ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR PRIVATE SECURITY PERSONNEL IN SLOVENIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the education system of private security personnel in Slovenia. Through the presentation and comparison of education and training programs for obtaining national professional qualification (hereafter: NPQ) and secondary and post-secondary education programs, it indicates shortcomings and opportunities for improvement. The theoretical part used a descriptive method and an analysis of professional literature, legal, and by-laws in the field of private security and education. On this basis, the historical background and current regulation in the Republic of Slovenia were presented. The analysis and comparison consisted mainly of education programs and programs for obtaining NPQ. In the empirical work, the focus group included security personnel based on different ways of obtaining education, certification or ID card for security personnel, as well as security managers and lecturers at various levels of education and training. The findings show that the subjects in the field of private security in the training and education programs are very similar in content, they are also comparable in terms of duration and the ratio between theoretical and practical work. Since the programs are not adequately upgraded according to the level of education, it would be necessary to update the programs and at the same time ensure the competence of the practitioners of the pedagogical process. It would also make sense to regulate the conditioning of the approach to training for different NPQs with work experience. The findings are useful especially for creators of education and training programs and proponents of laws regulating private security, secondary and higher education, and NPQ. They could also be important for other countries that have a similarly organized private security personnel education system and/or want to reform their existing system.

Keywords: private security, education, training, security guard, private security manager

INTRODUCTION

In addition to state protection, various protection options have begun to develop in many modern societies, which provide additional security to clients and other users of security services. To the greatest extent, it concerns the protection of the assets of individuals or practitioners of many activities who want to prevent loss of profit. Thus, many non-state organizations in the field of

security began to develop in the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter: RS). It is about the pluralization of police activity, which represents the process of transferring the implementation of typical police tasks to another state, local and also private police, security, and control organizations [5].

In accordance with the development of private security, institutions dealing with the education and training of security personnel began to appear, various professions developed, and also professional standards and catalogs of skills were defined [11]. This started the development of training and development of security personnel. In the course of its work, the latter has at its disposal a number of measures and other means that interfere with human rights and their fundamental freedoms, which is why we attribute a great deal of responsibility to them [1], [10]. This is precisely why employees in the field of private security must undergo professional training and further training with the aim of acquiring and improving professional knowledge and skills according to programs for professional training and development of security personnel (hereinafter: programs) determined by the minister responsible for internal affairs, according to the type of work performed by security personnel in the field of private security [14]. At the same time, the purpose is not only to raise the level of knowledge, but to consolidate and upgrade the skills, abilities [12], and the practical implementation of individual measures of security personnel.

Private security education and training programs

According to the Private Security Act [14], security personnel must meet general (Article 32) and special conditions (Article 33) in order to obtain an ID card for private security personnel, which is mandatory for working in private security. One of these conditions is that the applicant is professionally qualified for the type of work he will perform. He can demonstrate professional competence if he has (Article 40):

1. completed an educational program in the field of private security, in accordance with the regulations governing public educational programs,
2. completed professional training and advanced training, as stipulated in the Private Security Act, and obtained a national professional qualification in the field of private security in accordance with the regulations governing national professional qualifications, or
3. a national professional qualification in the field of private security obtained in another way in accordance with the regulations governing national professional qualifications, if professional training and further development, as stipulated in the Private Security Act, is not mandatory.
4. Depending on the type of work performed by security personnel, we know the following national professional qualifications [1], [14]:
    * security watchman,
    * security guard,
    * security supervisor

- security control center (SCC) operator,
- security bodyguard
- security manager
- security technician
- authorized security systems engineer.

Educational programs in the field of private security include secondary professional education and vocational-technical education Security Technician and the post-secondary program Security [2], [11]. The Security Technician high school program provides candidates with a V. level of education and was prepared based on the professional standards for a security guard, a security supervisor and a Security Control Center (SCC) operator. Upon completion of the post-secondary program, candidates obtain the title of security engineer and VI. level of education. It was prepared based on the professional standard of security manager and bodyguard.

In the following, we will focus only on an NPQ security guard and a security manager, as these are two key professions in private security, and at the same time, they are the most suitable for comparing the programs and competencies of security personnel.

