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WINTER/SPRING 2020

# EUROPEAN LAW ENFORCEMENT RESEARCH BULLETIN

**ISSUE 19**

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– previously published as and continuing from the *European Police Science and Research Bulletin* –

## ISSUE 19

WINTER/SPRING 2020

**Also published online:** <https://bulletin.cepola.europa.eu>

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**Published by:** European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL)  
(Executive Director: Dr. h.c. Detlef Schr6der)

**Contributions are to be submitted** via the Bulletin's website (<https://bulletin.cepola.europa.eu>, with more information). Submitted articles, depended on the category, are subject to a (double blind) peer-review process. Communications for the editors shall be mailed to [research.bulletin@cepola.europa.eu](mailto:research.bulletin@cepola.europa.eu)

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*Printed by Bietlot in Belgium*

Manuscript completed in June 2020

1<sup>st</sup> edition

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

Print	ISSN 2599-5855	QR-AG-19-001-EN-C
PDF	ISSN 2599-5863	QR-AG-19-001-EN-N

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# Introduction by the Executive Director

**Detlef Schröder**

Executive Director



Dear Readers,



In the last months, the Covid-19-pandemic has changed the world as we knew it.

All over Europe – and beyond – people were forced by circumstances to operate in a new reality, characterised by sudden disruption, uncertainty and volatility. In order to curb the fast spreading of an hitherto unknown virus, governments decided to re-erect borders, forbid or restricted private travel and imposed strict home curfews. Most personal and institutional routines of life have been affected, or made impossible. Kindergartens and schools were shut together with restaurants and many other businesses in the third sector – public life, for a time, came to

a standstill. This unprecedented health crisis has put enormous strain on our societies and, for the first time in decades, we have had to call on our capacity of resilience.

Governments across Europe resorted to impose a general curfew as an exigent first response, restricting the freedom of movement of citizens as well as shutting down many businesses. A state of emergency was declared and police officers had to enforce observation of the new rule of “social distancing”, meaning that strangers had to keep a minimum physical distance when in public.

Worthy of note is the exceptional courage and selflessness demonstrated by medical, emergency and law enforcement servants in ensuring public safety and supporting governments’ wide efforts to prevent the pandemic from reaching even higher tragic proportions than those already registered. Thinking of all those professionals fills me with admiration, appreciation and deep gratitude for their solvent work and unwavering commitment.

We, European citizens, have together found ways to persevere through these difficult times. We have all witnessed signs of hope and solidarity and a broader sense of community has erupted.

This pandemic has unveiled once more, how interconnected we all are. Digital technologies have never been more important in our lives and organisations. I can but attest how critical they have been to ensure business continuity. As a matter of fact, this crisis forced CEPOL's operations to shift to digital-only channels and agency-wide remote work. Following the first announcement in March on the temporary suspension of all our training activities and meetings requiring physical presence, the agency ramped up remote working capabilities to keep connected to its stakeholders and maintain its online learning activities running smoothly and without disruptions.

The reality is that having access to safe digital tools for facilitating virtual workshops and online meetings has become a clear prime commodity, a public utility, for organisations.

The pandemic outbreak has made apparent other emerging needs with regard to law enforcement training in some Member States: the lack of solid and adequate online infrastructure to ensure continuity in the delivery of mass training activities. Those needs were immediately detected by CEPOL through our COVID-19 Task Force set up in March.

Following an initial mapping of needs, we articulated a quick response by putting all our available eLearning infrastructure, resources and expertise to the service of those training institutions requiring support. Thanks to this response, more than 2,000 law enforcement officers from x different countries have been able to receive training through their corresponding academic institutions.

The current crisis has shown us all how important up-to-date online learning solutions are for enabling us to continue with our vital further qualification. The current challenging circumstances have not hindered the release of our new Law Enforcement Education platform, LEEed - launched in the midst of this crisis after 18 months of intensive software development work. We have been at the forefront of law enforcement online education for over a decade and LEEed epitomises CEPOL's commitment for online learning as an integral part of our training programme.

