



European Crime Prevention Network

Thematic Paper

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European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN): Crime prevention activities at the EU, national and local level

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Abstract

The European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) was set up on 30 November 2009 by Council Decision 2009/902/JHA repealing the establishing Council Decision 2001/427/JHA. The Network grew in the EU policy context on Member States' initiatives. The Network consists of a Board, with a rotating Chair, an Executive Committee and the National Representatives from all Member States with their Substitutes if appointed; a permanent Secretariat as well as National Contact Points appointed by each Member State. The EUCPN Secretariat is hosted by Belgium in the project 'Towards a European Centre of Expertise on Crime Prevention' financially supported by the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme of the European Commission – Directorate-General Home Affairs. In line with the Council Decision, a Multiannual Strategy sets out the long-term orientations for the Network. The EUCPN's vision is to be a primary source of crime prevention within the EU. Therefore, the Network contributes to developing the various aspects of crime prevention at the European Union level, taking into account the European Union crime preventive strategy, and supports crime prevention activities and good practices at the national and local level. The EUCPN Best Practice Conference and the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) are just two of the prestigious and high-quality activities the EUCPN organizes annually, and which offer a platform for policy-makers and practitioners to meet each other and share experiences. Through internal and external evaluations of the Network, which are scheduled on a regular basis, feedback on the functioning of the EUCPN is provided and recommendations are formulated to further professionalize and improve its performance. These will support the Network in carrying out its long-term mission and turn it into an important reference when it comes to crime prevention in Europe.

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European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN): Crime prevention activities at the EU, national and local level

1. Introduction

In the past decennia, crime prevention became more and more relevant to public policies and to the implementation of crime strategies in the EU. This has had an effect on how crime and safety have been approached across the different EU Member States, as it is linked to the widespread acknowledgement that causes of crime go beyond the reach of the traditional criminal justice systems.¹ As defined by article 2.2 of the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA, which lies at the basis of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN): *"Crime prevention covers all measures that are intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens' feeling of insecurity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, either through directly deterring criminal activities or through policies and actions designed to reduce the potential for crime and the causes of crime. It includes work of government, competent authorities, criminal justice agencies, local authorities and the specialist associations they have set up in Europe, the private and voluntary sectors, researchers and the public, supported by the media".*²

According to scholars, cooperation and partnerships in crime prevention and community safety and the connection to wider social and urban policies became essential to take into account the broader context that is needed to approach crime and its causes.³ Cooperation in crime prevention can be found at the local level, in local crime prevention projects and programmes, in city-to-city cooperation, in region-to-region networks, certainly between countries, at the European level and not least at the international level. The development of crime prevention strategies and policies varies a lot across Europe according to the different political and cultural traditions and socio-economic conditions of the Member States.⁴

The EUCPN has grown within this diverse context with the aim to connect the local, national and European level, promoting crime prevention knowledge and practices among the EU Member States. In the first part of this contribution, the EU crime prevention policy context and its history will be outlined, as well as the establishment of the EUCPN as the major Network in Europe on crime prevention issues. Next, the structure of the Network will be presented by explaining how the EUCPN works internally. Also, the EUCPN's activities at the local, national and European level will be highlighted in more detail, by giving examples of initiatives and events which are regularly organized. Finally, an outlook will be given on the future of the EUCPN.

¹ Crawford, A. (1998). Community Safety Partnerships. *Criminal Justice Matters*, 33: 4-5.

² Council Decision 2009/902/JHA of 30 November 2009 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and repealing Decision 2001/427/JHA [OJ L 321, 8.12.2009, p. 44-46]. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009D0902:EN:NOT>

³ Crawford, A. (2009). *Crime Prevention Policies in Comparative Perspective*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing; Hebberecht, P. & Baillergeau, E. (eds.) (2012). *Social crime prevention in late modern Europe. A comparative perspective*. Brussels: VUB Press; Hebberecht, P. & Duprez, D. (eds) (2002). *The prevention and security policies in Europe*. Brussels: VUB Press.

⁴ For an overview of national crime prevention strategies, see <http://eucpn.org/strategies/index.asp>.



2. EU crime prevention policy history and the establishment of the EUCPN

2.1. The Single European Act (1986) and the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)

From 1975 onwards, intergovernmental cooperation between the European Member States has been established gradually. First in the fields of police and judicial cooperation with the TREVI Group where Ministers of Interior and Justice of the Member States came together to collaborate. The initial focus was on counter-terrorism, but it later gradually extended to other areas of crime.

The Single European Act in 1986⁵ became a turning point in this process of cooperation since its aim was to establish a single market in which the free movement of persons – as well as goods, services and capital – was ensured (Art 8a). From that time on, the Community institutions became involved in dealing with judicial cooperation both in criminal and civil matters. In the European integration process, Justice and Home affairs continued to be a matter of intergovernmental cooperation.

