

# PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF BORDER GUARDS IN PROFILING PERSONS

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**Abstract.** *The author of the paper explores the content of the qualification improvement course "Profiling, Interviewing, Identification" implemented in the State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia, the questionnaires given to the course participants in order to develop the guidelines for more effective training of border guards in the field of profiling and provides his point of view, taking into account training on profiling delivered in national and international context and level. The paper is aimed to identify the possibilities of improving the border guards' professional background in performing profiling in line with the current socio-economic, political and migration trends in Europe and in the world. The research was done in the State Border Guard College of the Republic of Latvia and several Central Asia region countries. For this purpose analysis and evaluation of documents, scientific, pedagogical and psychological literature was performed and suggestions for the improvement of border guard training system in the field of profiling were compiled. The author concludes that the current SBGC lecturers' level of proficiency allows to develop and implement any length and content qualification improvement course in the field of profiling. The author recommends to develop a micro-learning approach, namely by creating a variety of short video training materials. Development of profiling methodological instructions at the central level of the State Border Guard would lead to the increase of profiler (border guard) activities efficiency in performing service duties and would allow to operate with profiling related terms, procedures and activities.*

**Keywords:** *border guard, college, course, profiling, training.*

## Introduction

The effectiveness of profiling depends directly on the border guard's professional skills. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the training of border guards. In his research, the author explains the implementation of profiling training in the State Border Guard College (hereinafter – SBGC) and describes the experience of lecturers in implementing the profiling courses at national and international levels. Best practices as well possible obstacles in the implementation of profiling practical exercises are revealed. The research covers the period from 2008 to 2020.

During the research, the author evaluates the results of the questionnaires completed by the qualification improvement course participants and introduces the possibilities of solving the discovered challenges and problems, as well as summarizes the best international practice in organizing practical exercises in the field of profiling. Key task of



the paper - in order to prevent the crossing of the state border by terrorists, criminals and fraudsters, promote the development of profiling training in Latvia and in the world.

### **National training in the field of person profiling**

For several years border guards associated profiling mainly with comparison of the person's face to the photograph (portrait) in document. Profiling was perceived as a synonymous word for identification. In order to define and use the unified term, in 2008 the SBGC lecturers initiated the idea of implementing the qualification improvement course for the staff of the State Border Guard (hereinafter – SBG) in the field of profiling. Initially, the qualification improvement course programme comprised only eight contact hours: four hours were devoted to the basics of profiling and four – to the theory of interview. A lecturer with extensive experience in psychology was invited to implement the above mentioned course. Development and after that also the implementation of the course was challenged by the fact that the SBG didn't have any approved profiling methodology. There was also a lack of clarity in profiling definition and its interpretation.

The SBGC in cooperation with the SBG Central Board encouraged the development of the definition and concept of profiling, which were defined by the SBG Central Board letter No 23/1-6/104 of 9 January 2009 “On the definition of profiling”:

*“Profiling – division of persons into the risk groups (performed during the border checks and immigration control) by observing them, analysing their behaviour, appearance and response during the interview and document examination, in order to distinguish those individuals who need to be subjected to additional examination or immediate detention.”*

In addition to the incorrect use of the term, qualification improvement course participants complained about the small or insufficient number of practical lessons. Only in 2017, the duration of the course programme was extended to fourteen hours. After the course programme was updated, seven hours were devoted to profiling. The content of the course topic “Interview procedure” was supplemented with information acquisition techniques and practical exercises in performing interviews of different categories of persons (minors, aggressive persons, etc.) and representatives of other cultures. The main achievement of the programme update was the inclusion of the topic “Identification of individuals”. Three hours were devoted to the document verification methodology, facial recognition techniques and identification of person's possible place of origin.

