricate dynamics. Pirnat and Meško (2018) underscore that despite local safety and security falling under municipal purview, the police often play a pivotal role. Donnelly (2013) highlighted the escalating challenges police encounter in managing visible patrolling, crime prevention, and law enforcement due to their broadening responsibilities. In reaction, local municipal authorities are assuming specific policing roles, prompting police forces to forge partnerships with both local and private entities to tackle these issues. In response to the evolving landscape of policing, particularly at the local level, Sotlar and Dvojmoč (2015) highlight the emergence of diverse entities alongside the national police that possess specialized safety-related authority akin to law enforcement. This includes, among others, municipal warden services, private security companies, private detectives, municipal inspectorates, judicial police, military police, and customs services. Expanding on this, Eman and Bulovec (2021) underscore that the overall safety of local communities is also attended to by civil protection, firefighters, and medical crews, broadening the scope of safeguarding efforts. As the landscape of policing undergoes rapid and substantial change, the mentioned public, private, and municipal entities are experiencing heightened engagement in ensuring safety and security within communities. This mirrors the perspective presented by Jones and Newburn (2006) and Stenning (2009), who presented a contemporary framework for plural policing.

Plural policing is evident in the City of Ljubljana (COL), where the responsibility for safety is distributed among multiple entities. Foremost among these is the police, serving as the primary safety provider. Additionally, the Municipal

Warden Service (MWS) has maintained a steadfast presence in the city for three decades, operating under the banner of "safety, traffic, community". Over time, it has grown to become Slovenia's largest municipal warden service. It comprises 57 personnel, organized into three sections and supplemented by independent contractors (Mestna občina Ljubljana [MOL], n. d. a). Besides the abovementioned police and municipal warden service, provision of safety in the COL involves Fire Brigade Ljubljana, Emergency Management Department, Municipal Inspectorate, Department for Health and Social Care, Department of Environmental Protection and private security services. Together, these institutions form a complex mosaic of safety within the city. This pluralistic approach fosters collaboration among diverse organizations, pooling resources and expertise to address each community's distinct requirements. Often working in tandem with the police, these entities establish a more potent public safety system (Sotlar et al., 2021). As highlighted by Eman et al. (2022), better security in the local community lies in collaboration among the police, other security institutions, and residents, forming the foundation of effective community policing. This collaboration is vital for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 - *Partnerships for Goal Achievement*. In practice, cooperation between municipal wardens and the police is most frequent, as mandated by regional legislation, specifically the Municipal Warden Services Act ("*Zakon o občinskem redarstvu (ZORed)*", 2006), which regulates the work of municipal wardens. In the case of the COL, more detailed cooperation is defined by the Protocol on the collaboration between the MWS and the Police Directorate Ljubljana (MOL, 2009). The protocols on collaboration in COL also encompass the MWS's cooperation with other entities. This collaboration, although not explicitly outlined by the law, is regulated at the local level. For example, the MWS cooperates with some municipal warden services and inspectorates of other municipalities, the Emergency service, and the Chamber for the development of Slovenian private security. In the realm of safety provision in the local environment, it is crucial to mention the Municipal Safety Program. This program serves as a fundamental strategic document, defining the starting points for ensuring a safe and quality life for local community residents. Its preparation and implementation involve representatives from the municipality, municipal warden service, and the police. The program includes an assessment of the security situation, requiring an examination of risk factors in the local community and, based on this, the design of procedures to address these problems ("*ZORed*", 2006). Furthermore, under Article 35 of the Organization and Work of the Police Act ("*Zakon o organiziranosti in delu v policiji (ZODPol)*", 2013), the police collaborate with local authorities to enhance safety, often through councils and committees. Effective crime prevention requires the active participation and contribution of many local representatives (mayors, police officers, social workers, principals, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and others) (Meško & Sotlar, 2012). With the aforementioned, Eman et al. (2022) agree, pointing out that to ensure security in the local environment, good cooperation between representatives of the municipality, especially municipal wardens, and the police is essential.

Safety takes precedence in the COL, emerging as a focal point and integral objective within the framework of sustainable development¹ (MOL, 2015). Ljubljana, Slovenia's capital, with its political, cultural, economic, transportation and education significance, presents distinct security challenges. Its dense population, traffic, and public facilities distinguish it from neighbouring municipalities. As of January 1, 2022, the COL recorded a population of 293,218 residents (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije, n. d.), further augmented by 138,900 daily commuters to the city for work. Conversely, there is a reduced influx of traffic, with approximately 24,000 daily journeys from Ljubljana to surrounding municipalities. This equates to an additional 163,000 individuals involved in work-related commuting to or from Ljubljana (Barnot, 2022). When factoring in high school students, college students, and tourists, the weekly populace within Ljubljana reaches nearly half a million individuals. Covering an area of 274.99 km², the COL is divided into 17 district communities (MOL, n. d. b; n. d. c).

Safety in urban settings is crucial for quality of life. The COL takes various actions to enhance security and inclusivity, aiming to heighten feelings of safety and reduce crime-related apprehensions. This commitment involves proactive measures, education, awareness campaigns and strategic plans, covering traffic, security, environment, disasters, and welfare. The website highlights safety updates, aligning with COL's vision of safe city.