With the establishment of an area of freedom, security and justice under the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997⁶, the possibility to establish closer cooperation on Justice and Home affairs was further elaborated.

At the time, article 29 of the Treaty on European Union stated that *“the Union’s objective shall be to provide citizens with a high level of safety within an area of freedom, security and justice by developing common action among the Member States in the fields of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters [and this] objective shall be achieved by preventing and combating crime [...]”*⁷.

Furthermore, the Treaty specified that closer police cooperation could be established directly or through the European Police Office (Europol)⁸, and that judicial cooperation could go through the European Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust)⁹.

2.2. Council of Tampere 1999

The European Council of Tampere (October 1999) confirmed the importance of effective crime prevention policies. Crime prevention was identified as a common priority both in internal and external policies:

“The exchange of best practices should be developed, the network of competent national authorities for crime prevention and co-operation between national crime prevention organizations should be strengthened and the possibility of a Community funded

⁵ Single European Act [OJ L 169, Volume 30, 29.6.1987] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOhtml.do?uri=OJ:L:1987:169:SOM:EN:HTML>.

⁶ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts [OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, p. 1–144] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:11997D/TXT:EN:NOT>.

⁷ Treaty on European Union (Consolidated version 1997) [OJ C 340, 10.11.1997, p. 145–172] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:1997:340:0145:0172:EN:PDF>.

⁸ Europol <https://www.europol.europa.eu/>.

⁹ Eurojust <http://eurojust.europa.eu/>.



programme should be explored for these purposes. The first priorities for this co-operation could be juvenile, urban and drug-related crime.”¹⁰

In the document 'The prevention and control of organized crime: a European Union strategy for the beginning of the new millennium'¹¹, the European Commission identified, among others, priority areas in crime prevention at EU level such as: *"preventing penetration of organized crime in the public and the legitimate private sector, strengthening the prevention of organized crime and strengthening partnerships between the criminal justice system and civil society."* The idea for setting up a coordinated strategy and bringing together those involved in crime prevention was suggested in the Communication on the prevention of crime in the European Union¹².

2.3. The establishment of the European Crime Prevention Network

The outcome of the Tampere summit in 2000 resulted in the need to establish a platform for information exchange on crime prevention, particularly with regard to urban, juvenile and drug-related crime. This role was given to the European Crime Prevention Network, the establishment of which was proposed by various Member States (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and officially confirmed shortly afterwards by the Council Decision 2001/427/JHA.¹³ From then on, the EUCPN would be responsible for promoting the exchange of information on crime prevention across the EU as a whole to fulfil three specific aims:

- Improve Member States' understanding of the crime phenomenon;
- Develop cooperation and networking among crime prevention stakeholders at all levels of government;
- Strengthen the multidisciplinary approach to crime prevention projects.

2.3.1. Council Decision 2001

Notwithstanding that crime prevention is primarily a matter of the individual Member States, the rationale for cooperation between countries was, and remains, strong. The 2001 Council Decision defined it as the mission of the EUCPN to promote crime prevention activities across the EU and to provide a means to share good practices.¹⁴ The scope of the EUCPN activities was defined in the 2001 Council Decision as mainly, but not exclusively, focusing on volume or traditional crime.

¹⁰ The prevention and control of organized crime: a European Union strategy for the beginning of the new millennium [OJ C 124, 3.5.2000] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000F0503:EN:NOT>.

¹¹ The prevention and control of organized crime: a European Union strategy for the beginning of the new millennium [OJ C 124, 3.5.2000] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000F0503:EN:NOT>.

¹² Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The prevention of crime in the European Union. Reflection on common guidelines and proposals for Community financial support [COM(2000) 786 final - Not published in the Official Journal] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sqa_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lq=en&type_doc=COMfinal&an_doc=2000&nu_doc=786.

¹³ Council Decision 2001/427/JHA of 28 May 2001 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network. [OJ L 153 , 08.06.2001] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:153:0001:0003:EN:PDF>.

¹⁴ Council Decision 2001/427/JHA of 28 May 2001 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network. [OJ L 153 , 08.06.2001] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:153:0001:0003:EN:PDF>.



At the same time, the European Commission was in favour of the establishment of a European forum for the prevention of organized crime to deal with various aspects of prevention with regard to economic and financial crime, lawful and unlawful dealings in goods, trafficking in human beings and corruption.¹⁵ This led to the introduction of the Hippocrates programme¹⁶, the EU Organized Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA)¹⁷ and later to the AGIS programme¹⁸.

2.3.2. Communication on Crime Prevention in the European Union 2004

A Communication published by the European Commission in 2004 on 'Crime Prevention in the European Union'¹⁹ took stock of the EUCPN's progress and came to broadly positive conclusions. It noted that the EUCPN had so far achieved good results considering the then existing context. In particular, it highlighted that:

*"For the first time ever, Member States representatives and experts have begun meeting regularly to exchange experiences, set a common strategy and priorities for action and research on the basis of annual programs."*²⁰

The collection of information on crime prevention policies and good practices, conferences, expert meetings and the website of the EUCPN were considered to have been particularly useful to Member States. The Communication also noted the importance of the progress made with regard to the development of a common methodology to prepare, implement and evaluate concrete crime prevention projects.