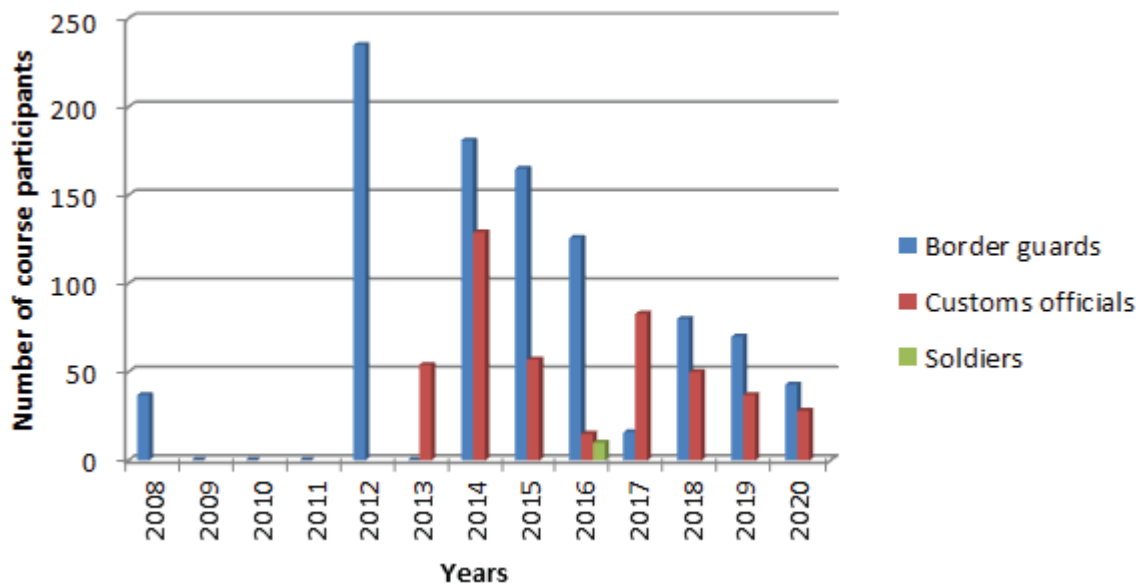
Taking into account the activity of participants during the qualification improvement course, as well their different competence in performing service duties, a decision to implement this qualification improvement course separately for the SBG instructors and the SBG officers was taken.

At the same time, profiling, interviewing and identification issues were integrated into the SBGC Professional further education programme “Border guarding”.

In the foreword of the qualification improvement course programme was stipulated that the course participant should have at least three years of professional experience in the field of border control or immigration control. The State Revenue Service of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter-SRS) expressed interest in the SBGC delivered course (mainly in basics of profiling for the customs officials). In order to deliver this course also to the SRS officials minor changes in the content of the programme (smuggling indicators) were made.

Important booster for the development of the qualification improvement course was made after the analysis and further activities taken as the response to the results of the European Commission’s Schengen evaluation, as well as the material and experience gained in the SBGC and the SBG. It was decided to update the qualification improvement course programme and the duration of the programme was extended from 14 hours to 22 hours. The questionnaires completed by the SBGC Professional further education programme “Border guarding” cadets after six months of the SBGC graduation, showed a great interest and desire of cadets – now working border guards - to get additional and more extensive knowledge in profiling. Due to that the requirement for the course participants’ experience - *at least three years of professional experience in the field of border control or immigration control* was deleted from the course programme foreword. In line with the “Sectorial Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding” developed by the FRONTEX Agency (setting standards for training excellence, 2013, 4th level), the objectives and tasks of the programme were complemented by the developed competences and learning outcomes.

Since 2008, 1446 officials were trained at the SBGC implemented profiling course (953 border guards, 453 customs officials and 10 soldiers, see Fig.1).



**Fig.1 Number of profiling course participants per year (SBGC, 2008-2020)**

COVID-19 pandemic forced to postpone and later also to cancel the implementation of the SBGC qualification improvement courses. In order not to stop the training of the SBG staff in the field of profiling, in 2021 was decided to amend the programme by transforming it into an e-learning course. The e-learning format allowed the programme to be extended to four weeks. The acquisition of the programme is based on the basic principles of e-learning, i.e. the learning process and the exchange of information between lecturers and the SBG officials are carried out remotely by means of information and communication technologies. The course theoretical topics have to be acquired independently; three weeks are foreseen for self-studies. The seminar on independently acquired topics, practical training and final examination take place during the 4th week, in person, at the SBG Territorial Board.

The lecturer’s scheduled time for conducting an e-learning course is 8 hours per training week for one group. In order to support the learners who have an interest to improve knowledge and skills in the programme topics independently, recommendations, instructions and materials for additional learning in the SBGC Moodle platform have been added.

Currently, the course programme is intended for the SBG officials who are involved in border control and immigration control and carry out profiling, interviewing and document examination, aimed at distinguishing between those persons, vehicles, property and objects who need to be subjected to additional checks or there should be taken a decision on their detention or removal.

To provide programme participants an in-depth knowledge in applying profiling and interviewing methods in performing their service duties, the programme again is implemented separately for the SBG instructors and the SBG officers. It is important to underline that for the SBG officers the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) included in the course programme comply with SQF level 5. This is the first SBGC qualification improvement course, that has been fully developed in line with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (hereinafter – FRONTEX) standards for inspectors and mid-level officers.

