

Report Workshop: EU project Domestic Burglary

Because the theme of this 2nd States-General was the conclusion of the European project '*An integral methodology to develop an information-led and community-orientated policy to tackle domestic burglary (A methodology to tackle burglary)*', a specific workshop was dedicated to this.

First a summary of the project was given:

The project '*An integral methodology to develop an information-led and community-orientated policy to tackle domestic burglary (A methodology to tackle burglary)*' focuses specifically on domestic burglary, in which there is also a focus on itinerant crime groups. With over 8 registered burglaries every hour and yearly more than 69,568 registered burglaries and attempts, this phenomenon continues to be one of the largest crime problems in Belgium. Moreover, rates of property crime and crime against persons related to the citizen's home are problematic throughout the whole European Union. Knowing that in 2004 1.7% of the EU households saw their houses burgled and 1.4% experienced a failed attempt¹, it can be said that the number of burglaries within the European Union is alarmingly high. Not only the dimension of this form of criminality, but also the financial impact on our society and the psychological effects on the victims make this an important problem.

Despite different policy plans that consider domestic burglary a priority, the crime rate remains alarmingly high. This project was set up with funding from the European Commission, proving that the EU wants to deal with the growing problem which is domestic burglary. Which approach to follow to tackle this, is a challenge for many EU policy makers. Furthermore, addressing the matter of itinerant crime groups, which forms part of this problem, is also on the EU agenda. On that account, it is important to support the EU Member States with these domestic burglary issues.

Therefore, our aim was to develop, provide and widely diffuse a methodological step-by-step plan to realize a dynamic burglary policy plan that can be used throughout the European Union. This step-by-step plan materialized through the organization of advisory boards, focus groups, terrain visits and a World Café. With this methodological step-by-step plan, we want to support other Member States by developing multiple methods and improving their own national policies. The action plan developed during this project can serve as an example of a good practice and therefore inspire the policy makers of the other member states.

Moreover, we have pursued the following goals. First of all we wanted to increase the awareness and knowledge of member states and their policy makers and practitioners in the field concerning the issue of domestic burglary and itinerant offender groups. This was achieved through an extensive communication plan which involved a conference, press releases, communication through EUCPN and a website on which all the documents of the project are to be found

¹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Crime_trends_in_detail

(www.domesticburglary.eu). With this, we also wanted to increase the exchange of expertise and good practices between the member states. This was accomplished by conducting multiple terrain visits. Furthermore we have monitored recent trends and developments in the field of domestic burglary and we have mapped the different actors within Belgium and the EU. Moreover, as said before, we want to serve as an inspiration to the other member states, with our structural approach to tackle burglary and also as a general methodology for developing action plans for other crime problems. We realized this through the organization of the different methodological activities discussed below. Therefore we have tried to increase the coherence between policies and approaches by strengthening the collaboration. Ultimately, we want to prevent and diminish domestic burglaries in the European Union.

As already mentioned above, during this project, multiple methodological activities were organized. In order to have a clear understanding of the content of this project, it is therefore important to delve deeper into the different actions that were undertaken. The project consists of a cost-benefit analysis, an advisory board, focus groups, terrain visits and a world café. All the findings of these activities were then combined into an action plan.

First of all, in order to provide a global view of the current situation, we have analysed the phenomenon on the basis of objective and subjective data, and evaluated the current policy to come to a cost-benefit analysis. However, it was not possible to provide a full scientific cost-benefit analysis. Therefore we have opted for making an overview of all the partners involved in the prevention of domestic burglary. Nevertheless, we have tried to implement as much rating data as we could find. Moreover this global overview on the current situation was mainly focused on the Belgian partners and institutions. This was decided because of the short duration of the project and for logistic reasons. However, by referring to the concerned international actors, the European dimension was not forgotten.