The Communication emphasised the importance of the role of local authorities and the primary responsibility of the Member States in the field of prevention of volume crime. Nevertheless, EU-level co-operation was also seen as important to *"effectively support prevention activities in the Member States, to avoid duplication of efforts and to use resources more efficiently"*²¹.

¹⁵ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The prevention of crime in the European Union. Reflection on common guidelines and proposals for Community financial support [COM(2000) 786 final - Not published in the Official Journal] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sqa_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lq=en&type_doc=COMfinal&an_doc=2000&nu_doc=786.

¹⁶ Council Decision of 28 June 2001 establishing a programme of incentives and exchanges, training and cooperation for the prevention of crime (Hippocrates) [Official Journal L 186, 07.07.2001].

¹⁷ Organized Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) https://www.europol.europa.eu/latest_publications/31.

¹⁸ Council Decision 2002/630/JHA of 22 July 2002 establishing a framework programme on police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (AGIS) [OJ L 203, 01.08.2002] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:203:0005:0008:EN:PDF>.

¹⁹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Crime prevention in the European Union [COM(2004) 165 final, 12.03.2004] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52004DC0165:EN:NOT>.

²⁰ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Crime prevention in the European Union [COM(2004) 165 final, 12.03.2004] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52004DC0165:EN:NOT>.

²¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Crime prevention in the European Union [COM(2004) 165 final, 12.03.2004] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52004DC0165:EN:NOT>.



2.3.3. The Hague Programme 2004

In 2004, the Hague Programme on 'Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union'²² reiterated the priorities for the EUCPN. The Hague Council went on to argue that the EUCPN should be professionalised and strengthened. It is noteworthy that in addition to its role in relation to EU Member States, the 2004 Hague Council highlighted the function of the EUCPN in helping the Council and Commission in developing crime prevention policies.

*"The Union [...] needs an effective tool to support the efforts of Member States in preventing crime. To that end, the European Crime Prevention Network should be professionalised and strengthened. Since the scope of prevention is very wide, it is essential to focus on measures and priorities that are most beneficial to Member States. The European Crime Prevention Network should provide expertise and knowledge to the Council and the Commission in developing effective crime prevention policies."*²³

The Hague Programme argued that the EUCPN's remit should promote the exchange of experience and ideas between EU Member States. In general, the Hague Programme highlighted the importance of the EUCPN and its introduction of concrete action plans.

2.3.4. The Lisbon Treaty 2007

The Lisbon Treaty²⁴, which was signed by the Heads of State or Government in December 2007, highlighted crime prevention as integral to the EU's core aim of promoting the well-being of European citizens. According to Article 2.1/2.2:

*"The Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples. The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime."*²⁵

Reflecting this, Article 84 of the Treaty stated that the European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, "may establish measures to promote and support the action of Member States in the field of crime prevention, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States." Elsewhere, the treaty set out the EU's role in promoting cooperation between "all the Member States' competent authorities, including police, customs and other

²² The Hague Programme: strengthening freedom, security and justice in the European Union [OJ C 53/1, 03.03.2005] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2005:053:0001:0014:EN:PDF>.

²³ Presidency Conclusions – Brussels, 4/5 November 2004. Annex 1. The Hague Programme: Strengthening Freedom, Security and Justice in the European Union. [14292/1/04, REV 1, 08.12.2004] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/82534.pdf.

²⁴ Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007 [OJ C 306, 17.12.2007] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT:EN:NOT>.

²⁵ Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007 [OJ C 306, 17.12.2007] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT:EN:NOT>.



specialised law enforcement services in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offences” (Article 87 - 1)²⁶.

2.3.5. Council Decision 2009

Following the European Commission’s recommendations based on an external evaluation of the EUCPN²⁷, which was conducted in 2007-2008 under the supervision of the European Commission and which identified several opportunities for strengthening the Network, an informal and internal working group was set up to discuss the future of the Network on the following issues:

- The role and purpose of the EUCPN and its target groups;
- The EUCPN’s website and use of languages;
- The EUCPN Secretariat and financing;
- Issues relating to the Chair, National Representatives, Contact Points, and Committees.

Many proposals of this working group found their way into a new Council Decision 2009/902/JHA on 30 November 2009, repealing the establishing Council Decision 2001/427/JHA.²⁸ This Council Decision from 2009 still lies at the basis of the EUCPN today.

Article 2.1 of the 2009 Council Decision states:

“The Network shall contribute to developing the various aspects of crime prevention at the Union level, taking account of the European Union crime preventive strategy, and shall support crime prevention activities at the national and local level.”

Although this definition was already included in Art.1 of the 2001 Council Decision, the focus was no longer put explicitly on juvenile, urban and drug-related crime after 2009.