Extensive literature has examined into the concept of community policing, as pointed out by Eman and Bulovec (2021), highlighting its essence as a localized strategy that revolves around collaborative efforts for crime reduction and prevention. This approach is nurtured through the interaction between law enforcement and the community's residents. Moreover, numerous local and foreign scholars have extensively explored crime prevention strategies (Braga et al., 2012; Crowe, 2013; Jeffery, 1971; Meško, 2002a; 2002b; Meško & Lobnikar, 2005; Ratcliffe, 2006) as well as policing practices (Eman et al., 2021; Eman & Bulovec, 2021; Meško et al., 2013; Skogan 2019). Analysing crime through criminological theories (Birks et al., 2012; Clarke, 2004; Eck & Weisburd, 1995) has been a recurrent subject of research and discussion, frequently emphasizing the pivotal role of the police in maintaining safety within the local community. Notably, however, there appears to be a gap in research from the perspective of the municipal warden service. This article aims to highlight the work of the MWS, focusing on outlining the nature and distribution of its preventive and repressive efforts. Data for this analysis were sourced from two databases accessed through apps utilized by municipal wardens for monitoring preventive activities and geographically mapping repressive measures. The incorporation of these apps with criminological knowledge offers a robust foundation for future planning, implementation, and justification of measures adopted by municipal wardens, and even urban planning. The dedication and level of engagement have propelled

¹ *The Sustainable Urban Strategy of the City of Ljubljana for the years 2014–2020 (MOL, 2015), under the goal of "Security as a good and a constitutional category, emphasized a policy of zero tolerance for infractions in proximity to public institutions involving vulnerable groups and designated traffic zones. The strategy aimed to introduce automation for offense detection and the establishment of a centralized communication centre. Additionally, it sought to augment the number of municipal wardens and enhance their authority in enforcing security and preventive measures, ensuring their continuous presence in areas facing heightened security concerns. The strategy also alluded to international trends, suggesting the potential renaming of the municipal warden service to the city police, mirroring practices in other regions.*

the MWS to be recognized as a significant partner in enhancing local security. This recognition has indeed led to an increased influx of work and has also prompted the need for operational optimization, digitalization of work processes, and the utilization of knowledge-based approaches. As stated by Meško and Sotlar (2012), it is essential and necessary to use crime prevention approaches based on knowledge. In the discussion, the authors evaluated the outcomes of preventive actions and repressive measures, comparing them against criminological insights.

2 COMMUNITY POLICING AS A FORM OF PREVENTIVE WORK BY MUNICIPAL WARDENS

Community-oriented work or community policing, an important part of the work of municipal wardens, operates on the same foundation as the community policing executed by the police. Eman et al. (2021) stress the community policing model's emphasis on police-resident collaboration for local safety. This approach emphasises police-community partnerships to jointly address issues and prevent crime, fostering a secure environment. This involves police engaging with residents to understand crime causes and design strategies for mitigation. Notably, community policing's effectiveness and local changes require time. Eman and Bulovec (2021) highlight Slovenia's community policing evolution, stressing active police engagement with local leaders and citizens. An essential aspect is nurturing trust and communication between police and the community, fostering better collaboration, while countering negative perceptions of law enforcement. As noted by Eman and Bulovec (2021), police effectiveness relies on community trust. Building this trust demands police-community relationships, professionalism, and accountability. Public perception of police is shaped by factors like problem-solving, integrity, accessibility, and visibility (Meško, 2001). Trust is vital for collaborative policing, especially in diverse rural and urban settings where human rights and privacy are of utmost importance (Meško et al., 2019). This trust enables effective and safe police operations based on understanding of community needs, cooperative problem-solving, and better safety outcomes.

Given their wide-ranging responsibilities, municipal wardens ensure traffic and public safety and uphold order in municipality's jurisdiction. Sotlar et al. (2021) emphasize that municipal warden services hold a significant position in modern security. They serve as an institution for formal social supervision, evident in their designated tasks and authorities. These include traffic supervision, ensuring safety on municipal roads and public spaces (including recreational and other public areas), protecting infrastructure and the environment, maintaining order and peace, and preserving the city's cultural heritage ("ZORed", 2006). Sotlar et al. (2021) stress the municipal warden service's role in internal security subsystem, particularly within urban areas. It holds a significant position in local community security and aligns with police and protection efforts. The municipal wardens' enforcement tasks, akin to police principles, reflect their authority. Notably, the Ljubljana MWS also embraces preventive measures, influenced by community policing practices. In 2011, MWS adopted its first official Strategy for community-oriented work of municipal wardens of the City of Ljubljana (Mestna

občina Ljubljana, Mestno redarstvo, 2011). Since then, the MWS has notably increased preventive efforts, paralleling the police's activities encompassing warnings, education, discussions, site inspections, and information dissemination via social media or the municipality's website. This evolution has significantly enhanced the municipal wardens' effectiveness in deterring misdemeanours and ensuring citizen safety. Municipal wardens prioritize strong community relationships, trust-building, and safety while raising awareness and imparting crime prevention knowledge. Their role includes overseeing compliance with pertinent laws and regulations, conflict resolution, and maintaining traffic and public safety. These efforts are considered soft approaches, as they do not infringe on fundamental human rights and freedoms. Violation prevention involves soft approaches, with sanctions like fines as last resort for addressing offenses (MOL, 2008).

3 PREVENTION AS THE OPERATIONAL STRATEGY OF LJUBLJANA'S MUNICIPAL WARDEN SERVICE

Crime prevention is a multifaceted and crucial aspect of maintaining public safety and community well-being (Clarke & Eck, 2003). It encompasses strategies and actions aimed at reducing the occurrence of crimes and mitigating their negative effects on individuals and society, including fear (Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC], 2002). In the realm of crime prevention, effectiveness is maximized when carried out collaboratively with various organizations. As introduced earlier, a broad spectrum of stakeholders is involved in ensuring security in COL. Municipality bear responsibilities in areas such as traffic and general public safety, which are practically executed by municipal wardens. The primary mode of collaboration between municipal wardens and other stakeholders, such as the Police and the Inspectorate, takes the form of mixed (joint) patrols. Furthermore, COL has a well-established practice of information exchange among services. Practical mutual assistance is frequently implemented in the field, particularly because the municipal wardens lack the authority to address criminal acts. Collaboration is also imperative in areas extending beyond the primary work of municipal wardens. When cooperating with the Inspectorate, it primarily addresses environmental offences within its jurisdiction, while the municipal wardens provide on-the-ground support due to their powers. Last but not least, collaboration with other security entities extends to preventive awareness-raising activities in educational institutions and local communities, as well as joint field preventive actions. Across all services, a common challenge is a shortage of staff. Consequently, institutional collaboration, as envisioned by SDG 17, is also welcomed in practice to address staffing gaps effectively.