One of the most recurrent activities was conducting the advisory board. The tasks of the advisory board were to guide the process and give feedback towards the project group on a regular basis. During the project they met 4 times. The advisory board consisted of approximately 20 persons: representatives from the local and federal police, private sector, city services, city representatives, dpt. Justice, academics, burglary prevention advisors and the regional policy level. This ensured that the project was interdisciplinary. Also, the Advisory Boards provided an extra quality guarantee for the project through reflections and supervision.

Furthermore, two focus groups were organized during the project. In these focus groups, 4 specific topics were discussed in depth. There were Belgian and European participants during both focus groups. Therefore, the discussion points and information put forward by these focus groups were more Europe-oriented. Therefore we were able to map certain differences between the European member states, which gave us a better insight in the necessary European action points.

After the presentation of the different themes of the focus groups, Mr John Radmer, senior analyst at the Danish national police and specialized in prevention, was asked to speak. He presented his reflections on his participation in the focus groups and on the importance of a European project regarding domestic burglary. The participation in the focus groups gave him the chance to learn a lot about the other countries and their good practices. He thinks it is very important to continue to focus on sharing information. Information is not being bundled enough; therefore the creation of a platform is very important. Furthermore he told about what Denmark currently does for the 4 themes that were discussed in the focus groups. The focus is put on the responsabilization of the citizen. Citizens are highly responsible for their own behaviour to prevent burglary. Furthermore the focus is on risk management as well. For people who became a domestic burglary victim there are the crime prevention visits. The initiatives are not limited to the level of the individual, neighbourhoods are assessed as well. One now examines which neighbourhood changes need to be made to increase the feelings of security in neighbourhoods.

The focus is also put on new technologies, more specifically for the police. New police applications have been developed that are used in patrol cars. This way, incoming tips are being treated much faster. This way, it was shown that there are plenty of differences between the countries when one talks about their approach of the phenomenon.

Moreover, the project group conducted over 20 terrain visits to gather good practices concerning domestic burglary. These terrain visits were performed based on a checklist in order to collect all the necessary information. Because of logistic reasons, the project group only visited projects within Belgium. However, there was a focus on the transferability, so that the other Member States could benefit from the gathering of these good practices. The exchange of good practices is one of the proved methods to decrease the amount of the criminal phenomenon.

And finally, a World Café was organized in order to involve all the stakeholders and to achieve broad support for the outcome. This was achieved because a World Café is an interactive methodology to involve a large group of people. The main target group were the field practitioners: representatives from the local police, city services, private partners, domestic burglary prevention consultants, Neighbourhood watches, provincial prevention services and justice. During the World Café, the participants discussed multiple theses in small groups. The goal was to let the people from the field give their view on what needed to happen in domestic burglary prevention.

As a means of disseminating all the analyses of the methodologies mentioned above, a methodological step-by-step plan was made. This methodological step-by-step plan contains all the detailed information about all the activities that were performed. This implies that the analysis contains mainly reflections on the methodologies used and on the steps taken. However, the action plan also combines all the findings resulting from these methodologies. By analysing the

different methodologies, we wanted to show in which ways you can easily research a given phenomenon. In addition, the action plan is therefore a policy document proceeded by these methodologies. The action plan was divided into action points to be taken at international level and action points that should be taken at national level.

After having explained the action plan, a few provoking positions were given relating to the different action points. These were then followed by short discussions. For the position that the effective implementation of CPTED is more important than increasing social control, several participants indicated that the effective implementation of both measures is important and thus that one cannot just choose one of them. In the end it was also asked whether this action plan is a good basis to continue the work. The answer was primarily positive; there was only one critical reflection on the lack of financial and administrative points. It was explained though that the action plan was specifically drawn up with the information obtained from the different participants regarding the methodologies. Therefore some aspects may be somehow underrepresented. Nonetheless some financial and administrative action points were included in the plan.

Throughout the discussion of the project one could not always elaborate on the different results of the methodologies and it was not always possible to discuss the entire action plan in detail. Therefore the participants were referred several times to the guide and to the website www.domesticburglary.eu where all information, results and the action plan are bundled.



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