The Network’s key target groups were governments, competent authorities, criminal justice agencies, local authorities and ‘specialist associations’, the private and voluntary sectors, researchers and the public, supported by the media.

2.3.6. The Stockholm Programme 2010

The Stockholm Programme²⁹ reiterated the importance of crime prevention, for example in paragraph 4.3.2 on more effective crime prevention:

²⁶ Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007 [OJ C 306, 17.12.2007] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12007L/TXT:EN:NOT>.

²⁷ Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES) (2009). Evaluation of the European Crime Prevention Network. Kent. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/crime-prevention/docs/evaluation_of_eucpn_final_report_\(cses_11_03_09\).pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/crime-prevention/docs/evaluation_of_eucpn_final_report_(cses_11_03_09).pdf).

²⁸ Council Decision 2009/902/JHA of 30 November 2009 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and repealing Decision 2001/427/JHA [OJ L 321, 08.12.2009, p. 44-46] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:321:0044:01:EN:HTML>.

²⁹ The Stockholm Programme — An open and secure Europe serving and protecting citizens [OJ C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 1–38] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010XG0504%2801%29:EN:NOT>.



"The best way to reduce the level of crime is to take effective measures to prevent them from ever occurring, including promoting social inclusion, by using a multidisciplinary approach which also includes taking administrative measures and promoting cooperation between administrative authorities, citizens of the Union that have similar experiences and are affected in similar ways by crime and related insecurity in their everyday lives".

Art. 4.3.2 argued that *"Member States have developed different methods to prevent crime and should be encouraged to share experiences and best practice.[...] in addition, the cross-border dimension underlines the importance of enhancing and developing knowledge at European level on how crime and criminality in the Member States is interconnected, to support Member States when taking individual or joint action, and to call for action by Union institutions when deemed necessary".*

Against this background, the Stockholm Programme set out a very clear vision for the future of the EUCPN. The European Council invited the Commission:

"to submit a proposal building on the evaluation of the work carried out within the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) with a view to setting up an Observatory for the Prevention of Crime (OPC), the tasks of which will be to collect, analyse and disseminate knowledge on crime, including organized crime (including statistics) and crime prevention, to support and promote Member States and Union institutions when they take preventive measures and to exchange best practice."

To achieve this, the Observatory should build on the work carried out within the framework of the EUCPN and the evaluation of it. It should include or replace the EUCPN, with a secretariat located within an existing Union agency and function as a separate unit. The European Council invited the Commission to submit a proposal on setting up the OPC by 2013 at the latest.

A second external evaluation undertaken at the end of 2012 concluded, however, that it is too early to establish a Crime Prevention Observatory since it does not seem to correspond to a pressing need in the short term and is currently less desirable politically or financially³⁰. Hence, for the time being, the Member States have opted to continue the work with the support of the EUCPN Secretariat in its current structure (cfr. infra) and with its current level of resources and to focus instead on the improvement of the Network's functioning by implementing an approved and concrete action plan (see also: 6. Outlook, p.20).

³⁰ Report from the Commission to the Council, Evaluation report on the European Union Crime Prevention Network [COM(2012) 717 final, 30.11.2012] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/crime-prevention/docs/20121130_eucpn_report_en.pdf.



The Board is chaired by an appointed Member from within the body of National Representatives. The **Chair** heads the Network and guarantees its working. The position of the Chair is currently rotating every six months according to the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Chair convenes and chairs at least one Board Meeting per semester and also chairs the Executive Committee.

Together with the Chair, the **Executive Committee** prepares the strategy and decisions of the Network for approval by the Board. The Executive Committee is composed of up to three National Representatives, selected by the Board for the term of 18 months, and three National Representatives from the current and the next two Presidencies of the Council of the European Union. In addition, a representative of the European Commission is attending the Executive Committee as an observer.

The EUCPN **Secretariat** is based in Brussels at the Belgian Federal Public Service Home Affairs and has been fully operational since 2011 with the financial support of the European Commission DG HOME's Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme (ISEC)³⁴. The Secretariat currently consists of three permanent staff members: a coordinator, a research officer and an administrative officer.

The task of the Secretariat is to provide general administrative, technical and analytical support to the Network and to represent the Network externally. It acts as a focal point for communication with the Network Members, identifies ongoing research activities in the field of crime prevention and other related information that would be of use to the Network. The Secretariat hosts and maintains the EUCPN website and is also responsible for delivering systematic output on crime prevention. Finally, through the Secretariat, the Network is closely collaborating with academic researchers and experts in the field bringing together scientific research, policymaking and (local) practice.

The **target groups** of the Network are practitioners and policymakers at both the local and national level, as well as other relevant EU and international agencies, organizations and working groups some of which are non-voting observers.