It is crucial to recognize that, in practice, prevention is gaining importance due to its positive impact on the state of security in the local environment, a sentiment also reflected in the municipality and its institutions. As outlined by Somasundaram (n. d.), prevention methods can be categorized into three main approaches: environmental, social, and criminal justice. Tailoring prevention strategies to the specific environment involves either 1) altering the surroundings

and minimizing opportunities, 2) influencing community behaviours, or 3) implementing measures through law enforcement, contingent on the unique context. Importantly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and while criminological findings and theories each have strengths and limitations, together they provide valuable tools for city planning and MWS operations. Applying criminological findings to municipal wardens' roles requires an understanding of criminal acts, encompassing offenses, misdemeanours, and deviant behaviour. Municipal wardens handle misdemeanours, which are less severe than criminal offenses but impactful in the local context.

The operational activities of the MWS are guided and informed by a range of criminological findings, knowledge, and theories. These insights provide a foundation for the department's strategies and approaches to ensure public safety and order within the city. Clarke and Eck (2003) pointed out that effective crime prevention strategies go beyond traditional law enforcement measures, involving proactive efforts to eliminate or reduce opportunities for criminal activities. This aligns with the concept of situational crime prevention, which, according to Eck and Weisburd (1995), makes the occurrence of crime more difficult or less attractive by modifying the immediate environment.

As found by Jean (2007) in the concept of Pockets of Crime, crime concentration in certain city areas occurs due to favourable opportunities. Uneven urban development driven by planning, zoning, and development patterns leads to these high-crime pockets. Disorder, collective efficacy, and location play roles in their emergence. As stated by Van Wilsem (2009), opportunities for criminal activities are believed to be highly concentrated in specific locations. Analysing streets as individual units provides valuable insights into crime patterns that might be overlooked when aggregated at the neighbourhood level. Within the city centre, MWS identified several areas characterized by a high density of offenses, especially violations of public order and peace². In these areas, unresolved disorder and neglect within the community, as suggested by the broken windows theory (Wilson & Kelling, 1982), can escalate, leading to increased criminal activity, including more serious offenses. Neglect indicates a lack of control and concern. Ensuring a well-maintained and organized environment is crucial in preventing the progression of crime. As stated by Ratcliffe (2006), the integration of technology, such as surveillance systems and predictive analytics, has also become instrumental in enhancing crime prevention efforts.

In the aforementioned cases, MWS intervened by conducting an on-site inspection to assess the current situation. Employing situational prevention (Clarke, 1983), the proposed measures were designed to enhance area control, deter further gathering and settlement, and reduce opportunities for ongoing violations. Situational crime prevention, grounded in theories such as opportunity and routine activity, rational choice, and lifestyle (Meško, 2002b), considers potential offenders, victims, and crime locations. The Routine Activity Theory (Cohen &

² In instances considered by MWS, a specific group of homeless individuals and drug addicts engage in activities that disrupt public order and peace, including the consumption of prohibited substances, littering, and generating noise. Despite conducting regular controls and increasing presence at the identified locations, the situation did not improve. Similarly, regular cleaning and environmental maintenance had only a temporary impact. Consequently, MWS opted to conduct a comprehensive study of the area and integrate criminological insights into practice to effectively address the ongoing issue.

Felson, 1979) emphasizes the convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and absent guardianship for crime to occur. Somasundaram (n. d.) emphasized that strengthening the presence of capable guardians, including enhanced police patrolling, increased resident surveillance, and reinforced security measures, can effectively restrain crime rates. With this approach, MWS aims to decrease littering and instances of public order and peace violations. To address this, MWS proposed a spatial reorganization plan that enhances natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement, in line with the insights of Jeffery (1971) and Crowe (2013).

Noteworthy crime prevention strategies include environmental design measures (Jeffery, 1971) and problem-oriented policing (Goldstein, 1979), both emphasizing a proactive and targeted approach to prevent criminal activities. In practice, the measures implemented by the MWS in the design of city residential streets, pedestrian areas, parks, outdoor seating and recreational spaces, squares, malls, and parking lots (including access and structures) align with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (Crowe, 2013; Jeffery, 1971). Furthermore, findings from the Defensible Space Theory (Newman, 1996) are invaluable when considering the architectural and environmental design of neighbourhoods and public places, as its design impacts crime prevention and neighbourhood safety. This is done with the awareness that specific physical and social environmental conditions can either facilitate criminal opportunities or trigger criminal behaviour (Crowe, 2013; Jeffery, 1971).

An example of the application of the aforementioned criminological findings is evident in the case of traffic overload, leading to violations of stationary traffic, unauthorized parking, and the improper use of sidewalks for riding e-scooters and bicycles. These actions increased the risk to pedestrians and narrowed sidewalks. To address this, COL established pedestrian zones in the central area and implemented restrictions on vehicle entry and speed, capping it at 10 km/h. This initiative enhances safety and, importantly, helps reduce emissions in the city centre. The services of the COL manage parking in non-designated areas such as streets, sidewalks, and green spaces. Designated street parking spaces are marked with lines and signs. Speed restrictions and barriers are applied in areas with vulnerable road users. Clear traffic signals are installed, and road infrastructure and sidewalks are upgraded to enhance safety. Additionally, regular proactive preventive measures are implemented to raise awareness.

