

## **Police Officer Perceptions of Crime Hot Spots and the Applicability of Analytical Support of Policing**

**Nenad Milić, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of Criminal Law, Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia. E-mail: [nenad.milic@kpa.edu.rs](mailto:nenad.milic@kpa.edu.rs)

**Brankica Popović, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia. E-mail: [brankica.popovic@kpa.edu.rs](mailto:brankica.popovic@kpa.edu.rs)

**Darko Marinković, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Academy of Criminalistic and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia. E-mail: [darko.marinkovic@kpa.edu.rs](mailto:darko.marinkovic@kpa.edu.rs)

One of the basic conditions for effective police work in the local environment is the disposal of information about the events that pose a threat to the safety and security of citizens in a particular location. Without such information, necessary measures and actions will not be taken, or if they are taken, they will not take place where and when needed. Answering the question as to the extent police officers know where crimes are committed is important, not only in terms of improving work efficiency of the police organization, but it can also be a significant indicator of (low) quality analytical support provided to police officers. In this context, this paper provides results of research on current police practices of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, specifically to answer the question as to extent the police officers know where crime areas (hotspots) are located, and the way in which they acquire information on relevant events at their patrol areas, as well as the influence of the crime analysis unit in their everyday work. Results showed that police officers believe that they are familiar with the locations of crime hotspots, although the analysis revealed that police officers' knowledge of hot spots do not correspond with real situations. We discovered that two key factors stand out – personal lack of interest of police officers, and inadequate analytical support of their work. In order to overcome the stated problems, it is necessary to decentralize the work of the department of analytics, to implement crime mapping in police practice, as well as to create adequate organizational prerequisites for better informing police officers.

**Key words:** police officers' perceptions, hotspot, crime mapping, analytical support, GIS, police

**UDC: 351.741:343.9(497.11)**