

Debate

Composition:

- Luc Claeys, Prevention officer, City of Menen
- Eddy De Raedt, Director DGJ/DJB, Federal police
- Christian De Valkeneer, Attorney General of Liège
- John Radmer, Senior Consultant, Danish National Police, National Centre For Crime Prevention
- Stéphane Vanhaeren, Commanding Officer PZ Braine L'Alleud, representative of the CPPL

Moderator: Martine Maelschalck, Chief editor of l'Echo

This report includes a summary of the views adopted by different members of the panel.

Claims:

1. **Everybody talks about cooperation, but everyone still keeps working on their own projects which sometimes involve other partners. What is the key to really involve all the partners in the same battle?**

De Raedt: a large number of partners are active in the field of domestic burglary. The cooperation between these partners is always positive. However, we must ensure that nobody acts in isolation.

De Valkeneer: the first partner is the population. The citizen being the victim, it is necessary to imply him/her in the security process.

Claeys: The city of Menen achieves solid initiatives with the local police. This is an essential partnership to tackle this fight together. The project «Speed TPA" (Thefts Prevention Advisor) allows cooperation between the local booby and the TPA who go from door to door in neighbourhoods at risk to inform citizens on risks and propose preventive advice.

2. **The citizens are responsible for their own security. Is that really the solution?**

Vanhaeren: security is the responsibility of the State. The PLP (Local Partnerships for Prevention) can also help. It is important to empower citizens in the framework of cohesion and social vigilance. The PLP of Braine l'Alleud has led to the arrest of two women acting suspiciously thanks to the vigilance of a citizen.

Claeys: Security is a shared responsibility: citizens should not think they should do nothing. It is cooperation between citizens and the State.

De Raedt: The citizen has to work together with the local bobby as much as possible. This way, we will come more quickly to the arrest of a suspect.

Radmer: The citizen and the authorities must work together for security. Citizens should not hesitate to take the initiative to contact the police when they observe suspicious behaviour.

3. Each link in the security chain has a part to play, but is prevention the most important one? How can prevention still be reinforced?

De Valkeneer: The integrated police is a cooperation of all partners. We have all the tools through the zonal security councils, but they are not sufficiently used to develop security programmes. There should be more meetings involving all partners.

In the field of repression, the elucidation rate is quite low. There is no contact with the victims, so there are very few elements to find the perpetrators. A study is to be conducted regarding fingerprints and DNA analysis: the lab is expected to go to the field more frequently: it is basic police work. It could be a local police task. The Prüm Treaty allows the interconnection of fingerprints databases and DNA with the Netherlands and France. This has already led to 1,000 positive matches. But it is necessary to expand this agreement with other countries. In all cases, burglaries are prosecuted.

Vanhaeren: it comes to the division of tasks. The local police must take care of the core matters. Specialized matters are reserved for the Federal Police. When there is a transfer of competences, a transfer of means is required as well. It is important that the intervention teams are trained to know when it is necessary to call the lab. Justice lacks financial means to analyse the traces, so why do we have to take them systematically?

De Valkeneer: all traces are analysed, but identification is rarely possible because it is impossible to match the traces. Should we invest in this? Repression has a preventive dimension. This is a way to dig in parallel with prevention; we must not compartmentalize these two aspects.

Clays: It is a long process. The Menen Prevention Service gives annually 300 prevention tips. It is difficult to measure the result of this. It often turns out that the citizen does not execute the advices given in the short or long term. However, citizens have learned notions regarding the basis of burglary prevention. We also work around preventing feelings of insecurity. Often it is more a question of feelings of insecurity than of the crime itself. Along the border with France, citizens are often confronted with home invasions

4. Justice: The Justice Department is often impeded by the considerable amount of dossiers to be processed. Which leads can be considered in order to discourage perpetrators?

De Valkeneer: elucidation is important. "What works": a reflection in this context is essential. The elucidation rates are of the order of 10 to 12%. The exemplary nature of the punishment is important, especially for traveling packs. Justice is mainly working on confiscations and fines. It is also important to work on the organization itself and not on small hands.

De Raedt: the public prosecutor of Liège conducts regularly seizures on houses. This way, the chain is closed. Police work is thus important both in terms of prevention and justice.

Vanhaeren: the cartographic analysis of what is happening in the field by the federal police is essential. This allowed catching 55 people in the act. This cartography helps to better direct the work of the police.

5. Europe: Is the legislation failing at the European level? Is it therefore up to the EU to propose a firm prevention approach?

The opening of the borders within the EU has enabled itinerant crime groups to operate freely. Which legislative steps can be taken in this matter?

De Raedt: Police cooperation goes beyond the culture between the different Member States. Legislation in the Member States is not so important. This is a cultural given that we all are working together and it is a European priority.

De Valkeneer: Progress can be achieved in the context of European judicial cooperation. The Eurojust tool facilitates investigations when more countries are involved. But the motivation of states differ from one another. This primarily relates to a willingness to cooperate.

Radmer: we must engage in early warning systems. This way, we can still reverse the process and focus more on prevention.

6. Is it more important to implement projects/prevention campaigns at the national (uniform) level or at local level (close to the citizen)?

Claeys: local actions are easier because the priorities are not the same everywhere. The PLP employ volunteers in the framework of prevention. National campaigns allow to sensitize the citizens on the phenomenon.

De Valkeneer: the local approach is more important. The PLP is an interesting tool. New technologies must also be mobilized: it increases the social cohesion and so allows reducing the feeling of insecurity. It is important to work at a very local level, for example in a neighbourhood.

Vanhaeren: There are 3 levels of power: the Mayor, the Governor and the Minister of Home Affairs. When a phenomenon affects several cities, national campaigns are interesting.

Radmer: Denmark does not invest in national campaigns. The police are specifically committed to the local level.

Conclusion

Two words to conclude:

- Division of tasks
- Communication between authorities and population



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