Participants of the course learn remotely: the identification of the person by photograph, the requirements for the interview and the methods of obtaining information, the methods and tactics of questioning, methods of determining the possible place of origin and cultural diversity. In addition, participants need to get acquainted with the history of profiling, the main directions of modern profiling (operational and criminal profiling), factors influencing profiling, as well as methods of obtaining profiling indicators.

Theoretical part of the course programme includes an approach envisaging that every week – after the independent learning of uploaded material in Moodle platform, the course participants have to prepare on Moodle platform or send via e-mail an answer for the specific task or question (up to 1500 words) (hereinafter – weekly report). Such approach proves that the SBG official has become acquainted with the weekly training material in the specified time and quality. The lecturer evaluates the weekly reports giving a grade from 1-10. The grades received for weekly reports are considered in the final course evaluation. The SBG official is not allowed to take part in the course practical part in case of failure in one of the weekly reports. The weekly report can be submitted unlimited number of times. At the beginning of the course practical part, the lecturer conducts an analysis of independently acquired topics by discussing them with participants. Special attention is paid to the profiles (characteristics) of high-risk persons who may be associated with certain criminal behaviour (characteristics of terrorists, victims and organisers of human trafficking, smugglers, drug couriers, etc.). During practical exercises, an emphasis is put also on the risk indicators of travellers' vehicles and luggage. Using the document verification methodology, participants are practically trained to interview different categories of persons (minors, aggressive persons, etc.), persons having diverse cultural background.

The course final examination consists of the test and 1 practical task.

The final grade course participant gets after the completion of the course and it is formed from the average grade received for participation

and activity during practical lessons (incl. weekly reports) and the grade received for the course final examination.

### **International training in the field of person profiling**

Since 2016, the SBGC lecturers have been actively involved in the projects of the International centre for Migration Policy Development (BOMCA) in Central Asia (hereinafter – CA). Main objectives of the activities were:

- to provide knowledge and assistance in establishing and strengthening identification and profiling mechanisms thus leading to the better distinguish among different categories of persons.
- to present European Union (hereinafter – EU) good practices in the area of foreign terrorist fighters (hereinafter – FTF) identification and profiling techniques.
- to improve the competency of involved Uzbekistan authorities to identify FTF in CA region.
- to elaborate FTF' identification methodology.

Basically, technical missions as well as Train of trainer (hereinafter – ToT) seminars last from three to five days. During the first day, participants were generally introduced to profiling methods. The second day was dedicated to the detection of potential terrorists. Third day was devoted to behavioral analysis and interviewing. During the fourth day, participants learnt the methodology of document verification and identification of the person by photograph, as well as identification of the person's possible place of origin by property. On the fifth day, practical exercises were organized.

The author of the paper further describes the Border Management Programme in CA (BOMCA) and the Law Enforcement in CA (LEICA) international practice and specifics for the implementation of profiling practical lessons during ToT.

Such ToT practical lessons are often organized and implemented in different hotels, where people of different nationalities can enter or leave the premises without any special permission. It is worth mention that the hotel itself may be a possible target for the terrorist attack. The world has experienced several examples of terrorist attacks that took place in the hotels. The most important is the Mumbai (India) attacks (2008) that took place in 2 hotels. The terrorist targeted the lobby, the elevators and the restaurants. Another big attack was in 2005 in Amman (Jordan) where a series of coordinated suicide attacks took place in three hotel lobbies.

Based on these assumptions, during ToT in CA, the author of the paper proposed to conduct various practical lessons in the lobby of the world-class hotel where people of different nationalities were moving into and out of the

premises, and the hotel itself was perceived as the possible target for the terrorist attack. In this case, there is no need for an endorsement and trainer can find people that participants are not familiar with. According to the level of knowledge, competences and general preparedness of participants several scenarios could be carried out:

- detection of suspicious person who enters/leaves the hotel: trainer could make tasks for participants evolving a real hotel guest;
- trainer could invite actors – *fake guests* who behave suspiciously according to the scenario;
- *fake guests* could also seek information about the hotel's security, access, schedules. Training participants could observe the *fake guests* or even ask questions to them.

