



SIDE EFFECTS OF FREE MOBILITY 25 - 27 MARCH 2009

Helsinki Police Department
Police Commissioner Jukka Riikonen

IMPORTANCE OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT AUTHORITIES

Helsinki Police Department is responsible for general order and safety, for combating crime and comprehensive criminal investigation as well as for offering police licence services in the city of Helsinki. In addition to the basic tasks, the Police Department has various special tasks at the national and regional level. Therefore, the planning of policing and the related co-operation between authorities must be comprehensive and their targets must be well co-ordinated.

Helsinki Police Department makes active efforts to find out the security expectations of the citizens and to respond to them jointly with other authorities. In recent years, the Police Department has particularly reinforced co-operation with the city of Helsinki. The enhanced co-operation has been well-timed also with regard to the issue of begging. In Helsinki, the long history of co-operation between the police and other authorities has been a solid basis to reinforce co-operation and develop it further. Initiative and activeness are expected from the Police of the capital not only in co-operation but also in related information and transparency.

Helsinki Police Department considers that begging in the area of the city of Helsinki is not a totally new phenomenon, but has just become more striking in the streetscape. Since the beginning of the decade, there have been people –mostly foreigners – begging and peddling in the summertime, but now it has become an all-year-round activity. The increasing number of beggars in the streets of our capital requires more active measures both in uniformed policing as in immigration controls conducted by the police.

Helsinki Police Department and the Safety and Preparedness Coordinating Division of the Administration Centre of the city of Helsinki started multi-administrative co-operation relating to begging in the early autumn of 2007. Since the beginning, the representatives of the city social services have taken part in it. The co-operation meetings charted the possibilities of different authorities to interfere in begging and its side effects, such as the presence of small children. According to the guidelines agreed at the co-operation meetings, the Police Department has given instructions to the field on procedures and action models relating to examining the circumstances of the beggars.

The city of Helsinki and Helsinki Police Department have constantly worked in close co-operation and agreed on harmonised authority procedures with regard to beggars and other phenomena in the area. It should particularly be born in mind that it is not only the Police that are responsible for interfering in occurrences like begging. The means to prevent phenomena that city-dwellers consider unpleasant and to make the city more attractive are most effective when carried out in active co-operation between several actors.