Community engagement, as highlighted by Eck and Spelman (1987), is a crucial aspect that involves the active participation of residents in identifying and addressing local crime concerns. It is important to note that community-oriented policing, as described in the previous chapter and in the opinion of Sherman and Weisburd (1995), plays a pivotal role by fostering collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the community. Social and economic interventions, such as educational programs and employment opportunities, contribute significantly to crime prevention by addressing underlying root causes (Welsh & Farrington, 2007). Moreover, Cullen et al. (2000) emphasize the role of developmental crime prevention programs in reducing crime and delinquency, highlighting the importance of early interventions. Additionally, study by Braga

et al. (2012) showcase the impact of focused deterrence strategies in reducing violent crime by targeting specific high-risk individuals.

By drawing on criminological knowledge, the department gains valuable insights into the factors driving misdemeanours and the underlying causes of various offences. In line with this, MWS participated in various EU projects (PERICLES³, SHINE⁴, PRECINCT⁵), enabling the department to address diverse areas that have significantly contributed to enhancing security and improving the operational practices of the municipal warden service and prevention activities. These areas include vehicle ramming attacks, sexual violence in highly dense nightlife entertainment spots, and the protection of critical infrastructure from the cascading effects of physical and cyber-attacks. This understanding enables MWS to tailor interventions and preventive measures more effectively. Moreover, criminological theories provide frameworks that assist MWS in analysing patterns, evaluating risk factors, and devising strategies to mitigate violations.

3.1 Geographical display of recorded misdemeanours actions taken

The process of digitalization has enabled the geographical representation of recorded misdemeanours and the corresponding actions taken. Eman et al. (2013) emphasized that geographical maps are a crucial component of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), an analytical approach for crime analysis. This method, as highlighted by Klinkon and Meško (2005) and Krevs (2004), serves as a tool for collecting, storing, retrieving, transforming, analysing, and presenting spatial and time-related data related to specific incidents, transforming them into new insights, ultimately serving the purpose of generating novel information. Furthermore, as pointed out by Eman et al. (2013, p. 287), GIS serves as a means of “supported decision making about the problem of crime in the studied environment”. The visualization of hotspots or the representation of executed measures for misdemeanours holds critical significance in explaining key locations, planning interventions, and developing preventive strategies for the MWS. The utilization of criminological insights within the realm of GIS is particularly applicable to mapping measures addressing misdemeanours. The MWS employs the Power BI statistical program, enabling the visualization of implemented measures on a map. The Power BI application sources its data from the Inpores misdemeanours application, where misdemeanours are recorded and input into the system. This tool not only displays the location but also offers information on the number of measures within a certain time frame and facilitates year-to-year comparisons. By

3 *In the EU project PERICLES (Preventing Vehicle Ramming Attacks), four areas in Ljubljana were redesigned and reinforced with measures such as retractable bollards to prevent vehicle ramming attacks. This enhances pedestrian safety by stopping vehicles at lower speeds and slowing them down during high-speed attacks (PERICLES, 2022).*

4 *In the EU project SHINE (Sexual Harassment in Nightlife Entertainment Spots: Mitigation and Prevention), MWS collaborated on evaluating the state of sexual harassment in nightlife areas in Ljubljana and developing a pilot prevention and control model (European Forum for Urban Security, n. d.; Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023).*

5 *The PRECINCT project (Preparedness and Resilience Enforcement for Critical Infrastructure Cascading Cyber-Physical Threats) aimed to enhance the understanding of COL and MWS regarding the city's critical infrastructure and its interdependencies. This initiative improved information sharing, response readiness, and detection methods for potential cascading threats (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023; PRECINCT, n. d.).*

clicking on a specific location, users can access the date and number of violations on specific location. It is important to note that the workload at each location is influenced by a preliminary analysis of the local environment. Although the positions of stationary measuring devices remain fixed, the effectiveness of measures differs among various locations. A more substantial municipal warden presence is allocated to more critical areas, contributing to a higher frequency of perceived violations. Thus, when interpreting the results, consideration should be given to this distribution and its impact.

4 RESEARCH

This study aims to analyse the distinct aspects of both preventive and repressive measures undertaken by the MWS Ljubljana in the year 2022. Its primary goal is to offer a comprehensive overview of the department's preventive activities, delve into the various preventive measures, encompassing the scope of preventive work and the allocation of prevention hours across different community districts. Additionally, the study examines the field of work in which these measures were applied and the methods employed for their execution. The data for this analysis were collected using the SUDMR app, which is employed by the MWS for monitoring preventive work. The SUDMR app offers a comprehensive overview of the department's preventive work, encompassing various aspects such as the number of activities, their duration, and descriptions. The program also facilitates year-to-year comparisons. Additionally, it provides insights into the prepositions of further activities. Additionally, the PowerBI app was utilized to analyse repressive measures, offering insights into geographical coverage, specific locations, and the quantity of repressive actions.

To achieve its objectives, the study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data were extracted from the apps, while we exported the data into Excel for the analysis of preventive work. Drawing from the literature on community policing, crime prevention, and the scope of municipal wardens' work, we constructed a table categorizing preventive activities by area, field of activity, action type, and time allocation. We coded the text based on the conducted activities and grouped it accordingly, resulting in the identification of 11 groups based on the field of activity. The same process was applied to categorize preventive action types, resulting in 11 distinct groups as well. We also prepared graphical representations based on the obtained data.

