

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

**World Café – Report  
19/06/2014, FPS Home Affairs, Brussels**

## **World Café Report**

Together we know more—that is why on **Thursday, 19 June 2014**, the Directorate for Local Integral Safety organized a World Café around the topic of domestic burglaries. This World Café is part of the European project entitled “*An integral methodology to develop an information-led and community-orientated policy to tackle domestic burglary*”. The report that follows will begin with a discussion of methodology: what were the positive and negative points of the World Café? Thereafter, the various problem statements discussed there will be addressed. While doing so, the focus will primarily be on the conclusions and on any resulting policy recommendations. The list of participants can be found in the Appendix.

## **Methodology**

It is important to briefly evaluate the methodology of the World Café, so that it can be improved in the future.

## **Explanation**

The goal of a World Café is to allow as many ideas as possible to arise, via dialogue, to collect them and to allow them to impact one another. This way more effective solutions, deeper insights and more fundamental resolutions can be garnered, and loftier decisions can be taken. It is a transparent and interactive manner to collect the opinions and insights of a large group of people.

*The working method:*

The group of participants was divided up into smaller groups (the subdivided participants' lists can be found in the Appendix). Each group was seated at a table which was covered with a 'tablecloth' on which a question or problem statement was written. The objective was to enter into dialogue about the statement or questions and to write the results on the table. After approximately 25 minutes, the groups switched tables. There was one 'host' present at each table; this person took notes and moderated the discussion. After each table switch, the host briefly went over what had been said and written by the previous group(s). After that, the dialogue was continued with the new group. This was repeated 4 times. During the final discussion round, the groups were also asked to propose any relevant policy action points.

## Positive points

- The system of switching tables ensured that more than one topic could be addressed.
- The different statements covered varying aspects of the domestic burglary phenomenon.
- The brief discussion periods (+/- 25 minutes) and the enthusiasm of the participants ensured that the discussions didn't have the chance to die out. The timing also forced the groups to come directly to the point, without getting stuck in endless discussions about one point or another.
- High-quality conclusions were reached.
- The discussions were carried out per language group, so that the language would not be a barrier when expressing opinions and to avoid misunderstandings. The conclusions, however, were relayed in both languages, even for the statements that were only addressed in Dutch.
- The discussions can also potentially provide interesting points of view for dossiers other than that of theft prevention. As dossier managers, the moderators can make these links.
- The wide range of participants from diverse departments and positions (Local vs. Federal, Police vs. Administration, preventive vs. repressive, expert vs. civilian ...) allowed for varied discussions and for the exchange of good practices.
- The moderator led the same discussion a number of times, which allowed him or her to avoid repeating content-related pitfalls made in a previous discussion. This allowed the moderator to remain focused on one central theme, which had a positive influence on the final result. The fact that the background of the groups of participants was constantly changing meant that the moderator had the option to delve even deeper into recurring elements or to further investigate new elements.
- This methodology allows people from the field to be involved in policy preparation by actively asking them for their knowledge and opinions. This stimulates a bottom-up approach and shows appreciation for the terrain workers.
- The international presence was also absolutely added value.
- The small groups and the relaxed atmosphere resulted in everyone being able to give his or her opinion.
- It was an excellent opportunity to network and to meet people who are all involved with prevention.
- Sufficient breaks were provided for so that everyone remained refreshed enough to actively discuss the topics at hand.
- The moderators possessed the necessary knowledge and expertise about the topics and steered the discussions in the right direction.
- By utilizing a timekeeper, the agreed upon end times could be respected.

## Negative points

- It is necessary to provide meeting rooms with good acoustics.
- The conclusions took quite a long time. The reason for this was that they were presented in both national languages.
- Some discussions were still at their peaks when the 25 minutes ran out and therefore had to be stopped abruptly. The role of the timekeeper is essential in this.
- The groups switched to the next table without changing their composition. This sometimes led to points from previous discussions being brought along to the next discussion without the new moderator being aware of what was being discussed but potentially having an influence on the new discussion.