³⁴ Council Decision 2007/125/JHA of 12 February 2007 establishing for the period 2007 to 2013, as part of General Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties, the Specific Programme Prevention of and Fight against Crime [OJ L 58, 24.2.2007, p. 7-12] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32007D0125:EN:NOT>. For more information on the ISEC Programme: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/security-and-safeguarding-liberties/prevention-of-and-fight-against-crime/index_en.htm.

4. The working of the EUCPN

The European Crime Prevention Network contributes to developing the various aspects of crime prevention at the Union level, taking account of the European Union crime preventive strategy, and supports crime prevention activities and good practices at the national and local level. Article 4 of the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA³⁵ mentions the following specific tasks for the EUCPN:

- To facilitate cooperation, contacts and exchanges of information and experience between actors in the field of crime prevention;
- To collect, assess and communicate evaluated information including good practice on existing crime prevention activities;
- To organize conferences, in particular an annual Best Practice Conference, and other activities, including the annual European Crime Prevention Award, designed to achieve the objectives of the Network and to share widely the results thereof;
- To provide its expertise to the Council and the Commission as required;
- To report to the Council on its activities each year through the Board and the competent working bodies. The Council shall be invited to endorse the report and forward it to the European Parliament;
- To develop and implement a work programme based on a clearly defined strategy that takes account of identifying and responding to relevant crime threats.

4.1. Multiannual Strategy 2011-2015

The EUCPN's basic goals are reaffirmed in the Multiannual Strategy which was adopted by the Board in December 2010 for the period 2011 until the end of 2015, as shown in figure 2 below. The Multiannual Strategy 2011-2015³⁶ sets out the long-term orientations for the Network.



Figure 2: EUCPN's Multiannual Strategy and annual planning

³⁵ Council Decision 2009/902/JHA of 30 November 2009 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and repealing Decision 2001/427/JHA [OJ L 321, 08.12.2009, p. 44-46] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:321:0044:01:EN:HTML>.

³⁶ The Multiannual Strategy for the European Crime Prevention Network <http://eucpn.org/key-papers/index.asp> is complemented by a general 'Keynote to the Multiannual Strategy for EUCPN' <http://eucpn.org/key-papers/index.asp> and an 'Annex 2' <http://eucpn.org/key-papers/index.asp> with a concrete action planning.



The general objective stipulated in article 2.1 of the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA has been translated into the mission of the Network³⁷:

"The Network contributes to the development and the promotion of a multidisciplinary and preventive approach to crime and feelings of insecurity at European level. The Network therefore actively supports policymakers and practitioners of European, national and local level."

The goals of the Network, as defined in the Multiannual Strategy, are:

- To be a point of reference for the target groups of the Network
- To disseminate qualitative knowledge on crime prevention
- To support crime prevention activities at the national and local level
- To develop the EU policy and strategy of crime prevention and to develop various aspects of crime prevention at EU level in respect of the strategic priorities of the EU.

Concrete actions and projects to reach these goals of the Network are planned in annual Work Programmes³⁸ and reported in Annual Reports³⁹. During the working year, new projects and initiatives can be added to the Work Programme. National Representatives report on a regular basis on the progress of these projects via the Secretariat to the Board.

Every year, both the Work Programme and the Annual Report are presented to the relevant European Union working groups, such as GENVAL⁴⁰ and COSI⁴¹.

4.2. Funding

The EUCPN currently relies on three funding sources. The financing of projects by individual Member States, EU financial programmes managed by the European Commission (ISEC – Prevention of and Fight against Crime, Hercules, Daphne, etc.) and the EUCPN Fund, an internal fund established by voluntary contributions from Member States to support the execution of the Work Programme and the Multiannual Strategy.

³⁷ Multiannual Strategy for the European Crime Prevention Network <http://eucpn.org/key-papers/index.asp>.

³⁸ EUCPN's Work Programmes can be downloaded using the following link: <http://www.eucpn.org/work-prog/index.asp>.

³⁹ EUCPN's Annual Reports can be downloaded using the following link: <http://www.eucpn.org/key-papers/index.asp>.

⁴⁰ Working Party on General Matters including Evaluation. GENVAL draws up some of the Community's strategies and policies aimed at coordinating measures to prevent and counter organized crime. In addition, this working party plans evaluations of the Member States' compliance with international obligations in this area.

⁴¹ Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security. COSI was created to strengthen operational cooperation regarding the internal security of the EU. Thus, the key objective of the Committee, set out in the Lisbon Treaty, is to promote the coordination of operational actions between the EU Member States, including in the area of law enforcement.



5. Field of activities: local, national and European level crime prevention

As laid out in the goals summed up in the Multiannual Strategy, the Network's vision is to be a primary source of crime prevention development and good practices within the EU. The following paragraphs will go into more detail on the specific actions and tasks the Network is taking to accomplish its goals.

5.1. EUCPN as a point of reference for crime prevention

The first goal mentioned in the Multiannual Strategy, i.e. to be a point of reference for the target groups of the Network, addresses the need of and the communication with the various target groups. To achieve this, the Network has set up a contact database comprising members of the various target groups: policy makers, academics and experts in fields related to crime prevention, as well as practitioners.