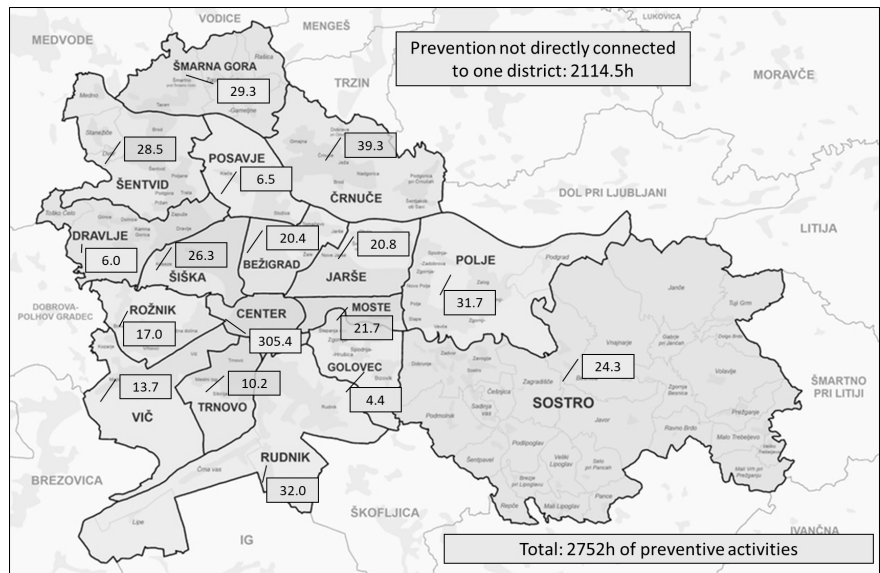
As this study is pioneering, direct comparisons with similar research are limited. However, we can indirectly compare our results with findings from criminological and community policing studies. Another limitation is that our analysis focused exclusively on repressive and preventive measures conducted by the MWS in 2022.

4.1 Results

The MWS has shifted its focus from primarily implementing repressive measures to increasing its emphasis on preventive activities. In 2022 alone, these efforts

translated to 2,752 hours of preventive work conducted by municipal wardens of the MWS. This data, gleaned from the SUDMR app utilized by the department to monitor preventive activities, serves as clear evidence. The Covid-19 pandemic further elevated the role of the MWS in previous years, with the highest recorded preventive hours reaching 6,532 hours in 2020. This aligns with the department's overarching objective of fostering a safe and secure environment for citizens, a need that became even more pronounced during the pandemic. With the omission of restrictive measures in the past year, a sense of calm was restored within the local community. A notable portion of prevention efforts is of a general nature, applicable citywide and not tied to a specific district. Zooming in on the districts (Figure 1), the city centre emerged as a focal point of significant preventive endeavours due to its densely populated nature. The city centre of Ljubljana boasts unique attributes, including a high influx of tourists and events, as well as the largest pedestrian area in the city. Notably, vehicular access is restricted (with rare exceptions) within this zone, and the permissible speed for bicycles and motorcycles does not exceed 10 km/h.

Figure 1:
Allocation of preventive work hours across districts in Ljubljana (in hours)



A comprehensive breakdown of the prevention-related activities is graphically depicted in Figure 2. Among these activities, a significant portion, comprising 37.7% (873 hours), was dedicated to road traffic-related endeavours. An additional 29% (799 hours) was focused on pedestrian, cyclist, child, elderly, and disabled safety. Beyond this, the municipal wardens of the MWS were actively engaged in a diverse range of preventive tasks. These encompassed providing road safety measures and ensuring general public safety during various sports and music events, as well as spearheading safety promotion and awareness campaigns. To heighten the efficacy of their efforts, increase their visibility, bolster public recognition, and expand their reach, the municipal wardens collaborated closely with the police. As reported by the SUDMR application, engaging in mixed

patrols with the police resulted in a significant allocation of 218.7 hours towards collaborative preventive activities.