Training to obtain NPQ security guard and security manager

In order to obtain a certificate for an individual type of work, individuals must meet entry and special conditions, namely obtain and submit a medical certificate of medical fitness for the work of a security guard, issued by a doctor specializing in occupational and sports medicine, have a certificate of completion of at least elementary school and a certificate of participation in training [4]. According to the Order on the determination of the professional training program for the security guard (2017) and the Order on the determination of the professional training program for the security manager (2019), the candidate or candidates for obtaining the NPQ security guard and security manager must attend training prescribed by the Ministry of the Internal Affairs and successfully pass a written, practical and oral knowledge test. This is done in front of a commission determined by the Republic Examination Center (REC). The professional training program for a security guard is implemented in the scope of 102 school hours. The program is divided into 11 substantive sections, for which the number of hours of theoretical and practical work is also foreseen. The professional training program for a security manager is implemented in the scope of 90 school hours. The program is divided into 8 substantive sections, for which the number of hours of theoretical and practical work is also foreseen. Sufficient participation in the training is considered if the candidate attends at least 80% of the scheduled hours for each content component [9].

Security Technician High School Program

The secondary school professional program for Security Technicians lasts four years and ends with a vocational high school diploma, if the student has successfully completed general education subjects, compulsory professional modules, optional professional modules and open parts of the curriculum with positive grades. The vocational matriculation exam includes a mandatory written and oral part in Slovenian and private security. The optional part consists of a written and oral exam in either a foreign language or mathematics and the product or service and its presentation [2].

Secondary school professional education is divided into general education subjects and professional modules. Among the first are Slovene language, two foreign languages, mathematics, art, history, geography, psychology, physics, chemistry and physical education. We will not focus on the latter, but we will compare the following professional modules with the other programs: Protection of people and property, Technical security, Safety and health at work, Protection against fires, Supervision of security services, Operation of the Security Control Center and interventions, Crimes and criminology, Security of public gatherings, Transport of cash and other valuable shipments, Security in logistics, Security information systems [2].

It is also important to mention adult education, which enables adults to obtain the fifth level of education or appropriate qualifications and competences for the needs of the labor market. It is education according to publicly valid vocational and professional education programs, which are regulated by the Act on Vocational and Professional Education and the Adult Education Act. It is carried out as an extraordinary education in such a way that the same standard of knowledge as in regular secondary education is ensured, and students are given certain adjustments, such as time coordination, flexibility in checking and evaluating knowledge and promotion.

As part of the focus group, Assoc. prof. Ph.D., who is the head of professional training and a lecturer at Čas – Private School for Security Education, says that their education for adults takes place in such a way that, for example: for the subject Protection of people and property at secondary school, students are invited to a lecture on NPQ security guard to content sections: normative regulation of private security, use of measures and other means, practical procedure and self-defense, and communication and conflict management. Thus, students listen for almost 70 hours in this subject, which basically means 20% of the lectures in the subject in the regular program (340 hours). In addition, candidates are provided with consultations, access to materials and use of online classrooms.

Security engineer university (post-secondary) program

The higher education Security Engineer program lasts two years, is evaluated with 120 credit points according to the ECTS system, and ends when the student completes all program obligations, namely: all mandatory modules, two of the optional modules, an optional subject, and a thesis. In each year, 34 weeks of educational work are prescribed, of which 24 weeks of lectures, seminars, laboratory exercises, and 10 weeks of practical training with employers [2].

A candidate who wishes to enroll in the security engineer study program must have completed a general or vocational high school diploma or completed appropriate education according to previous regulations. The conditions are also met by anyone who has passed a master's, supervisor or management exam, three years of work experience, and has passed a knowledge test in general education subjects to the extent specified for the vocational high school diploma [2].

The curriculum consists of six modules and their associated subjects and an optional subject. Three modules are compulsory, and the student chooses another two and one optional course from the three electives. Compulsory modules are Business Communication, Security and Regulations, and Security and Organization. Optional courses are Protection of persons and property, Security management and Security technical systems [2]. In the following, we will focus primarily on those modules and subjects that are directly related to private security, as they are key for the comparison (for example: Introduction to private security in the Security and regulations module; Security planning in the Security Management module).