People within this database are regularly asked to share their knowledge and expertise on certain matters, they are invited to workshops, they are requested to share their opinion about the functioning of the Network, etc. Conversely, requests and questions on crime prevention by these target groups are dealt with by the Secretariat, either through own research or through facilitating contact with other experts.

The communication towards the target groups and the general public has been continually improving by the introduction of a quarterly newsletter, updating the EUCPN-website on a regular basis and disseminating the latest research results.

The EUCPN newsletter⁴² is meant to be a platform for policymakers, practitioners and everyone who is interested in crime prevention. In the newsletter, a compilation of news, research, good practices and experiences on crime prevention in the Member States and in Europe are presented.

Finally, to be able to respond to the needs of the target groups, the Secretariat developed an event feedback tool which is used after every EUCPN event to measure participant satisfaction with the organization of and the communication about the event, and to make recommendations to the Board on further improvements for future events.

5.2. Disseminating qualitative knowledge on crime prevention

One way to achieve the goal of disseminating qualitative knowledge on crime prevention is through the collection and exchange of information and best practices in crime prevention. In practice this means that, first of all, the EUCPN is aiming to collect existing knowledge and information – (research) reports, policies and (local or national) prevention strategies, etc. –, combine that information and share it with the Network's target groups. Additionally, own initiatives are taken to increase the knowledge on certain themes by, for example, the organization of expert workshops or panel sessions, the development of toolboxes for local practitioners and the collection of information on national and/or local crime prevention initiatives through the Members of the Network.

The Secretariat is also publishing a six-monthly report series called 'European Crime Prevention Monitor' which combines information from administrative data on crime

⁴² It is distributed in PDF-format and entirely downloadable on the EUCPN website. EUCPN Newsletter Series <http://eucpn.org/newsletter/index.asp>.



figures and trends across the European Member States, as well as large-scale survey and own collected data. The aim of these reports is to provide a substantial but targeted overview of the situation and trends on crime and crime prevention across Europe and, at the same time, gain insight into the policy measures and strategies used to prevent and to tackle crime.

The first European Crime Prevention Monitor report⁴³, which was published in June 2012, presents findings from different international cross-country crime statistics, surveys (such as victimization and self-reported surveys) and reports (such as e.g. Europol's OCTA). The second report⁴⁴, published in December 2012, focused on the public opinion and people's perceptions regarding the work of the police and the perceived 'success rate' of crime prevention policies at the national and the European level. The third Monitor Report, published in October 2013⁴⁵, zoomed in on the priorities of crime prevention policies of the Member States and the fourth, which is due in early 2014, will be addressing the theme of domestic violence.

Next, a toolbox and thematic paper series have been created, which are usually linked to the thematic work within each European Presidency. A toolbox consists of different parts: a theoretical part, which is in the form of a thematic paper, giving a broad theoretical background and introduction to the topic; a more practical part, like a manual or guidelines, which provide useful recommendations for local practitioners or policymakers on how to approach certain challenges of crime problems; and finally, an overview of existing good practices from the Member States.

The toolbox as a whole is aimed to provide more knowledge on a specific theme, but each chapter can also be read as an individual, stand-alone part which gives people the opportunity to pick the information they need.

In 2012, three thematic papers and two toolboxes were published. The thematic papers were written either by the EUCPN Secretariat or by external academic experts. The toolboxes were composed by the EUCPN Secretariat but in close collaboration with the Network Members, with experts in the field as well as with the Presidency under which they were created. The first paper was on 'Sport, science and art in the prevention of youth crime'⁴⁶, the second, on the prevention of youth crime through local cooperation involving the police⁴⁷, was written in the framework of the first toolbox on local cooperation⁴⁸. The third paper on community policing⁴⁹ was also an academic publication

⁴³ European Crime Prevention Monitor 2012/1 - European cross country crime statistics, surveys and reports. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network. <http://eucpn.org/research/reviews.asp>.

⁴⁴ European Crime Prevention Monitor 2012/2 - Public opinion and policy on crime prevention in Europe. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network. <http://eucpn.org/research/reviews.asp>.

⁴⁵ European Crime Prevention Monitor 2013/1 - Priorities in crime prevention policies across Europe. . <http://eucpn.org/research/reviews.asp>.

⁴⁶ EUCPN (2012a). Sport, science and art in the prevention of crime among children and youth. EUCPN Thematic Paper No.1, European Crime Prevention Network: Brussels.

⁴⁷ EUCPN (2012b). The prevention of youth crime through local cooperation with the involvement of the police - A pilot study. EUCPN Thematic Paper No. 3, European Crime Prevention Network: Brussels.

⁴⁸ EUCPN Secretariat (eds.) (2012a). Local cooperation in youth crime prevention. EUCPN Toolbox Series, no. 1, European Crime Prevention Network: Brussels. <http://eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate=>.

