

An integral methodology to develop an informative-led and community-oriented policy
to tackle domestic burglary
(A methodology to tackle burglary)
HOME/2012/ISEC/FP/C2

Report Advice Council Domestic Burglary

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The second Advisory Board meeting took place on 20.02.2014 from 10:00 to 12:00.

1. Introduction

Rachid Kerkab chaired the meeting. After a word of welcome and an introductions round, the context of the project was explained once again.

Project context

The idea to submit a project within the framework of the "Prevention of and fight against crime" programme of the European Commission DG Home Affairs dates from the second half of 2010 when Belgium took over the European presidency. The request was submitted in October 2012. The project was started at the beginning of October 2013, and it will end on 31 September 2014.

The project is directed at the development of a methodology for the prevention of domestic burglaries. The aim is to foster a structured approach with regard to domestic theft and to create a larger framework within which possible measures can be more broadly contextualized. In doing so, the entire safety chain is considered, from prevention through policing measures to judicial measures. Efforts are therefore also made to establish collaborations between a wide range of partners of the integral safety chain.

The project also aims to increase the awareness of the various member states and their policy

makers with regard to problematic issues. Other goals of the project are the exchange of good practices between the various member states and the mapping out of the latest trends.

These objectives are reflected in a number of methods which also count as 'deliverables':

- A cost-benefit analysis of the current domestic burglary policy
- The collection and evaluation of various good practices from the various fields via terrain visits and the accompanying evaluation checklists
- The bundling of the gathered expertise and reflections from focus groups which included foreign and domestic experts.

2. Cost-benefit analysis of the current domestic burglary policy

First of all, the scope of the project was described. Jeroen De Stercke and Rachid Kerkab both remarked that the **scope, in addition to elucidating the policing aspect**, should also be given a more **social interpretation**.

Furthermore, Rachid Kerkab stated that this relates to the development of a **policy instrument**, which requires a **more pragmatic approach** (as opposed to a purely academic study). In other words, the financial limitations as well as the restraints with regard to the number of persons that can be made available to work on the project must be taken into account. For example, the lack of time, budget and available personnel makes it impossible to carry out an effectiveness study.

The actual analysis is divided into two large components: a policing-judicial component and an administrative component. In both, all of the actors/activities that played a role in the narrative were listed with an accompanying 'cost price' (to the extent that that was possible). These were either concrete figures or an approximation of the societal costs. Finally, the benefits were enumerated to the extent that that was possible.

In the margins of the CBA, Dirk Geurts discussed the **EMPACT project** and the added value that it can provide to this European project.

The EMPACT project, in which some twenty countries participate, determines the European Safety Priorities for a period of four years. For 2014-2017, both strategic objectives and operational campaigns related to the phenomenon of **Organized Property Crime** will be elaborated. The advantage of this international collaboration is that **data collection and interpretation is honed** as is the ability for the **countries to warn each other about specific itinerant criminal groups**. There should still be space here to add a "prevention" aspect and to thereby come to a synergy.

Rachid Kerkab endorsed the importance and potential of this and remarked that it could be very interesting to expand the prevention component of EMPACT with a view to itinerant criminal groups and domestic burglaries.

3. Terrain visits

The goal of the terrain visits is to collect some thirty best practices related to the prevention of domestic burglary. This is part of the concrete deliverables. These visits are mainly domestic projects, but we will also have a look over our own border for the purpose of driving up the quality of this part of the project as high as possible. Thinking outside of the box is the message here.

Several 'innovative' ideas, for example, are projects related to defensible space, responding to the (attitude of the) citizen by means of architecture or the organization of residential neighbourhoods. So, for example, it was observed that too little attention is paid to safety impact reports in construction plans for large sites. A number of remarks and suggestions were put forth by the Advisory Board:

- Everyone agrees about the importance of the BINs. They provide for social cohesion and offer a number of benefits related to the prevention of domestic burglary.
- Reference was also made to the importance of social media in improving the relationship between the citizens and the Police. Both groups can keep each other informed using this medium.
- The Police have widely varying relationships with the population: the youth prefer to limit their contact with the Police to the strictest minimum, while the elderly call on them perhaps somewhat too quickly.
- When it comes to subjective safety, the principle of 'more blue on the street' applies. This stands in contrast to the manner in which the Police can work most effectively, that is, functioning 'in plain clothes'.
- It can also be noted that the Police are being increasingly depicted in a negative light in the media. This is disheartening for them given that the results of their work are never revealed, except in association with negative reports.
- It must be possible, following the example of The Netherlands, to take advantage of the dog owners in a neighbourhood. Those who walk through their own neighbourhoods each and every day are quicker to notice changes.
- The importance of a neighbourhood street plan was also referred to as another example from The Netherlands. If there is one main street, a person who is wandering around but does not belong there is noticed more quickly, and it is more difficult to get out of the neighbourhood. Street plans however cannot be changed, but it may be possible, in the future (when building new residential neighbourhoods), to take this into account.

4. Focus group topics

One of the parts of our project is the organization of focus groups.

In this context, the invitees are the different project partners (Federal Police, Service of Penal Policy and the Federal Services of the Province of Antwerp) as well as the other national experts in the area of domestic burglary, including Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants, BIN Coordinators, Prevention Officers ...)

In addition, international experts were also invited to this focus group. These experts include our partners, including Romania, Bulgaria and Germany, but other countries (Lithuania, Denmark, Ireland, The Netherlands and Croatia) were also invited to join this focus group.

The goal during these first focus groups was to split the participants into two groups and to prioritize two topics:

Itinerant perpetrator groups from an integral perspective with Prof. Dr. Em. Paul Ponsaers (Ghent University, Belgium) acting as moderator and

New technologies related to domestic theft with Prof. Dr. Sofie De Kimpe acting as moderator.

By means of these focus groups, more problem areas can be identified and concrete proposals for future policy can be made.

Specific conclusions had already been put forward in the framework of the States General Domestic Theft that was organized on 21 October.

Focus groups allow us the opportunity to delve deeper into these conclusions and to gather national as well as European reflections about them.

5. Conclusion

The most important objective of the CBA is that it be a policy analysis instrument. It is for this reason that the approach to it is more pragmatic. There is neither time nor money at hand for an impact evaluation.

EMPACT, primarily the preventive part of it, and the prevention policy developed by Home Affairs can assist and enrich one another.

In the process of increasing the awareness of the citizens to the problem of domestic burglary, it is important to reach the target group by means of networks that are already in place (and which may handle other problem areas).

One of the problems with reaching citizens is that those who are most vulnerable to domestic burglary are usually the least easy to reach.

6. Miscellaneous - meetings scheduled

The next Advisory Board meeting will take place on **28 April 2014, 10:00 – 12:00**.

Dates of upcoming Advisory Boards:

- Monday, 30/06/2014
- Thursday, 28/08/2014

Time: 10:00-12:00

Location: FOD IBZ (FPS Home Affairs), Waterloolaan 76, 1000 Brussel in the Waterloo meeting room

We would like to thank you again for your cooperation and input.



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