- In order to be able to offer a variety of statements to the different tables, several moderators are needed. Having a sufficient number of experts available for this is not always evident.
- The combination of leading a discussion and, at the same time, taking notes was not as simple for the moderators as it appeared. Several minutes between each group would be handy for making notes and a brief summary of the most important points for the new group. These intermediate summaries would also make it easier to formulate the final conclusions.
- A methodology such as this requires a good deal of preparation time as well as practical elements, such as setting up the meeting room.
- The processing of the discussions that were carried out is also a time-consuming job.
- The motivation of the participants is important for the success of the concept.

## Conclusion

Generally speaking, the organization and the methodology of the World Café received positive critique. We can therefore conclude that a World Café adds value to consultations of this kind. We will remember this in the future. Several participants also suggested that this method be repeated in the future. There was even a specific suggestion made to organize this event on an annual basis.

## The problem statements

### Statement 1

Should technical preventive measures be standardized and obligatory for every home?

- a) If so, how would you implement this in very concrete terms?
- b) If not, what other resources should then be utilized?

### Conclusions

Many participants are proponents of the integral approach within the "Politiekeurmerk Veilig Wonen" [Police Quality Mark Safe Living].

Enforcing a citizen obligation to secure the home, so that the home conforms to specific safety standards, is not possible, because the need for securing homes varies significantly from home to home. What should be done, though, is to continue to stimulate/raise the awareness of the citizens for the purpose of reducing the risk of burglary in their homes.

An obligatory visit from a Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant could be an option. This is especially important at the time of the purchase or building of a home, and it could be systematically arranged at the time of registration with the municipality. People could then always choose whether to take the measures or not. Some type of labelling could then also be provided for the various degrees of security that a home possesses. In the future, this could play a role, especially at the time of the sale of a house.

Standardization/minimum standards could be imposed on manufacturers/contractors so that citizens are not misled. Related to this is the implementation of a quality label (cf the energy certificate that is already ascribed to a home by the Regional Government).

The FPS Home Affairs certainly has a role to play in the realization of this type of standardization, more specifically within the framework of the cooperation with the Local

Governments, on the one hand, and in relation to the updating and standardizing of the training for the Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants on the other.

#### *Action points*

- Elaborating a quality label on the basis of a gradual standardization table for security materials (cf energy certificate). On the basis of this table, the security materials to be installed could be indicated in function of the building's profile, i.e., in function of an increasing risk profile (according to location, utilization...). The existing SKG standards, which are also used in The Netherlands, could be used for this standardization.
- Collaboration with/guidance of the Regional Governments in order to make it possible to include such standards in the building regulations, plus building in some financial stimuli.
- Guidance of the Local Governments to structurally apply technical preventive advice/theft prevention.
- Standardizing the working methods of the Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants.
- Updating and standardization of the training of the Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultants. (The current training programme is outdated.)
- Informing, training and raising of the awareness of other partners (i.e., locksmiths, architects, insurance companies ...) with regard to theft prevention.

#### **Statement 2**

A collaboration must exist between the private sector and the FPS Home Affairs. What can the private sector do for prevention policy? Will the citizens accept this?

- a. Should architects receive more training related to safety?
- b. No insurance without the registration of valuable goods.
- c. The better the security of a house, the lower the insurance premiums.
- d. Would it be a good idea to have private security firms patrolling along with the Police?

#### *Conclusion*

A uniform framework must be created: a uniform regulation related to making (primarily) new constructions burglary-resistant. It is expected that architects will then automatically request specific instruction. Such regulations must clarify how safe one can deem a specific safety measure. And, for example, what the minimum safety level is for a new construction. A professional specialization will also arise from this system; a specialization such as those that have recently arisen in the form of environmental experts and insurance experts.

Specific instruction would best be comprehensive, since safety, in the broadest sense, must be integrated: theft prevention (architectural as well as electronic security), social control in the framework of city development, fire safety etc.

In addition to comprehensive regulations, it would also be nice if coefficients were used when calculating the insurance premiums, since in the current system the client has no insight into the method used to calculate his or her premium. Moreover, this does not motivate the client to take a number of safety measures. After all, the client cannot see whether the measures taken have had a positive effect on his or her premium. Another benefit of a coefficient like this is that the client can 'comparison shop'; clients can compare insurers.

