



Garda Representative Association

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'CROSS BORDER COLLABORATION WILL NEED FURTHER

PLANNING, RESOURCES & TRAINING'

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ANY Cross Border policing agreement would need far greater investment in resources, training and equipment to prove effective.

That is according to GRA Vice President Brendan O'Connor of the Donegal Division, reacting to the publication of a new PSNI report on policing.

One of 50 recommendations included in the 170-page South Armagh report was that agreement should be reached between Gardaí and PSNI to allow police services to pursue suspects across the Border.

Vice President O'Connor welcomed the recommendation, but not without a note of caution.

"Gardaí operating in border areas very much welcome a focus on the issue of pursuits and vehicles failing to stop," said O'Connor following an appearance on BBC Radio.

But Garda O'Connor also pointed out that the current garda standards in resources, training and equipment are not on the same level as those enjoyed by their PSNI counterparts.

"It has been the long held belief of the association and the members that we represent that the issues of driver training and suitability of vehicles need to be addressed.

"If there is to be a joint approach to the problem then Gardaí will have to be resourced, trained and equipped to the same level as our counterparts in Northern Ireland.

"The PSNI have a fleet of high powered interceptor patrol cars equipped with the latest technology and operated by drivers trained to a high standard.

"Unfortunately it is still common for untrained Gardaí to be allocated driving duties where they are prohibited from turning on blue lights or exceeding the speed limit even in an emergency."

“If we are serious about tackling cross border criminals we will have to see an investment that brings the response and pursuit capability of Gardaí up to that of the PSNI in terms of vehicles, numbers of patrols and driver training.

“The issue of hot pursuits across the border has been the subject of much discussion over the years with legal, procedural and oversight/accountability issues presenting significant difficulties before political sensitivities are even considered.

“The GRA believes that providing communities on both sides of the border with well-resourced, trained and equipped policing should be the priority in the short term and will be more effective than controversial strategies that drag operational policing into the sphere of the complicated and sensitive political environment that can prevail in border communities.”