



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

Report kick-off meeting advisory board

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European Commission – Directorate-General Home Affairs

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The kick-off meeting of the Advisory Board took place on 26 November 2013 from 10h00 until 12h00.

1. Presentation of the project

After the welcome speech, the introduction and the presentation round, Leen Cortebeeck gave the word to the project members to present the project.

With the included PowerPoint presentation, the context, objectives, and deliverables were presented. Then, the steps that were already undertaken and the different investigation phases were discussed. Next, the project group gave their idea about the plan for the cost-benefit analysis, the focus groups, and the best practices terrain visits that need to be done.

Context of the project

The idea to submit a project within the framework of the program 'Prevention of and Fight against Crime' of the European Commission, Directorate-General Home Affairs, dates back to the second half of 2010, when Belgium held the European presidency. The request was submitted in October 2012; the project started in October 2013 and will end on 31 September 2014.

The project aims at the development of a methodology to prevent domestic burglaries. It wishes to initiate a structured approach regarding domestic burglaries, and create a broader framework where possible measures are broader framed. Hereby, the complete security chain, from prevention to police and judicial measures, is considered. Cooperation is pursued between a whole range of partners of the integral security chain. The project also wants to increase the awareness of the issue with the various Member States and their policy makers. Another objective is to exchange good practices between the various Member States, and to map new trends.

These objectives are mirrored in a number of methodologies that also count as deliverables:

- An analysis of objective and subjective source material, and an evaluation of the existing policy by means of a cost-benefit analysis.
- Collecting and evaluating of several good practices from the various fields, via terrain visits and an associated evaluation checklist.
- Bundling of the gained expertise and reflections from focus groups with experts from home and abroad.
- Using the interactive methodology of 'World Cafés', the participation of stakeholders / policy officials and terrain experts is reinforced in the project.

Reflections / suggestions Advisory Board

1. Linda Emon (liaison official Province of Antwerp) expresses her concern about the **composition of the project group** and asks if pressure could not be applied to the Federal Police and the Ministry of Justice to still delegate a representative. Leen Cortebeek mentions that at this moment, there are still negotiations going on for an additional member for the project group, but each partner decides autonomously to which extent he participates in the project.
2. Some participants observe that they miss the representation in **the Advisory Board** of, among others, architects, public prosecutors, Department of Immigration, etc. Leen Cortebeek mentions that these were invited as well. The partners who are not represented will of course be consulted by the project group throughout the project.
3. Several attendees express their **concern about the objectives of the project that need to be achieved**. The question is raised if Belgium – being one of the worse members of the class – is in a position to take on such an ambitious project. The project group is aware of this, but nevertheless, it has the ambition to achieve the goal of the project, being a methodological roadmap to come to a policy regarding the tackling and mastering of domestic burglaries. The remarks of the Advisory Board with regard to the current policy will be treated separately in the section cost-benefit analysis.
4. Bernard Desmet (Assuralia) gauges **the project's international aspect**, because he is of the opinion that the focus is mainly directed on Belgium. Stijn Van Daele (University of Ghent) asks whether best practices abroad will also be visited. Leen Cortebeek answers that the main goal is to map the Belgian story, and to draft a roadmap that can also be useful for other Member States. The international dimension will be taken care by aligning closely with EUCPN. EUCPN has an extensive network in the field of crime prevention, and can provide lots of information.
5. The participants ask if the goal is to draft a **roadmap** to evaluate how to tackle domestic burglaries, or to tackle domestic burglaries themselves. To this question, Jeroen De Stercke answers that the focus lies on the development of a policy tool that can offer an important addition in controlling the number of domestic burglaries.
6. The main concern of the attendees is, however, if **something new** will be presented, or if they will only be bringing up old news that everyone knows already. The project in itself is a novelty already. The combination and synergy of intelligence and citizen participation were the reason why the project was withheld by the European Commission.

2. Cost-benefit analysis of the current policy regarding domestic burglaries

The participants ask themselves if making a cost-benefit analysis is not too **ambitious**, and if it is **realistic**. Stijn Van Daele (University of Ghent) remarks that criminologists have been studying the costs of criminality for about 20 years, and that within the project, a **pragmatic** approach will have to be taken for the cost-benefit analysis. Costs related to a measure can be calculated, but the calculation of its benefits is a much more difficult exercise.

Jeroen De Stercke answers that the goal is to first map all stakeholders, their activities/projects with regard to burglary prevention, and the available numerical data, and then to discuss with the Advisory Board what the possibilities are. It is not the intention to calculate and/or to subject everything to scientific evaluation criteria, but rather to evaluate the taken measures in an evidence and/or fact-based way, and from a policy perspective.

According to Bernard Desmet (Assuralia), **with the insurance companies, the focus regarding burglary prevention** mainly lies with recommendations on their websites. He also draws attention to the fact that only 40% of their clients have taken out a theft insurance next to their fire insurance. This is important in order to determine the material damages due to burglary, based only on the compensations paid by the insurance companies. Moreover, the damage to a home is paid from the 'building' part, and not from the 'theft' part.