⁴⁹ Verhage & Ponsaers (2012). Community policing as a police strategy: effects and future outlook. In: EUCPN Secretariat (eds.), EUCPN Thematic Paper Series, no. 3, European Crime Prevention Network: Brussels. <http://eucpn.org/research/reviews.asp>.



in the framework of the second toolbox 'Community (oriented) policing in Europe: Concepts, theory and practice'⁵⁰.

In 2013, two more toolboxes are addressing the evaluation of crime prevention initiatives and the Lithuanian Presidency's theme of domestic violence respectively⁵¹.

Finally, as mentioned before, one of the main aims of the Network is to facilitate the exchange of best practices between Member States. Although there are various ways of achieving this goal, such as the organization of round table discussions and world cafes, thematic seminars, research reviews etc., the highlight is the Best Practice Conference, which is held at the end of each year and which involves the announcement of the winner of the European Crime Prevention Award.

5.3. Best Practice Conference & European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

Since 1997, the EUCPN has been organizing a Best Practice Conference (BPC) each year and honouring the best European crime prevention project with the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA).⁵² The aim of the BPC is to share and disseminate experience and knowledge of what is working or not in crime prevention to increase safety and security in the EU Member States. The audience is made up of policymakers, practitioners and researchers from across the EU, from candidate countries and from various national and European organizations. Non-European participants also often join the event as observers.

Since 2004, the European Crime Prevention Award has been officially integrated in the programme of the EUCPN and also turned into an annual activity by linking it to the Best Practice Conference. The ECPA is a competition which aims to publicly award good practices which have proven their success in the field with a prevention prize. It is also a cost-effective instrument to spread good crime prevention ideas from other cities, municipalities and organizations which are faced with similar challenges. Since 2012, the winning initiative is awarded a financial sum of 10.000EUR and the two honourable mentions receive 5.000EUR each.

The BPC and ECPA are organized by the Presidency of the Council and revolve around a specific theme. The ECPA is open to all EU Member States who can submit any theme-related project, initiative or package of measures which was successfully implemented to prevent crime. As figure 3 shows, the number of entries has increased over the years from just three in 1997 to no less than 22 in 2012. A continuation of this upward trend can be expected due to the increasing relevance of prevention in crime policies among the Member States.

⁵⁰ EUCPN Secretariat (eds.) (2012b). Community (oriented) policing in Europe: Concepts, theory and practice. EUCPN Toolbox Series, no. 2, European Crime Prevention Network: Brussels.
<http://eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate=>.

⁵¹ All toolboxes are available on the EUCPN website: <http://eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=32&pubdate>

⁵² More information on the events can be retrieved from: <http://eucpn.org/eucp-award/index.asp>.