One of the most noteworthy statements regarding the collaborations between the private and the public sectors is that the public sector has a long way to go when it comes to trusting

the professionalism of the private sector. This is certainly true when, for example, we compare our situation to that in the neighbouring Netherlands. Up until today, the exchange of information between both parties is for the most part one-way traffic. Yet, everyone would benefit if the private sector would, in fact, receive 'customized' information from the public sector.

#### *Action points*

- Creation of uniform regulations
- The implementation of a minimum safety level in new constructions.
- Much of the information exchanged is wrongly protected by the duty of 'professional confidentiality', and this protection only occurs when the information is coming from the public sector to the private sector. This principle is also often handled in an anxious and counter-productive manner when information is exchanged mutually between various branches of the public sector (welfare sector versus the Police to cite just one example). Efforts must be made to broaden the sometimes too narrow interpretation of professional confidentiality in order to come to a 'shared-amongst-professionals confidentiality'. This would make the exchange of information among professionals easier.
- There is a need for better cooperation with insurance companies. This cooperation would allow the public sector to present new rules related to the determination of premiums based on a coefficient. This way more comparable recommendations could be given.
- There must be greater collaboration with architects, locksmiths, electronics dealers, the building industry ... This way technical preventive measures can be better distributed.

#### **Statement 3**

How can we increase the participation of the citizens in theft prevention? Should this participation be increased at all?

- a. Where is citizen participation needed, for example, in providing assistance in awareness-raising campaigns and in the provision of prevention advice? And where is it absolutely not needed?
- b. How can we motivate the citizens to take responsibility?

#### *Conclusion*

We can only shift to citizen participation if awareness has been sufficiently raised. Now, much too often, the Police or the municipality are only called upon after someone has been victimized.

The lack of citizen participation can be seen from within a context of a larger structural societal problem. We must place this construct within the context of the individualization of society. How can we once again reinforce social control and social cohesion?

It is not enough to make efforts in one link of the safety chain; the integral safety chain must be taken into account.

The help of the citizen in awareness-raising campaigns and in the dissemination of prevention advice is generally seen as essential. Most of the participants in the World Café, however, thought that this should not be permitted to tip over into the citizens' taking the law into their

own hands. Posting video of the perpetrator on Facebook is considered as going too far. Care must be taken to prevent the creation of a "crime control" society.

The citizen must feel involved in the narrative of domestic burglary prevention. To this end, the citizen can best be reached via his or her social network and will participate when he or she is assigned responsibility, thereby gaining the opportunity to play an important role.

Objective reporting to the "man on the street" remains a difficult balancing act. It continues to be a tightrope walk between strict prevention and the creation of feelings of insecurity. Frightening the citizen must be avoided. The direct contact between the Prevention Service/Police and the citizens is the most efficient method of communication. In this, the district officers must play a greater role.

#### *Action points*

- The general willingness to report must be increased. The policy must support various campaigns to stimulate this.
- A specific communication strategy related to domestic theft must be developed. In conjunction with this strategy, a recognizable eye-catcher can be created, like the BOB campaign.
- Burglary prevention must be placed in the spotlight in a variety of ways and via different channels. Only in this way will the public remain constantly stimulated.
- The continuation of the tax exemption for securing a residence against burglary and fire was also cited as a policy action point.
- Encouraging partnerships with local stakeholders (the youth, neighbourhood committees ...) for the purpose of increasing awareness and disseminating resources and interventions to various target groups (children, the elderly, professionals such as dispensing chemists, doctors ...).

#### **Statement 4**

What is the role of social media in the area of crime prevention?

- a) What are the advantages and disadvantages of social media in communicating with the citizens?
  - a. What impact does social media have on preventive behaviour? Should this be researched in an academic setting?
  - b. Which social media should be used?
- b) What are the advantages and disadvantages of social media in the communication between the safety partners and the prevention partners?
  - a. Which social media should be used?
- c) What is the role of the FPS Home Affairs with regard to social media in the area of crime prevention?
- d) What are the roles of the various partners with regard to social media?

#### *Conclusion*

There are several advantages associated with the use of social media. One of these is that you can reach a great number of people in a short time. In addition, it is also very easy to share information via social media. Finally, it is an attractive and interactive medium (certainly for young people) as a result of its use of short films and links.