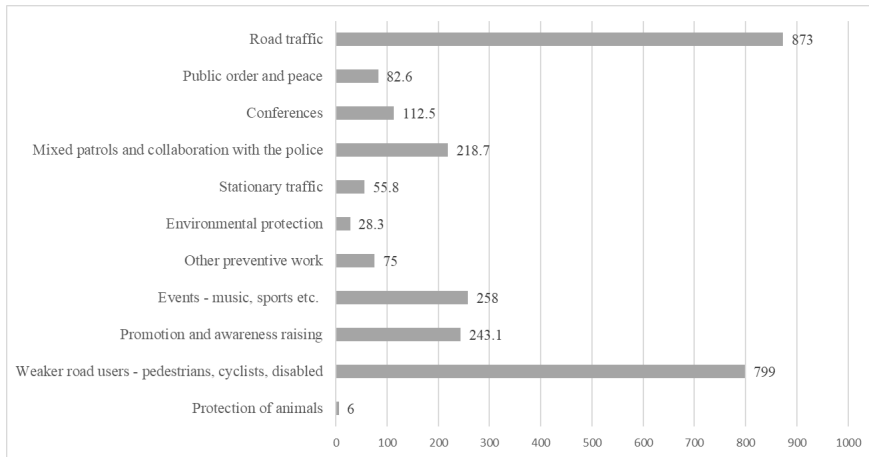


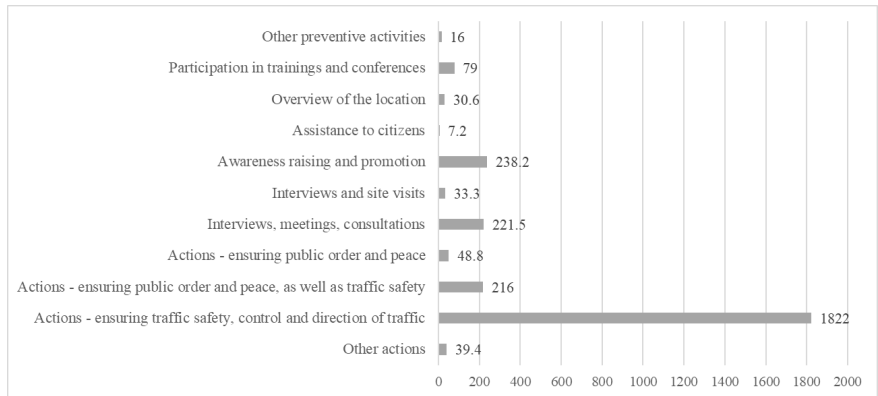
Figure 2:
Distribution
of preventive
work hours by
field of activi-
ty in 2022

The distribution of hours and conducted activities within each field of work exhibited variations due to the distinct nature of each considered topic. In terms of activity count, the highest was observed in the road traffic category with 98 activities, followed by 71 activities related to stationary traffic. Promotion and awareness-raising activities totalled 61, while mixed patrols and collaboration with the police were conducted within 44 activities. Additional activities included Public order and peace (28), Events (music, sports, etc.) (26), other preventive work (24), environmental protection (22), Weaker road users (pedestrians, cyclists, disabled) (21), conferences (14), and protection of animals (5).

The distribution of preventive actions types in terms of hours is visualized in Figure 3. The majority of actions were dedicated to ensuring traffic safety, encompassing tasks such as traffic control and direction, totalling 1,822 hours, which corresponds to 66.2% of the total hours allocated for prevention. Following this, activities associated with awareness-raising, disseminating promotional material, delivering lectures, participating in the creation of short awareness-raising videos for social media, and contributing to a children's television show accounted for a combined 238.2 hours (8.7%). In Ljubljana, for example, the municipal warden puppet is highly visible, as are promotional materials such as reflective strips, lights and safety vests, which the municipal wardens distribute to children to make them more visible in traffic. Conducting conversations and meetings with citizens, violators, other institutions and departments, as well as representatives of the districts constituted a total of 221.5 hours (8.1%). It is important to emphasize the role of providing assistance to citizens, even though it represented the smallest proportion of preventive work at 7.2 hours. This is notable because municipal wardens often play a critical role as first responders, averting potentially more severe consequences through their interventions. In many instances, municipal wardens engage in tasks like aiding vehicle breakdowns,

providing assistance to individuals injured in traffic accidents, and addressing acute medical conditions.

Figure 3:
Distribution
of preventive
action types
by hours



The distribution of repressive measures is illustrated in Figure 4, where areas with darker-coloured dots indicate a higher concentration of applied repressive measures. Throughout 2022, a total of 115,453 repressive measures were enacted. The majority of detected violations were attributed to stationary and mobile automatic speed measuring devices, accounting for a total of 56,040 repressive measures, or 48.5% of the total. An additional 41,345 measures (35.8%) were enacted in stationary traffic scenarios. The remaining 15.7% of measures spanned various other domains of municipal wardens' activities. In terms of numerical representation, measures related to other road-related offenses amounted to 3,898, followed by measures addressing abandoned vehicles in the context of environmental care (521), animal protection (175), and public order and peace (171). In districts predominantly inhabited by local residents with limited daily transit traffic, a minor occurrence of measurements is adequate to achieve traffic calming objectives. Conversely, other areas are characterized by elevated traffic volume and a diverse driver demographic, often comprising non-local individuals. Consequently, these locations necessitate a heightened presence of municipal wardens, consequently leading to an increased imposition of sanctions. When interpreting the results, careful consideration is imperative.