The university program is carried out as full-time and part-time studies. The school can adapt the organization and scope of education to part-time students. It adjusts the scope in such a way as to enable the student to achieve the credits defined by the study program. This means that both full-time and part-time students must fulfill the obligations necessary to obtain credits, except that part-time students have more adjustments. For example, the education company Abitura offers a post-secondary program for a security engineer part-time, and the program is no different from a full-time one. The program is implemented modularly and lasts two years. The implementation of the program is adapted in terms of time and implementation to busy students. Lectures, exercises, and seminar work are organized 2 to 3 times a week in the afternoon or on Saturday mornings.

Comparison of security personnel programs and competencies

Comparison by content

After reviewing the programs, we note that the content of the NPQ security guard program and the high school security technician program are very similar,

while the post-secondary school security engineer program differs the most. The program for an NPQ security manager can be placed among the mentioned programs, as it includes content important for leadership and management, but it is significantly less compared to the post-secondary program.

The NPQ security guard and high school program include the following content: protection of people and property, technical security, safety and health at work, fire protection, criminal behavior and criminology, and protection of public gatherings. The NPQ security guard also offers action according to the security plan and in case of emergencies, first aid, and communications, while the high school program also provides supervision of security services, operation of SCC, transport of cash and other valuable shipments (security guards have 16 hours of specialist training) and one of the optional subjects: security in logistics or security of information systems. Based on this, we can conclude that, with a few exceptions, the two programs are very similar, as both cover the most key subjects or contents. Both programs provide candidates with knowledge of the normative regulation of private security, measures and use of other means and duties of security guards, criminal conduct and criminology, and basic human rights and freedoms. They also know how to put this knowledge into practice [2], [4], [8].

The university program in the syllabus, just like the program for an NPQ security guard and the secondary school program, covers the normative regulation of private security, criminal law and criminology, safety and health at work, measures of security personnel, organization of transport, interventions and public gatherings and subjects of technical security. These are subjects that are comparable to subjects or content sets in other programs, so we will focus on them. It also covers additional content, such as business communication, law and state regulation, administrative law, and content related to the protection of persons and property, which includes planning for the protection of persons, tactics of personal protection, specialist driving and weaponry and shooting. The safety management module contains subjects related to management, planning and monitoring protection or safety, and such or similar items can only be found in the program for the NPQ safety manager [2], [3], [7].

In addition to these contents, the security manager program for obtaining the NPQ also covers the normative regulation of private security, measures and other means of security guards and their duties, criminal conduct and criminology, technical security, and communications, which represents a repetition and upgrade of the knowledge acquired in the NPQ security guard program [3], [7].

We made a comparison of the high school program, the post-secondary program, and the training program for the NPQ security guard, and for this purpose, we compared the same or similarly named courses and determined what the substantive differences are in the programs [2], [8].

Based on a comparison of the content of the subject Protection of Public Gatherings, which is based on the Act on Public Gatherings, we can conclude that the content of the programs is exactly the same. The content is written in other words that retain the same or very similar meaning.

When comparing the subject Transport and protection of cash and other valuable items in the secondary and higher education program [2], and the professional development program for the transport and protection of cash and other valuable items [6], we came to the same conclusions as when comparing the subject Protection of public gatherings. Candidates at all three levels learn the same content, without a significant upgrade. All candidates learn about the regulations, standards and requirements in the field of security and transport of money and valuable shipments, know the measures to protect valuable shipments, separate classes of protected shipments, and know personal protection, vehicles and other technical equipment.

Comparison by duration

Professional training for a security guard lasts 102 school hours [8]. The professional training for a security manager lasts 90 school hours and, like the training for a security guard, it devotes most of its hours to the security guard's measures and other means. There is more emphasis on the content of private security arrangements and the planning and implementation of internal control, where 12 school hours are prescribed for an individual content set [7].

The secondary school program lasts four years, except in the case of adult education, where students can complete their education earlier through an adapted program. The curriculum consists of general and professional subjects, but for the purposes of the article, we will focus only on the latter. There are 11 professional modules, two of which are optional. A total of 1,462 school hours are prescribed, to which 568 school hours of practical lessons, 304 hours of practical training with work and 352 hours of other forms of educational work must be added. This applies to the regular 4-year program for students who have completed primary school. These are students who do not have any practical experience.