**Scenario 1:** Controlling the main entry points of the hotel (station). Aim: understanding the baseline. What is the *normal behaviour* taking into account the time, location and the specifics of the hotel (people taking the bus/ train) and its neighbourhood? It's important that participants become familiar with what is *normal- usual* in the hotel, what's *usual* in the bigger perimeter of the hotel, so participants can recognize when something goes wrong and doesn't look *usual*. Evaluate: Is the observed behaviour abnormal? Is the observed behaviour suspicious? Participants don't know and they are not informed that there are two invited *actors* in the hotel (station). Possible examples of things that might happen during the moment of the observation:

- traveller with empty suitcase or heavy back pack enters/leaves the hotel (station);
- a person is leaving a heavy backpack in the restaurant/ lobby of the hotel. After going to the WC – he disappears;
- traveller is wearing a warm jacket in hot weather conditions;
- traveller is having an umbrella when it's not raining;
- a guest is sitting in the lobby of the hotel wearing a warm jacket;
- a person enters the hotel with a ceramic knife in his luggage (no alarm from the metal detector at the entry) or products of dual use (acetone);
- a person is taking many pictures in the hotel even of the staircase and the elevator.

Analysing the implementation of the scenario 1, the author submitted the suggestion that before acting out such scenario, it is important to establish the baseline in order to make it clear what behaviour is "*normal-usual*" and what behaviour is "*deviant*". Certain training and explanation should be performed.

**Scenario 2:** Every terrorist attack is preceded by a certain amount of planning. Depending on the type of terrorism, certain planning steps are

more or less visible. At any case, these are always the same steps where behaviour detection plays crucial role. These are the steps where offenders (terrorists) are vulnerable. Participants are divided into 3 groups working on 3 dynamic settings of active profiling:

- patrolling;
- *libero*: the *libero* follows the flow of people in the hotel. He is the only one who remains discreet;
- *active spotter*: in this situation, some participants will address as many people as possible waiting to enter the hotel (in the queue waiting to buy a bus ticket etc.) The other participant observes the reaction of other persons (to the taken security actions).

According to the scenario, one of the hotel rooms is regularly booked by the VIP (*male*). The room is booked every month for a week. VIP's country was strongly involved in the war against *Daesh* in Syria. What the students don't know is that during the practical exercise, one walk-on (terrorist) is observing the surrounding (he is shooting videos and taking pictures of the place, simultaneously he is talking to someone on the phone. Other walk-on (terrorist) is in the neighbourhood of the hotel in order to understand the habits of the VIP during his stay in the hotel. Walk-on (terrorist) find out that VIP is an active smoker and is going to have a smoke often in front of the hotel (smoking is not allowed in the hotel). The terrorists observe that there is no video observation camera and no security in the hotel provided smoking place. The plan of the terrorists is to shoot him from the car when he goes smoking outside. Lesson learned: during the implementation phase, the terrorist has a high chance of success. It is therefore in law enforcement agencies interest to act during the observation phase and dry run.

**Scenario 3:** Intelligence agency intercepted a phone call of a FTF who is travelling to Syria in order to make a terrorist attack against a Western target in the city. To mitigate the high threat, the law enforcement agencies construct safety rings and perimeters around the hotel (bus station) as many Western high-level guests are staying there. Participants create this safety perimeter. Everyone must remain within his or her perimeter. Participants are not informed that during the exercise - one hotel employee (or person in the police uniform) enters the security perimeter with a security badge of the hotel. A few days earlier he entered from the side of the hotel garage where there is no security control, he left in his car the weapon to commit the terrorist attack. Once he enters the hotel he behaves in a strange and nervous manner. Lesson learned: the participants guarding the outer perimeter fail and the purpose of the perimeter is not functioning. Each perimeter has to do its job in order to avoid an attack. Everyone is potentially suspected! Beware of the insider threat!



All scenarios need to be developed and harmonized with the hotel management. If the manager of the hotel agrees on a terrorist scenario and present the ToT exercise as an opportunity to train the hotel staff (at least the staff at the reception, in the lobby), as well if manager wants to deliver some walk-ons from the hotel staff for a few hours, it would also benefit the hotel and let to avoid possible terrorist threats.

It's much more complicated to secure a shopping mall than a hotel as it has several entries, at the same time it's more complicated to evacuate from the hotel because terrorists could hide in the private / restricted places of the hotel (rooms).

Such practical exercises are very time consuming – for planning and for performing.

The scenarios need to be explained for participants in the classroom and not in the lobby/ station. Everyone needs to be aware of what he or she has to do.

Finally, it is mandatory for the trainer to do the debriefing after practical sessions. Debriefing allows sum-up, making discussions and highlighting the drawbacks and fails.