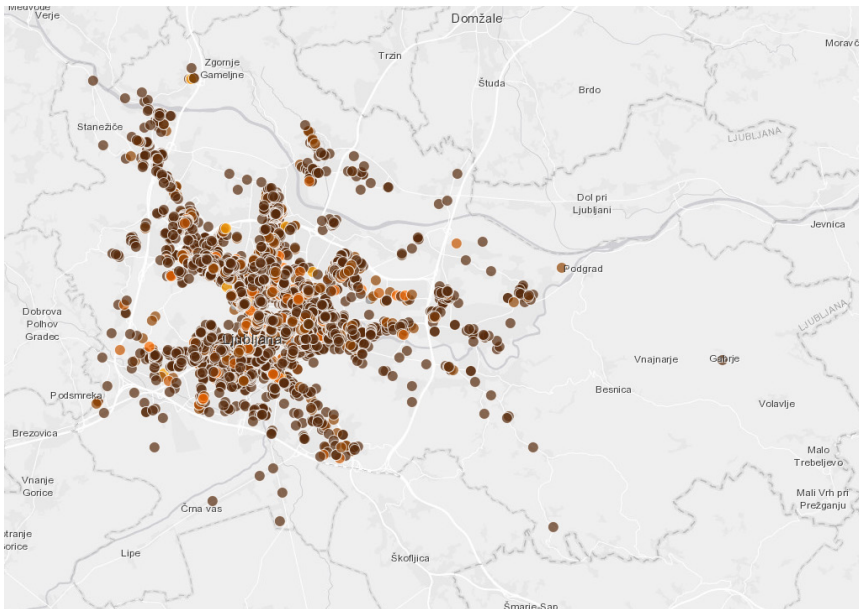


Figure 4:
Distribution
of applied
Repressive
Measures in
Ljubljana in
2022

5 DISCUSSION

The MWS is an entity responsible for ensuring security within the local community, with a primary focus on maintaining traffic and general safety and addressing misdemeanours within these domains. As can be summarized from “ZORed” (2006), the primary tasks of municipal wardens include the supervision of traffic in the municipality, care for safety on municipal roads and public areas, maintenance of public order and peace, protection of public property, natural and cultural heritage, and the environment of the municipality. Over recent years, there has been a notable rise in the execution of repressive measures, reaching a total of 115,453 in 2022 (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023). The MWS’s activities go beyond just repressive actions; they also involve significant efforts and tasks directed towards building a collaborative partnership with the community. In line with the shift “from punitive measures to evidence-based prevention” strategies targeting the reduction of violence (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n. d.), the MWS took the lead by outlining the preventive responsibilities of municipal wardens in the Strategy for community-oriented work of municipal wardens of the City of Ljubljana (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestno redarstvo, 2011). A comparison of repressive and preventive work areas aligns with the legally defined field of responsibilities of municipal wardens. It highlights that the highest number of violations in 2022 pertained to speeding, stationary traffic, and other road-related offenses. The most prevalent repressive actions coincide with preventive endeavours, with a notable focus on road traffic. It is essential to emphasize also the substantial effort dedicated to addressing issues like abandoned vehicles, which contribute to environmental care, animal protection, and public order and peace. Although these areas may

not be as prominent, their resolution significantly impacts residents in local communities.

The findings from the conducted study indicate a shift by MWS towards preventive measures, evident in both the number of hours dedicated to such activities and the diversity of conducted initiatives. Changes are not the result of legal provisions, as preventive municipal wardens' work is not legally defined. Instead, they are the consequence of the department's hard work and dedication to transitioning from a repressive to a preventive approach, which began in 2011 with the adoption of the Strategy for community-oriented work of municipal wardens of the City of Ljubljana (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestno redarstvo, 2011). Indeed, preventive efforts can be effective in preventing misdemeanours in local communities and ensuring citizen safety. As stated by Eman and Bulovec (2021), community-oriented work enhances trust and communication with local residents, fostering better collaboration and countering negative perceptions of law enforcement. This, in turn, enhances the effectiveness and safety of work, supported by an understanding of community needs, cooperative problem-solving, and better safety outcomes.

The analysis revealed that the majority of violations in repressive actions were detected primarily using stationary and mobile automatic speed measuring devices. In contrast, preventive work demands greater involvement and personal engagement from municipal wardens. The primary focus of preventive activities was to improve traffic safety, involving activities such as conducting controls and offering guidance and traffic routings. Moreover, efforts to raise awareness through distributing promotional materials, delivering lectures, and creating awareness-raising videos were carried out. In pursuit of SDG 4, Quality Education, municipal wardens actively collaborate with schools and kindergartens to promote safe traffic participation and familiarize children with their work and equipment. Additionally, engaging in conversations and meetings with citizens, violators, other institutions, departments, and district representatives constitutes a crucial aspect of preventive work. Meško (2002a) found that respondents in Ljubljana are not eager to collaborate in crime prevention activities, with only 20%, mainly elderly individuals, prepared to participate in such activities. It follows that it is important to make people aware and encourage them to participate in preventive activities. Promoting proactive cooperation by integrating and exchanging valuable data and information contributes to an improved level of safety in the local environment. This aligns with the conclusions of Rukus et al. (2018) regarding community policing, highlighting the significance of police officers' active engagement in communities. This entails dedicating more time and personnel to increase their presence in the local community and engaging in direct communication and collaboration with the local population.

Given that the MWS holds responsibility for local community safety and wields repressive powers, conducting tasks and procedures in a lawful and professional manner is of utmost importance. This significance is accentuated by the ongoing scrutiny of legality and legitimacy by experts and the general public. Similar to Meško's (2001) observation regarding the police, this also holds true for municipal wardens. The quality of work, response time to issues, accessibility,

visibility, and integrity, affect public opinion and the perception of the service in the community. Additionally, discussions about the municipal warden service often raise the argument that its performance primarily contributes to filling the municipal budget rather than fulfilling its primary role of ensuring traffic and overall public safety within the local environment. Meško et al. (2016) have raised serious concerns regarding the legality and legitimacy of municipal warden's work if this notion were true. As highlighted by Tičar et al. (2020), municipalities define misdemeanours and their corresponding sanctions. This leads us back to the core principle of community policing, which, as Eman and Bulovec (2021) assert, fundamentally relies on trust and effective communication. The annual reports (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023) consistently show a low number of complaints regarding the actions of municipal wardens. Additionally, significant resources are allocated to education, training, and improving the quality of their work. The increasing importance of MWS in ensuring local safety and citizens' quality of life is evident from the rising number of received initiatives and calls for assistance. The rise in email communication further underscores this trend. In 2022, 13,907 emails were received, marking a significant 95.23% increase in responding to initiatives compared to 2018. The incoming and outgoing email volume saw a substantial rise of 102.70% and 142.30%, respectively, from 2018 to 2022, despite relatively unchanged staffing. This highlights the department's commitment and efficiency in providing prompt responses, often within the same day or the following day. The active engagement of MWS has also garnered positive feedback from citizens and partner institutions (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023).