One of the disadvantages of social media is that it has an extremely light, short-term and limited effect on crime prevention. Furthermore, social media does not reach all of the target groups. You only reach a section of the citizens; for example, you do not reach the elderly. With social media, the people must know how to find you in order to be able to see your message.

Social media cannot replace the traditional channels of communication. It is not an either-or situation: we must supplement this with other means of communication. It is important to send the prevention message along as many channels as possible and to use those channels that are the most popular at any given moment. It is also important to decide which channel to use based on each individual target group. The use of Facebook is the preferred channel of communication to the citizen. With it, a wider-ranging public can be reached. Twitter targets a younger audience. Twitter could be used to announce events.

When social media is used it is important not to overload the citizen with messages. It is better to occasionally send a good-quality message than to send a constant stream (quality is more important than quantity). It is also important to post positive messages. Care must be taken that the messages do not reinforce anxiety.

FPS Home Affairs must play a supporting role for the partners within the context of social media. They must provide training, create starter kits etc.; they can also provide the impetus for social media campaigns. With regard to communication with partners and communication between experts, less open channels, such as e-mail and Intranets, remain the preferred option.

#### *Action points*

- Social media should be used more often, but attention must be paid to the various target groups.
- A study must be conducted about the effects of social media on crime prevention and about which target groups are actually reached.
- It is important for the government to keep watch over the messages that are disseminated. A strategy regarding how to react to certain messages should be worked out in advance. Someone must follow the messages and act as a moderator.

#### **Statement 5**

Is it possible that BINs can reinforce the mistrust of the citizens in the long-term and that they devolve into a "snitch line"? Won't the social cohesion suffer at the expense of this? How can we combat this potential adverse effect?

(This problem statement was only discussed with the Dutch-speaking participants.)

#### *Conclusion*

The social cohesion increases within the BINs. In neighbourhoods where there is no social cohesion, the social cohesion can do nothing but increase. This social cohesion makes the residents more alert. We then also see that BIN members are more willing to report. Messages that are disseminated within the BINs must be meaningful and have prevention-related content. The BIN offers the citizens the opportunity to take action against crime themselves.

The quality of the operation of a BIN depends on the motivation of the authorized police officer and the coordinator. The BIN as a "snitch line" is a myth and a preconception that is

usually wielded by its critics. Good communication from the start can prevent this, so that the citizen does not cultivate any false expectations. If a BIN is imposed from the government, there is a risk that it degenerates into a "snitch line".

#### *Action points*

- Tailor the BINs and the theft prevention advice to one another and ensure that there is a strong stimulus for applying the advice (e.g., subsidies).
- Provide a quality mark for the securing of homes and ensure that each new or renovated home complies with a minimum security standard.
- Draft a deontological code for BINs which includes clearly stated limits. In addition, a clear job description should be drafted for coordinators.

#### **Statement 6**

In what ways do new technologies help prevent domestic burglaries?

- a. Is enough being done to provide lower-income people with new technologies? If not, what should happen?
- b. Do cameras provide a false sense of security?
- c. Are cameras there for your safety, or is Big Brother watching you?
- d. Does safety come before privacy?

(This problem statement was only discussed with the Dutch-speaking participants.)

#### *Conclusions*

Those present agreed that in the future new technologies can offer many possibilities in the fight against crime. However, these technologies must be considered as aids for preventing a potential theft from becoming an actual theft or for increasing the chance of catching the perpetrator. They can reduce the chance that someone becomes a victim of theft, but entirely ruling out the risk of this is virtually impossible. Efforts must continue to be made in the area of organizational measures. An illustration: A burglar can be scared away by a camera and instead choose to break into the neighbour's house, which has no camera. The burglar can alternatively make him- or herself unrecognisable, by wearing a balaclava, for example, thereby reducing the chance of being recognized.

The arrival of new technologies that make it possible to track objects offers a great deal of possibilities for the tracking of stolen items. The cost of these technologies, however, can be prohibitive. In addition, it is also important that there is a sound regulatory framework which allows room for new tools without forming too great an intrusion into the privacy of the citizen.