In the Republic of Slovenia, the protection techniques program is often implemented as adult education or self-education, so we will take into account the duration of such education for comparison with other programs. As an example of adult education, we take Čas – Private school for safety education, where candidates study for two years and, as a rule, have lectures on professional subjects for at least 20% of the scheduled 1462 hours, i.e. around 300 hours, and self-educators have extended consultations.

The higher education study program Security lasts two years, during which the student completes the obligations in the subjects from three compulsory and two optional modules, as well as the obligations in the optional subject. If we

ignore subjects in the security engineer program where the content is not exclusively private security (e.g. business communication module), we find that students complete a total of 324 school hours in the first year. Of this, 240 hours of lectures, 72 hours of seminars, and 12 hours of laboratory exercises. In the second year, for the compulsory module, 202 school hours (128 hours of lectures and 84 hours of seminar exercises), and for two optional subjects, a total of 324 school hours (the number of hours of lectures and exercises varies depending on the chosen module).

Students in the higher education program have 240 hours of lectures in the first year, and 128 hours in the second year of the compulsory module. As an example, let's assume that a student in the second year chooses the optional modules protection of persons and property and security management. In the first module, the student completes 66 hours of lectures, and in the second, 112 hours. In total, the student in the higher education program has 546 hours of lectures during the two years of education. If we were to compare this with the training to obtain the NPQ, we have to take into account the hours for the NPQ security guard (102 hours), bodyguard (130 hours) and security manager (90 hours), which in total amounts to 322 hours. Here we see that the higher education program includes a large number of lecture hours, as well as laboratory and seminar exercises. However, it should be emphasized that candidates for the NPQ gain work experience immediately after completing the NPQ as a security guard and before completing the NPQ as a bodyguard and security manager, while students only after completing schooling.

We compared the high school program by using only two mandatory modules of the high school program (security and regulations and security and organization) for comparison, as only these cover the same or similar content related to private security. Thus, we find that at a higher school, lectures in these subjects last 368 hours, which is very comparable to adult education (around 300 hours), which is the most common form of education for security technicians.

The relationship between theoretical and practical education or training

The professional training program for a security guard consists of 102 school hours, of which 44 hours are practical work, or 43% of all contact hours. Professional training for a security manager within the framework of 90 school hours foresees only 18 school hours of practical lessons or 20% of all hours and only in the content related to measures and other means of security guards [7], [8].

The secondary school program for a four-year education specifies a total of 1,462 school hours of lectures, to which 568 school hours of practical lessons and 304 hours of practical training with work must be added. In total, the practical part of education represents approximately 37% of all contact hours.

The university program stipulates 562 hours of lectures for subjects in the field of private security, which are comparable to subjects in high school and to content sections for NPQ security guards. In these courses, approximately 260 hours of seminar exercises are planned (depending on the selected module), i.e. approximately 46% of all contact hours. It is a different kind of practical work that we have shown in other described programs.

From what has been described, it can be concluded that the ratio between theoretical and practical education or training is similarly distributed and that there are no major deviations, if we consider that candidates are being educated or trained as a security guard, security technician, security manager or security engineer.

Other comparisons

When comparing different programs in terms of content, duration, and the ratio between theoretical and practical content, it is necessary to mention two more important comparisons related to security guards with NPQ and security technicians and also security managers with NPQ and security engineers (security managers).

Security guards with NPQ and security technicians

So far, we have shown comparisons of programs where, in training for security techniques, we focused only on professional courses in the field of private security. In the following, we compared the implementation program for security techniques, which are trained on the job, in the scope of 20% of lectures or 300 hours (program for adults), with the program for obtaining the NPQ security guard (102 hours). After finishing school, with appropriate work experience, security technicians can, in addition to the tasks of a security guard, also perform the tasks of a security supervisor, SCC operator, transport and protection of cash and other valuable shipments, and security of events in night clubs, because they also have lectures for these subjects within the 300 hours.

If a security guard with NPQ wants to perform these tasks, he must complete NPQ for SCC operator (42 hours), NPQ for security supervisor (34 hours), transport and protection of cash and other valuables (16 hours) and security of events in night clubs (18 hours), a total of 110 hours. Thus, a security guard with NPQ must complete a total of 212 hours of lectures and close to 300 hours as a security technician.