According to the number of hours spent on preventive work, joint activities with the police were placed immediately after the primary tasks of municipal wardens which include ensuring traffic safety, public order and peace, and feelings of safety in the local environment. Collaboration is key to effective security management at the local level. The development of the joint provision of security by state, local and informal entities is extremely important (Programska skupina: Varnost v lokalnih skupnostih, n. d.). The above coincides with the findings of Jones and Newburn (2006) and Stenning (2009), who presented the foundations of modern plural policing activity; this reflects the changing nature of police work and the increasing involvement of other public, private and municipal entities in ensuring community safety. This type of cooperation, which reflects also the SDG 17, is also provided for in Article 35 of "ZODPol" (2013), which presupposes the cooperation of the police, local community authorities and other authorities, organizations, civil society and individuals in as part of safety councils, co-councils and commissions dedicated to ensuring greater safety. The key benefits of these councils by opinion of Meško and Lobnikar (2005) include the democratisation of formal social control and oversight of the police, fostering collaboration among responsible citizens and building mutual acquaintanceship, promoting more active cooperation among all essential local stakeholders, encouraging a heightened "safety consciousness", and facilitating discussions on local issues with a mindset of caring communities. Meško and Sotlar (2012) emphasize that merely connecting representatives of local stakeholders in a partnership does

not guarantee the consideration, selection, and implementation of appropriate social, situational, and developmental (preventive) interventions. Therefore, they underscore the importance of having access to in-depth knowledge about the causes of criminality and the effectiveness of certain interventions.

6 CONCLUSION

It is a fact that during their development, municipal warden services have transcended their primary role in traffic regulation and emerged as crucial stakeholders in plural policing activity. The key to ensuring safety at the local level lies in the mutual cooperation of various stakeholders, whose tasks and powers often overlap or complement each other. MWS stands at the forefront, driving the evolution of municipal warden services in Slovenia. It proactively addresses traffic and public safety concerns, responding to community needs and proposing numerous enhancements to municipal warden activities. At present, MWS plays a pivotal role in ensuring local security, significantly complementing the efforts of the national police in Ljubljana (Republika Slovenija, 2022).

In recent times, municipal wardens have been assigned additional tasks, often with insufficiently defined implementation guidelines. This situation is evident in laws such as the Decree on implementing Regulation (EU) on the rules and procedures for the operation of unmanned aircraft ("Uredba o izvajanju izvedbene uredbe Komisije (EU) o pravilih in postopkih za upravljanje brezpilotnih zrakoplovov", 2020) and the Restriction on the Use of Tobacco Products and Related Products Act ("Zakon o omejevanju uporabe tobačnih in povezanih izdelkov (ZOUTPI)", 2017), which expand municipal warden authority without clear specified methods of implementation. Moreover, within the framework of "ZORed" (2006), the roles and responsibilities of municipal wardens in the field of protection lack explicit definition. This becomes especially apparent as the need for the cooperation of municipal wardens in the event of natural disasters and other extraordinary events arises in practice. This need arises mainly from the fact that municipal wardens could significantly contribute to regulating and directing both traffic and people during such events. Additionally, municipal wardens could play a role in ensuring safety in public areas and preventing violations of public order and peace. The umbrella law "ZORed" (2006) should be amended to grant municipal wardens powers in the field of protection and rescue and the ability to work during emergencies outside the borders of the primary municipality or local authority. This solution would significantly enhance cooperation with other entities, such as civil protection, firefighters, rescuers, and municipal wardens from other municipalities.

Furthermore, within the framework of "ZORed" (2006), the specific roles, tasks, and collaborative partnerships of municipal wardens for ensuring safety within local communities, lack explicit definition. Except for cooperation with the police, which is outlined in "ZORed" (2006) but not precisely specified. The extent of cooperation depends on local agreements (cooperation protocols), willingness to collaborate, and especially the availability of personnel. In comparison to other municipalities, COL has a few collaboration protocols, with the most crucial

one outlining collaboration between the police and municipal wardens. This collaboration is mutually advantageous, aiming to enhance security services for citizens through activities like traffic monitoring and enforcing public order and peace violations, ultimately bolstering public security (Mestna občina Ljubljana, Mestna uprava, Mestno redarstvo, 2023; Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve, Policija, 2010).

The collaboration of municipal wardens with other entities represents an area where improvements and changes are possible, potentially contributing significantly to local safety. Enabling such cooperation requires legal changes with clear definitions of entities and methods for mutual collaboration. To align with SDG 17, a detailed study of the security situation in the municipality is essential. This study would identify not only security needs but also the entities with which municipal wardens should collaborate. In the absence of legal changes, cooperation could be defined through additional local collaboration protocols. Identifying security needs and priorities can also serve as a basis for municipal warden training, emphasizing mutual understanding of tasks and powers among entities. The primary focus should be on promoting the work of municipal warden activities and raise awareness among other stakeholders about their work.

A crucial factor for the successful implementation of preventive work and effective collaboration between municipal wardens and other entities is an ample number of personnel. Over recent years, the demand for additional personnel has been on the rise. While some aspects of traffic supervision can be addressed through technical equipment (e.g., automatic speed measuring devices), the indispensable physical interaction with residents, vital for community-oriented work and prevention, cannot be replaced by technology. Therefore, addressing the personnel shortage promptly is imperative. Failure to do so may hinder the future development of the municipal warden service, particularly in the realms of prevention and collaboration.

Overall, the integration of criminological findings, knowledge, and theories into the work of the MWS serves as a significant tool for analysing and addressing issues within the local community. This commitment underscores MWS dedication to effective and informed law enforcement practices that prioritize public safety and well-being. As highlighted by Swope (2001), "application of criminological theory to crime analysis helps to avoid the risk of ignoring important connections to the community-based environment. Crime analysis based on criminological theory offers a systematic approach to analysis that may yield more consistent results with a deeper level of explanation". Additionally, criminological theories aid in justifying the implementation of either repressive or preventive measures in specific areas, enhancing public opinion and the image of the MWS by demonstrating well-founded actions. Looking ahead, the MWS will encounter challenges related to digitalisation, process optimization, recruitment, education, training, and legislative changes. Sustaining and enhancing established collaborations with domestic and foreign local communities and experts is vital, as following best practices in community safety may contribute to the ongoing growth of the service.

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