#### *Action points*

- The knowledge about new technologies plays an important role in their success and in the value that they can add to the fight against crime. Another important action point is the monitoring of the current developments in this domain and the exchange of information related to these developments with the Police and the Prevention Services.
- A healthy balance between preserving the rights of the citizens by means of privacy legislation, among other things, and taking innovative actions against criminal phenomena with the aid of new technologies must be safeguarded.
- When communicating with the public, the message must be sent that technologies, such as cameras and alarm systems, must fit within a larger, safety-minded

framework. After all, a camera does not keep the resident from receiving unwanted visitors if the door to the house is not locked.

### **Statement 7**

The opening of the borders within the EU has resulted in itinerant perpetrator groups being able to operate freely. Is it then also the responsibility of the EU to prioritize a powerful prevention operation?

What should the EU do?

(This problem statement was only discussed with the Dutch-speaking participants.)

### *Conclusions*

The opening of the borders has indeed caused an increase in crime. Now it is time for prevention to evolve. Care must also be taken not to focus too greatly on itinerant perpetrator groups, since they make up only a portion of the perpetrators.

The countries within the European Union vary greatly when it comes to background and mentality, which means that crime prevention must be approached in various ways. Therefore, it is not simple to elaborate one overarching prevention policy. Prevention must be customized and given concrete form locally.

The EU can act as a stimulator and facilitator, though, for the purposes of putting "prevention" on the map.

Guidelines related to intrusion-resistant door latches and hinges, among other things, have been worked out at the European level, but it is important that this is followed up at the national level.

The exchange of information related to good practices between the various countries also has an enriching effect. But to do this, good communication and knowledge of the right channels is of crucial importance. The EUCPN can be an important player in this regard, but unfortunately this is not realized to a great enough extent. Working visits or short internships could also be organized in the other European countries for the purpose of gaining concrete experience, which could then be transferred to our own prevention policies.

### *Action points*

- The EUCPN has to become better known by the terrain workers so that an optimal exchange of information can be realized.
- National partners must be encouraged to convert already developed European standards into national regulations.

### **General conclusion**

A World Café is an innovative manner to hold meetings. Both the methodology as well as the content provided for positive results. The informal atmosphere and the system of switching from table to table ensured that several topics could be discussed in a relatively short period of time. The link to the terrain may never be lost from sight; in this sense, a World Café succeeds in allowing the knowledge and experience from the terrain to come up and to be addressed. This can only benefit the administrative level. The various action points bear witness to this. They will be further elaborated in the action plan of the European project.

The vast majority of the participants were very positive. They were especially positive about the chance to discuss specific topics with people in other positions and with other educational backgrounds. The group even requested that these types of meetings be planned more often and also applied to other themes. Due to its transferability, this methodology is ideal for this. From an organizational standpoint, it was also pleasant to see that the extra work needed to prepare for the meeting was worth doing.

## List of participants:

### The FR groups

<b>Moderators</b>			
GRIMMEAU, Cathy			
JANSSENSWILLEN, Luc			
MURENGERANTWARI, Sylvie			
NEVE, Astrid			
<b>Group 1 = Table 1, Salle Louise</b>			
DE RIDDER, Marc	Conseiller prévention vol	police zone midi 5341	prox@polbrumidi.be
LEURQUIN, Valentine	Fonctionnaire de Prévention	Plan Stratégique de Sécurité et de Prévention de Dour	pssp.dour@communedour.be
BARTH, Horst	Analyste stratégique	Police Fédérale Belge	horst.barth.1403@police.be
ZJEZDZALKA, Jean-François	Policier	Zone de police des Hauts Pays	saphonnelles@policedeshautspays.be
STORMS, Luc	Conseiller en prévention vol	Zone de police 5342	dpaprev@police5342.irisnet.be
TOSSINGS, Armand	Responsable service prévention	Police de Liège	prevention@policeliège.be
<b>Group 2 = Table 2, Salle Louise</b>			
HOMERIN, Catherine	Fonctionnaire de Prévention	Prévention	catherine.homerin@peruwelz.be
Decoster, Serge	conseiller prevention vol zone de police 5344	Zone 5344 - Etat major-direction proximite	serge.decoster.5118@police.be
MASSON, André	coordinateur adjoint	PLP Parc Albert, Les Sorbiers et BAM à Ganshoren	amasson33@gmail.com
SAIVE, Catherine	Conseiller en prévention vols	Police Locale Zone Montgomery	prevent.montgomery@mail.be
LIMBOURG, Frédéric	Conseiller en prévention vol	Service de Prévention - Ville de Mons	frederick.limbourg@ville.mons.be
HUART, Emmanuel	Conseiller en Prévention Vol	Service Prévention Colfontaine	huarte@colfontaine.be
<b>Group 3 = Table 3, Salle Louise</b>			
DUBUISSON, Isabelle	Policière	Zone de police des Hauts Pays	saphonnelles@policedeshautspays.be
VISÉE, Sara	CTP	Asbl Bravvo	sara.visee@brucity.be

