

I. Premise

The opening of the borders within the EU has caused that travelling offender groups can operate freely. Is it also up to the EU to formulate a powerful prevention operation?

What should the EU do?

II. Discussions

This premise was only discussed with the Dutch-speaking participants.

The notion of 'travelling offenders' is viewed with some scepticism. Who are these travelling offenders exactly, and is this phenomenon not exaggerated? It only represents a part of the offenders.

The participants indicate that opening the borders has had an effect on crime, and on the type of offenders that is active on our territory. The opening of the borders is part of the principle of free movement of persons and goods.

Prevention should evolve simultaneously. However, each country should retain its individuality.

The various European countries are not on the same line regarding prevention, and they interpret it differently. There already are big differences between Belgium and its neighbours The Netherlands, Germany and France regarding the approach. If we compare it then to the approach in the Scandinavian countries or in the countries of the former Eastern bloc, then the difference only increases.

It is thus not evident to bring the countries within the EU on one line regarding prevention policy. But is this necessary? Preventive measures should be close to the people, if they wish to achieve a sufficient effect. In fact, prevention is custom work per community, per neighbourhood, per district, etc.

However, this does not mean we cannot learn from each other. The country borders are already open physically, now we have to open them symbolically. There are many good practices in our own country, as well as in other European countries, regarding increasing awareness of citizens, and the practical implementation of a local prevention policy. Europe should be seen as a source of inspiration, from which we can take elements to integrate into our own prevention policy. An organization such as EUCPN can play an important role herein. However, according to the participants, this network is currently still not enough known. The EUCPN should be a facilitator in the information exchange.

"Europe as stimulator to
put prevention on the
map"

According to the participants, in general, no prevention actions should be organised by the EU, but the EU should ensure that 'prevention' comes into the picture. Europe can function as a stimulator, and can offer support.

An idea that is suggested is to organise visits to or short internships in other European countries, to gain actual experience that can then be used in the own prevention policy.

Standards and regulations around burglary prevention are developed at European level, but in practice, there is little compelling power from Europe. The enforceability of the European regulations often blocks the conversion to national standards. According to the participants, it is Europe's role to verify this compliance.

III. Conclusions

The countries within the European Union have a very different background and mentality, which means that prevention is also approached in a different manner. It is therefore not obvious to develop one comprehensive prevention policy. Prevention is custom work and should be developed locally.

The EU can act as stimulator and facilitator to put 'prevention' on the map.

Regulations are developed at European level around burglary-proof locksmithing, but it is important that this be complied with at the national level.

Information exchange of good practices between the various countries is enriching. However, a good communication and knowledge of the correct channels are of crucial importance for this. The EUCPN can be an important player here, but unfortunately it is not known enough.

IV. Action points

The EUCPN should become better known with people in the field, to be able to achieve an optimum information exchange.

National partners should be encouraged to convert European regulations into national standards.



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