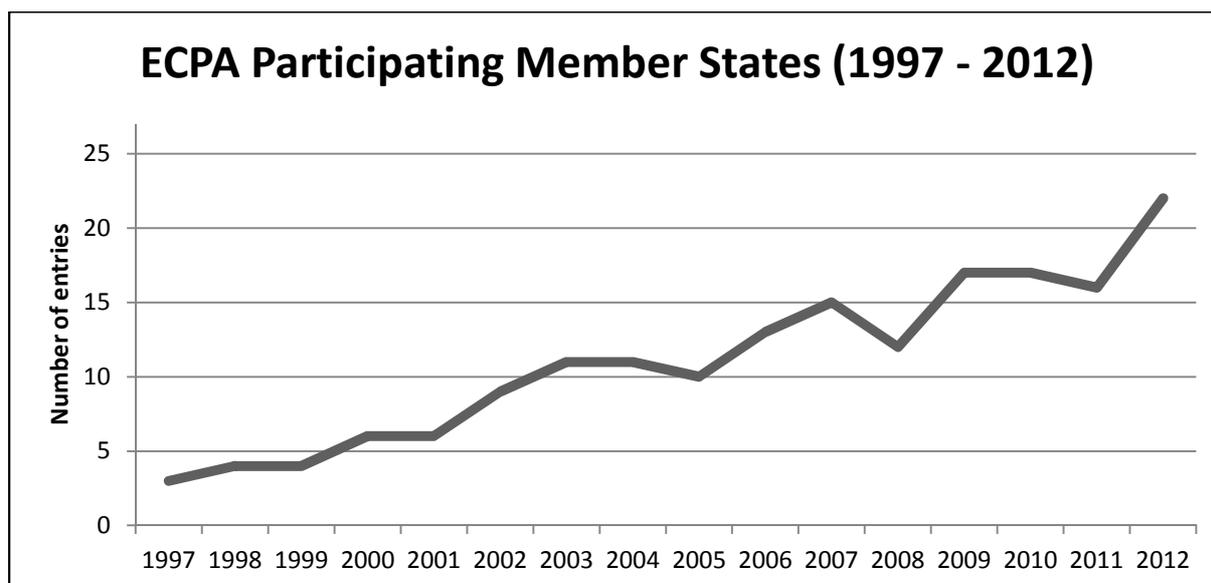


Figure 3: Number of ECPA participants per year 1997 - 2012

5.4. Supporting crime prevention activities at the national and local level

In addition to the substantive support through the development of reports and toolboxes, the third goal, i.e. to support crime prevention activities at the national and local level, is also addressed by providing information on the funding and implementation of crime prevention projects. For example, during Hungary's Presidency in 2011, a short report was circulated among the EUCPN Members and published on the website listing various national and EU funding sources and channels related to crime prevention activities⁵³. Information on deadlines for calls to apply for funding are always communicated through the EUCPN's communication channels (e-mail, website, newsletter,...) and the EUCPN Secretariat gives assistance to the applicants' search for partners for projects in other Member States.

Another example of supporting crime prevention activities is the publication of a guide on how to determine costs and benefits of crime prevention, developed in a project led by Denmark. This hands-on guide aims to offer support to policymakers and practitioners who want to conduct reliable cost-benefit analyses of crime prevention programmes in Europe⁵⁴.

Finally, the projects of the Best Practice Conference and the European Crime Prevention Award nominees are being promoted through the website and the three-monthly newsletter. The experts from the winning projects are also promoted through various workshops and/or conferences across Europe to share their experience on other platforms.

⁵³ Summary on funding sources and mechanisms of crime prevention activities in the EU Member States, European Crime Prevention Network http://www.eucpn.org/pubdocs/Summary_Board_final.pdf.

⁵⁴ Højbjerg Jacobsen, Rasmus (2013). Hands-on Guide to Cost-Benefit-Analysis of Crime Prevention Efforts. CEBR – Centre for Economic and Business Research. Copenhagen. <http://eucpn.org/goodpractice/showdoc.asp?docid=308>.



5.5. Developing crime prevention throughout the EU

To be able to develop and support crime prevention throughout the EU and to be involved in the EU policy and strategy regarding crime prevention, it is important to firmly establish a good working European Network on Crime Prevention. Hence, the Network is developing and implementing a Network Management Plan, taking into account the results of the external and internal evaluation and developing a structured response to the conclusions and recommendations of these evaluations (see also next paragraph on the outlook of EUCPN).

Additionally, the Network tries to establish partnerships with other relevant bodies, organizations and agencies, based on a stakeholder analysis and meetings with different partners in order to agree on forms of communication and exchange of information. Currently, EUCPN is establishing closer links with EUROPOL, CEPOL and Eurostat, as well as with other international and EU organizations, networks and initiatives.



6. Outlook

As mentioned before and as prescribed in article 9 of the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA, the European Commission presented an evaluation report to the Council on 30 November 2012 on the EUCPN and its activities. This evaluation laid a special focus on the efficiency of the work of the Network and its Secretariat, taking due account of the interaction between the Network and other relevant stakeholders⁵⁵.

The report showed that the EUCPN has been performing well and that many shortcomings have been addressed since the last evaluation in 2009. Nevertheless, some challenges still exist in improving the functioning of the Network, but also in setting the direction in which EUCPN will evolve over the next few years.

These challenges are summarised in 20 recommendations and are related to:

- (i) the EUCPN's performance, impact and added value: aligning its priorities with agreed EU priorities, making inputs to EU and Member State policy making in the crime prevention field, allying with other EU entities, developing and disseminating outputs and good practices to key stakeholders and improving the website;
- (ii) its organization and governance: providing guidelines to support the rotating EUCPN Presidencies, defining the role of the National Representatives (Board Members), observers and Contact Points, and the working of the Secretariat;
- (iii) its possibilities to develop towards a 'Crime Prevention Observatory' as suggested in the Stockholm Programme (cfr. supra).

Following this evaluation report, the EUCPN has established a working group and developed a concrete action plan setting out how and when these recommendations will be implemented. The relevant working groups on EU level are regularly informed on the further development of the Network. The next evaluation of the EUCPN is planned in 2016.

Finally, to conclude, the EUCPN developed further towards a real European centre of expertise on crime prevention over the past decade. This process has been strengthened by the establishment of a permanent Secretariat which is responsible for the administrative, technical and analytical support of the Network. With a variety of activities and a range of different outputs, such as the toolbox and thematic paper series on various topics, the organizations of expert workshops, the European Crime Prevention Award and the Best Practice Conference, the EUCPN supports crime prevention initiatives at the European, national and local level and enhances the links between these levels.

Through internal and external evaluations of the Network, which are scheduled on a regular basis, feedback on the functioning of the EUCPN is provided and recommendations are formulated to further professionalize and improve its performance. These will support the Network in carrying out its long-term mission and turn it into an important reference when it comes to crime prevention in Europe.

⁵⁵ The evaluation was undertaken by the Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES).



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