MASSET, Dominique	Coordinatrice	PLP Parc Albert, Sorbiers, BAM à Ganshoren	domimasset@hotmail.com
DELVAUX, Florence	Inspecteur police, conseiller prévention vol	Zone de police Bruxelles Capitale Ixelles	delvauxflo@gmail.com
MANDELAIRE, Jean-Marie	Conseiller Prévention vols	Police locale de Wavre	policewavre@skynet.be
PIRNAY, Juliette	Conseillère en prévention vol	Plan Stratégique de Sécurité et de Prévention de la ville de Ciney	jpirnay@ciney.be
<b>Group 4 = Table 4, Salle Louise</b>			
SILLITTO, Salvatore	Conseiller prévention vol	prévention	ssillitto@jette.irisnet.be
PARMENTIER, Didier	Représentant eNOXUS Wallonie/Bxl	eNOXUS bvba	didier@enoxus.com
DANIEL, Geoffrey	Conseiller en prévention	Cellule Prévention, Zone de Police "Pays de Herve" 5288	geoffrey.daniel.3783@police.be
CONTRINO, Silvina	Référente bureau de prévention	Ville de La Louvrière	scontrino@lalouviere.be
RASMONT, Julie	Conseiller prévention Vol	ZP La Mazerine	sav@zone-de-police-la-mazerine.be
PINTSCH, Pascal	Chef du service prévention	ZP Semois et Lesse	prevention@semoisetlesse.be

### The NL groups

<b>Moderators</b>			
CORTEBEECK, Leen			
DE STERCKE, Jeroen			
DEVISCH, Melissa			
LIAGRE, Febe			
STOVE, Ailien			
VAN CAUWENBERGHE, Anneleen			
VAN DER LINDE, Hilde			
VANHELLEPUTTE, Dafne			
<b>Group 5 = Table 1, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
VAN DEN HEUVEL, Frank	National Coordinator mobile banditry	National Police The Netherlands	frank.van.den.heuvel@rijnmond.politie.nl
BACKX, Patrick	Coordinator	BIN Kraaienbergh	patrick.backx@skynet.be
VAN HERLE,	Prevention Officer	City of Mechelen	werner.vanherle@mechelen.

