

Safer Belgian police officers with ZEPCAM



In the last couple of years, police officers in Belgium were seeing a growing number of threatening incidents while carrying out their duties. Which challenges did police officers face and what was the solution?

The challenge:

The Belgian police has experienced a rise in the number of violent incidents over the past years, as well as a need for more transparency. Safety and transparency being of utmost importance for the Belgian police, the current situation needed to change. There was a need to improve the work safety of police officers, to reduce disruptive behaviour towards them and ensure safety and transparency. Inspired by the police in the city and municipality of Mechelen, the Belgian police zone Marlow decided to also start using bodycams in May 2020.

The solution had to meet several challenging requirements:

- The bodycams needed to be as straightforward and easy to use as possible
- The software needed to comply with the Belgian police's strict privacy requirements
- Data safety was of utmost importance

The solution:

After a trial with different brands of bodycams, the Belgian police zone Marlow chose the ZEPCAM T2+ solution after a successful demo organised by ZEPCAM's representative in Belgium. This is an endlessly scalable solution, consisting of hardware and software components. It has been referred to as "comparable to Apple, while other brands are comparable to Android" by First Commissioner in the Marlow zone Philip Vanhees. Users and bodycams can be added as you go without any limitations. The bodycams are comfortable to wear and local law enforcement officers have found that they are easy to use, without any unnecessary additions. The excellent audio and image quality of ZEPCAM bodycams are also deemed to be very satisfactory. The docking stations are an important part of the solution. These enable not only the fast offloading of data, but they also regulate the amount of data that passes through the data network, ensuring that it can handle all of the information without affecting other systems negatively. The integrated approach of device and software allows for fast and easy video management and complies with all data safety standards. ZEPCAM also offers excellent customer support every step of the way, from setup, to training, to deployment.

"Upon our request, ZEPCAM made a few software adjustments, which turned out very well. We now have a product that is more attuned to the demands of our police and the Belgian legislation."

Philip Vanhees - First Commissioner Belgian Police Zone Marlow | Coordination of Operations

Results:

The bodycams have been fully operational for just over a year in the Marlow zone. The zone started working with 40 bodycams, then expanded to 80 and the idea is to equip every officer with a bodycam in the future. Over 500 officers work in this zone, covering three municipalities, performing a wide range of duties (intervention, traffic, enforcement, etc). Evaluations show that the results are positive. There are an average of 100 bodycam filmed incidents per month. Police within the region notice that the support for bodycams is growing. An increasing number of police officers are convinced about the added value of bodycams. This growing number is referred to as 'bodycam ambassadors' within the police force. It is considered likely that in a few years, bodycams will become standard equipment for every police officer. The presence of bodycams has resulted in more awareness of the actions of both the police and the general public. If a situation did escalate, the ability to share bodycam images with the police or others involved, yielded beneficial results for all parties involved.

Learnings:

An important learning is the positive change that ZEPCAM's bodycam has realised; reduced aggression and a severely increased capacity to record and provide evidence in case of an escalating situation. This positive change can be seen when studying interactions with the general public. Knowing certain actions have been filmed, helps them remain calm during a potentially escalating incident. The fact that over 100 incidents a month require the use of a bodycam indicated the urgent need for more tools to help law enforcement organisations work more safely and with an improved capacity to record and capture evidence. Naturally the indisputable evidence increases the level of transparency across a society. A further lesson was the usefulness of ZEPCAM's flexible and scalable bodycam solutions; throughout the implementation process the needs of the Belgium police were met resulting in a great match for their specific requirements.

About ZEPCAM:

Since 2009, ZEPCAM has been on a mission to make society safer. Today, more than 500 customers in more than 40 countries use ZEPCAM professional bodycam solutions to protect and support their frontline professionals when it really matters, and to improve the working conditions and efficiency of various frontline industries. Comprising bodycams, a video management system and hosting solutions, ZEPCAM provides frontline professionals and their managers with the tools to do their work safely and gather evidence that will stand up in court.



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