Several attendees ask whether everything will be limited again to **recommendations**, and if it were not better to try to make a number of **measures enforceable**. One thinks e.g. of initiatives such as the Secure Housing Quality Label that could be made mandatory in the request of a building permit. Ivo Schoeters (prevention consultant Police zone Rupel) remarks that there is a **European standard on construction measures for burglary prevention**, but it is not respected in Belgium. A secure housing label (conform to the European standard) could be a best practice.

Linda Emon (liaison official Province of Antwerp) also mentions the **Bibop policy in The Netherlands**, which results in criminals living in The Netherlands coming down to Belgium.

The following obstacles are also mentioned:

- Capacity problems with the Federal Police for carrying out trace evidence investigation and occupying the AIKs. However, this is outside the scope of this project.
- Having the function of a domestic burglary prevention consultant is not a priority with the local police, while domestic burglary is a priority in all zonal security plans. This is a local matter.

- Role of the regions in burglary prevention (urbanization), and cooperation of these with the police. The government agreement already paid attention to this, and initiatives will be undertaken.

Patrick Janssen states that the remarks related to the current policy could rather be subject of a process evaluation.

3. Themes of the focus groups

Stijn Van Daele (University of Ghent) remarks that with regard to the **focus groups**, the anticipated **number of participants** is high. Ideally, a focus group should consist of only 8 to 10 persons. Ailien Stove answers that they could work in smaller groups. Working in smaller groups and increasing the number of focus groups will be investigated.

Jeroen De Stercke proposes to organise the focus groups in relation to current trends. The first meeting could e.g. discuss travelling offender groups. The group remarks that speed of information is important in tackling mobile offenders, and that attention should be paid to initiatives of armed, integral, and integrated handling of stolen goods. However, the question could be asked whether based on a solved case degree of 7%, a correct offender profile can be made on which actions are based.

Koen Van Heddegem (VVSG) proposed to split the meetings of the **focus groups into one before and one after the burglary** . .

4. List of good practices

Linda Ernon (liaison official Province of Antwerp) remarks that a **roadmap domestic burglary** is being finished for the **provinces Antwerp and Limburg**. The roadmap pays attention to the establishment of the facts, the investigation, the information flow, and the cooperation between the various partners. In the province of Antwerp, there is also a **work group information flow**.

Bérengère Lefrancq (prevention consultant Audergem) mentions the **Project Rosas of Brussels**, and the **Prevention plan prevention consultants of Audergem**.

Ivo Schoeters (prevention consultant Police zone Rupel) remarks that it has already been shown that **CPTED projects** such as Secured by Design (GB), and Quality Label Secure Housing (The Netherlands) are efficient, but are not followed in Belgium.

Guido Bennaerts (Mandated official Neighbourhood information network (BIN), Police zone Antwerp) says that the **Vesta project** (free TPA for every resident of Antwerp) yielded little results.

Koen Van Heddegem (VVSG) mentions a work group armed management, wherein Antwerp and Ghent are active, among others. Dirk Geurts (Federal Police – DJC (Directorate of combat of crimes against property)) mentions a similar initiative with the **DJC**.

According to Linda Ernon (liaison official Province of Antwerp), the local criminal investigation department of Antwerp wants to start tackling the **receipt of stolen goods** and **marking of objects**. The participants point to already existing **SDNA projects**. This seems to be a success story in the town of Dendermonde. However, in the city of Mechelen not. Police zone Gavers would also have started such an initiative.

Marc Garin (Police corps chief Police zone Mons-Quevy) points out the importance of CCTV. Next to the use of ANPR, he mentions the **public-private cooperation 'Live view' in The Netherlands**, where private security firms send camera images for free to the police.

Carl Piron (Department Criminal Policy-DSB) suggests the idea to investigate if a "Kijk Uit" ('watch out') on domestic burglaries could be introduced on TV, to raise awareness of the population.

5. Various - Agreements

The next Advisory Board will be held on **Thursday 30 January 2013, from 10h00 until 13h00**. The following agenda will be discussed: the cost-benefit analysis, themes of the focus groups, and the list of good practices.

To prepare this meeting, we attach our structure proposal in the framework of the cost-benefit analysis that we have already made up.

We ask you to complete this document; remarks need to be made by means of track changes, and need to be submitted at the latest on Monday 20 January 2014. This way, we can still process this data and discuss it at the next Advisory Board.

Dates of the following Advisory Boards:

- Thursday 30 January 2014
- Monday 28 April 2014
- Monday 30 June 2014
- Thursday 28 August 2014

Time: 10h00-13h00

Location: FOD IBZ (Federal Government Service Internal Affairs), 76 Avenue Waterloo, 1000 Brussels – Waterloo Room

We wish to thank you for the cooperation and for your input.



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