Werner			be
GERS, Luc	Chief of Police	PZ Noord	luc.gers@pznoord.be
DORCHAIN, Steve	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	Integral Safety Service / City of Ostend	steve.dorchain@oostende.be
THOLLEBEEK, Koen	Coordinator 'Domestic theft'	PZ Gent	koen.thollebeek@politie.gent.be
<b>Group 6 = Table 2, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
BOS, Rodney	National Coordinator domestic burglaries	National Police The Netherlands	rodney.bos@politieacademie.nl
VAN BASTELAER, Johan	BIN Coordinator	BIN Bloemendaal Schoten	johanvanbastelaer@gmail.com
VAN GIJSEL, Hilke	Prevention Officer	Prevention Service Ronse	preventie@ronse.be
KEUPPENS, Tinne	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	City of Herentals	preventie@herentals.be
TAHON, Jan	W	Prevention Service Blankenberge	jan.tahon@blankenberge.be
OURY, Ellen	Prevention Worker	Prevention cell PZ Vilvoorde-Machelen	ellen.oury@pzvima.be
<b>Group 7 = Table 3, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
VAN ROOMEN, Dré	Senior GGP / District Officer / Job accent Neighbourhood prevention	Police Unit Zeeland/West Brabant, The Netherlands	dre.van.roomen@mw-brabant.politie.nl
DECLLEER, Oscar	BIN Coordinator Waasmunster	Vekuwe	carrydeclleer@hotmail.com
DEJONGHE, Veerle	Deputy of the Director	Police Crime Prevention Office - PZ Gent	veerle.dejonghe@politie.gent.be
DE VIJLDER, Marc	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	PZ 5339 Brussels Capital Elsene	marc.de.vijlder@telenet.be
DELARBRE, Jos	Inspector - Prevention Advisor	PZ Geel-Laakdal-Meerhout	jos.delarbre@pzglm.be
LIPPENS, Kris	Coordinator	Prevention cell PZ VIMA	kris.lippens@pzvima.be
<b>Group 8 = Table 4, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
PIETERS, Johan	Team Leader domestic burglary team / High Impact Crimes	Police Unit Zeeland/West Brabant, The Netherlands	johan.pieters@mw-brabant.politie.nl
BAERT, Violet	Prevention Attaché	Federal Services of the Governor of Antwerp	violet.baert@fdgantwerpen.be
GEKIERE, Benno	BIN delegate	PZ Zara	benno.gekier@telenet.be
ALLEGAERT, Thomas	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	Prevention Service Menen	thomas.allegaert@menen.be
MOORS, Hans	Candidate Commissioner of	PZ Gent	hans.moors@telenet.be

	Police		
PAUWELS, Freddy	PHENOMENON COORDINATOR DIW PZ VIMA	PZ VIMA 5411	freddy.pauwels@pzvima.be
<b>Group 9 = Table 5, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
VAN DER VEEN, Chris	Senior GGP / District Officer	Police Unit Zeeland/West Brabant, The Netherlands	chris.van.der.veen@mw-brabant.politie.nl
DE PAUW, Patrick	Liaison Officer	Province of Flemish Brabant - Service for Social Safety	patrick.depauw@vlaamsbrabant.be
GEUDENS, Gilbert	Owner safety consulting firm; Securitas advisor; Interseco adviser	Securitas	gilbert.geudens@telenet.be
BOMANS, Eline	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	Safety House City of Genk	eline.bomans@genk.be
WAEGEMAN, Greet	Detective	PZ Brussel-West	greet.Waegeman@zpz5340.be
DE NEVE, Kris	Intervention Coordinator	PZ Denderleeuw/Haaltert	kris.deneve@pz5439.be
<b>Group 10 = Table 6, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
MERTENS, Femke	Attaché	Province of Flemish Brabant	femke.mertens@vlaamsbrabant.be
HERBOTS, Geert	Security law advisor	Overberg gcv	geert.herbots@telenet.be
DELEU, Sofie	Prevention and well-being expert	Prevention and Well-being Service Dilbeek	sofie.deleu@dilbeek.be
VERSTRAETEN, Kris	Detective	PZ Brussel West	kris.verstraeten@zpz5340.be
AERTS, Joeri	Inspector	PZ Berlaar-Nijlen	personeelsdienst@berlaar-nijlen.be
VLEUGELS, Ingrid	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	Leuven	Ingrid.vleugels@leuven.be
<b>Group 11 = Table 7, Zaal Poelaert</b>			
MOONS, Sofie	Prevention Plan Coordinator 'Domestic theft'	Province of Limburg	sofie.moons@limburg.be
DE GRAVE, Roger	Chairman	Alia	dge@dgesecurity.be
STAS, Kathleen	Domestic Burglary Prevention Consultant	Safety House City of Genk	kathleen.stas@genk.be
VANKELF, Robby	Chief Inspector	PZ KASTZE	robby.vankelf@kastze.be
GROBBEN, Bart	Director Intake/Interrogation - Domestic Burglary	PZ Halle - 5413	bartgrobbe@politiehalle.be

	Action Plan		
BONNARENS, Ben	Student	Ghent University	<a href="mailto:ben.bonnarens@ugent.be">ben.bonnarens@ugent.be</a>



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