At the same time, it should be noted that security guards with NPQ must already have 2 years of work experience to obtain NPQ operator SCC and one year for NPQ security supervisor, and the security technician must acquire this experience only after completing the education program.

Safety manager with NPQ and safety engineer

There is also a special feature when comparing the safety manager with NPQ and the security engineer, where 90 hours of lectures are planned for the safety manager with NPQ, and 112 hours for the security management module for the security engineer. In this case, it is necessary to take into account that a candidate for NPQ security manager must have at least a higher education and at least 3 years of work experience in the field of private security, where measures and other means of security are implemented [3]. To enroll in the security engineer (security manager) program, secondary professional education is required, whereas work experience in the field of private security, where measures and other means of security personnel are implemented, is not required.

Thus we encounter two problems:

- a candidate with higher professional education or with higher education than this cannot apply for training as a security manager before he has three years of work experience,
- after completing the education, a security engineer cannot obtain an ID card or work as a security manager until he has gained three years of work experience in the field of private security, where measures are implemented and other means are used.

CONCLUSION

Based on the collected findings, both after reviewing programs for obtaining NPQ and programs for secondary and higher education, as well as after talking with experts, we found that there are deficiencies in the current arrangement of education and training in the Republic of Slovenia. These are primarily the inadequate upgrading of knowledge and competences through programs from training for NPQ to post-secondary education, inadequate training of the practitioners of the pedagogical process (professional courses) at secondary schools, and requirements for work experience for performing professions in private security. Therefore, below we present proposals for changes.

Upgrading of skills

We propose to modernize the programs of secondary and post-secondary education in such a way that the differences in the minimum standards of knowledge required for the successful completion of these programs will be visible. In this article, based on a comparison of private security subjects at training and education, we showed that it is only a matter of differently structured programs, which do not provide for upgrading by individual levels. The training programs for obtaining the NPQ must be considered as a basis and must cover the minimum standards for practicing the profession (which is already regulated by law), and the high school and especially the post-secondary school program must

be properly upgraded with additional content and more detailed requirements in the subjects of private security (protection of people and assets, transportation and cash protection, technical protection, etc.).

Qualification of the practitioners of the pedagogical process

The current legal regulation enables the subject Protection of people and property in the secondary school security technician program to be taught by anyone who has completed a university study program in security studies, law, psychology and economics or a higher education professional study program in security studies [2]. This means that the measures and other means, which are considered one of the most important subjects, can be learned by those who have not encountered them in practice never before. Such an arrangement reduces the credibility and quality of the program, so it would be necessary to introduce changes and thereby improve the system of education of security personnel. Subjects in the field of private security should not be taught by teachers without adequate training or experience in working in private security or the police. As suggested also by a lecturer at a secondary school, it would make sense to introduce or increase the number of professional trainings for providers of all programs and to further unify compulsory and additional literature.

Work experience

We have indicated that security personnel with multiple trainings for various professions in private security, after completing the training hours, come very close to those who have completed a program of security techniques after an adult education program. The latter must acquire work experience only after completing their matriculation, while those who have decided to undergo training can start gaining experience for the profession of security supervisor and VNC operator already after completing the NPQ security guards qualification. We propose that two years of work experience should be required to obtain a Security Supervisor ID, not just one. These are people who supervise the work of security guards, and therefore we believe that one year of experience is not enough for such a job.

Security managers who complete the security engineer program must, like those who have at least a VI. level of education at any other school, after completing education or training, have at least three years of work experience in the field of private security, where measures and other means of security are implemented, to be able to work as security managers - as persons responsible for providing private security in a private security company. It should be emphasized, however, that persons cannot apply for the position of NPQ security manager before they meet the requirement of three years of work experience in the field of private security. The reason for this is that the writers of the NPQ catalogs and programs equated the conditions for joining the training to the conditions for obtaining an ID card. In Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, it is written that education is free and that the state creates opportunities for

citizens to acquire an appropriate education [13]. Despite the fact that we are talking about training and not education, we find it controversial that work experience is a condition for approaching training. Therefore, we suggest that the training is not conditional on work experience and that candidates for the NPQ security manager can approach the training without work experience and then perform the duties of a security guard with the NPQ security manager and gain relevant work experience. After gaining three years of work experience, they can obtain an ID card for a manager.

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