Practical exercises could be very interesting and helpful in developing participants' skills and competences. However, author indicates some weak points in the implementation:

- working on the scenario, trainer has to analyse the situation taking into account many factors: there could be situation, that nearby training place is no bus/ train station, shopping moll/ market. Either there is a possibility that in the chosen scenario place is too crowded, but sometimes just few people are present. Places with many entries and soft targets are good for training because it makes it more difficult to secure. The author of the paper experienced the situation that in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) there was no bus station as many Europeans may imagine. There were open areas with lots of routed taxicabs waiting for people;
- to act out the planned scenarios could be challenging, for example to train participants in situations related to airport BCP in some countries it is very time and budget consuming because the venue is far away from the training institution/ city centre;
- use of active police officers in the scenarios apart of the group of participants would require endorsements of the Ministry of Interior and Head of Border guard because the actors are supposed to play terrorists outside the designated training location. In case of rejection or delay, the whole practical exercise may be jeopardized;

- for practical exercises trainer needs to identify some people who would like to join the practical exercises (at least 4 walk-ons). These walk-ons cannot be the trainers neither the organizers staff because participants will recognize them. It is necessary to find walk-ons participants are not familiar with. Usually young police officers could be involved (with a mix of officers in uniform and civilians). Mobilization of police officers for the full day of a practical exercise could be difficult due to holiday season or service tasks. The knowledge of language of involved participant is not so important because in a real situation the terrorist might not be the speaker of the local language. The same situation was in the EU terrorist attacks. Some of the perpetrators of the *Bataclan* terrorist attack didn't speak French.

### **Guidelines for effective training of border guards in the future**

In study (Madžuls, 2019), the author of the paper points out that the training of profilers is a key element in discovering possible impostors. Technical equipment cannot replace person when it is necessary to analyse psychology of another person and distinguish lies from true facts. Analysing the experience of other European Union, United States and CA law enforcement institutions, the most considerable training outcomes have been achieved in the United States, i.e. the length of training course are 2-3 weeks; course is followed by at least two months of internship in the workplace. The training programme includes the study of profiling theory, analysis of terrorism cases and terrorist profiles. Special attention is paid to the methodology for document verification and the detection of forged documents. The programme includes also topics on “observation” and “interview” in the context of Aviation Safety Service operational activity. Role-playing and psychological lessons are part of such training. Upon the completion of the training, the profiler starts an independent work, but under the supervision of his superior. It is envisaged that in the future all participants will take qualification improvement training.

Analysing the content of the SBGC implemented qualification improvement course “Profiling, Interviewing, Identification”, the author brings forward the following suggestions. It is necessary to amend the course programme with the following learning outcomes. Course participants are able to:

- describe the person's character traits;
- describe criminal behaviour;
- make an assumption about person's age, race, family, social status and profession;

- name person's habits, inclinations, as well as to describe person's behaviour and way of communication.

By developing the profiling skills, in the future it will be possible to train the heads of the SBG structural units to apply the profiling methods in the selection of the SBG personnel and management.

### **Conclusions and suggestions**

1. The proficiency of the SBGC lecturers allows the SBG to develop and implement the training programmes in the field of profiling of any length and content. Due to the lack of staff in many SBG structural units and also due to the influx of Ukrainian refugees in Latvia, participants of the qualification improvement courses – particularly “Profiling, Interviewing, and Identification” are unable to master the entire content of the programme and feel exhausted and too overloaded at work. It can be concluded that extending the content of the programme and duration of the course is not appropriate in case the course participant cannot ensure the full involvement.
2. Qualification improvement course participants are not eager to read scientific literature, as well as materials created by lecturers. It would be an advantage to use various computer programs that automatically play text; in that case lecturers have to gain additional knowledge on video processing programs. Taking into account the popularity of the “*TikTok*” resource, the author would recommend to develop micro training approach, namely by creating short video training materials.
3. The concept of profiling was approved at the State Border Guard in 2009 and the training on profiling is requested not only for the staff of the SBG, but also for the State Revenue Service and the National Armed Forces, the author recommends to develop and issue the State Border Guard profiling methodological instructions.
4. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the qualification improvement course, the author carried out an analysis of the factors influencing the implementation of the profiling course. It was concluded that the SBG has no statistical indicators and data on cases when a person, vehicle or document was detained due to the border guard's profiling skills and using of certain risk indicators. According to the author's point of view, the absence of such statistics makes it difficult to improve the existing risk indicators and develop the new ones. It also influences the training of border guards and providing information of the present state of things. The documentation related to detention cases, including tactical alerts/ warnings, need to be supplemented with a fact/indicator that has led to the suspicion of the border guard.

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