Being already into the orbit of advanced technological education solutions for law enforcement training in Europe, our aspiration is to become a true law enforcement eLearning hub. As part of the natural progression, incremental changes will have to be made in the platform. Innovation does not stop on the day of the release. However, it is not just all about technology. CEPOL has a critical role to play in unlocking the existing knowledge on new forms of crime and make it available to entire law enforcement community in Europe.

The contemporary pandemic has not just affected and changed the rules of everyday life for all EU-citizens and the authorities in the Member States, it also has altered the landscape of opportunities for criminals and criminal organisations. Their “business models” have felt the impact of restricted traffic and physical encounters as everyone else, but criminals being smart entrepreneurs, they seized the chances for adapting to the new environment in regard to counterfeiting, cybercrime and fraud. In a recent ad-hoc report<sup>1</sup>, Europol has outlined three phases of the developing serious crime field, differentiating between the current situation, the mid-term outlook and the long-term impact. As key factors shaping criminal behaviour towards new or extended vulnerabilities, the push towards more online activities, demand for certain scarce health care products, and a potential severe economic downturn with rising levels of unemployment are highlighted. The Corona-crisis has started out as a global crisis of public health, but it has quickly rendered its potential as an economic threat of historic dimension. As history is teaching us, economic problems always are followed by social tensions, and the institutions of law enforcement shall be better prepared and trained for this possible future very soon.

Faced with such global crisis, it is more important than ever for the European Union, its institutions and agencies, to work together and exchange best practices and knowledge in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

Sincerely,

Dr. h.c. Detlef Schröder

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<sup>1</sup> [“Beyond the pandemic - how COVID-19 will shape the serious and organised crime landscape in the EU”](#), Europol, The Hague 2020.

# Editorial



The finishing editorial touches for the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin had to be done in midst a period of a pandemic crisis, caused by an hitherto unknown spread of a miniscule, sub-microscopic organic structure, of which scientist are at odds with each other in calling it an animate being. The SARS-CoV-2 virus, triggering the COVID-19 disease has rattled rigorously at the social foundations of communities, nation states, and even the European project, by severely disrupting societal circulation, exchange of goods and daily routines alike. Not all parts of and citizens of Europe were affected on the same level, but this period will most certainly be recorded in the history books as a pan-national collective shock-experience and – and while this lines are written - the spread of the virus has not stopped and is ongoing on a global level.

Times of crunch are, however, also often times of fostering reflection and communication about the reasons for and consequences of disaster – “don’t let a good crisis to waste” has become an frequently cited phrase: if there is any positive side-effect to be found in the ravage of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, then it might be putting a break on sliding down the slope of the disquieting trends towards post-facticity and fake-news: the apparent suffering and fate of people infected by the novel virus, extorts even from the most stern science-sceptics the insight, that apart from a miracle, evidence-based research and scientific methodology are the most promising instruments to overcome the pandemic crisis.

It is no real surprise though that the territorial mushrooming of the Covid-10 disease has had already yielded a massive effect in regard to the enforcement of law: virtually overnight the applicable law changed substantially, as many European governments (and worldwide) had declared a case of emergency, enacting emergency law, and in effect restricting fundamental rights, e.g. the right of free movement. Organisational resources had to be re-deployed all of a sudden as EU-internal borders were re-erected and the focus of policing efforts had to be shifted and realigned to the “new reality” of the abruptly altering patterns of social life (e.g. decline of traffic, stop on leisure events). There has been no shortage of



commentary about the possible impact crisis and implications of the pandemic on social life in general and law enforcement in particular. However, there is forthcoming evidence that there will be certain profound effects to be noticed – if those repercussions will prompt basic innovation, will trigger a “game-change”, or after a while will be processed so that everything will be back to normal is to be seen. Examining the facts, taking an analytic perspective and making an effort to consider all relevant aspects and context shall be a tested approach for overcoming a crisis – everything what scientific research stands for.

This issue of the European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin at hand is hopefully a good example of showcasing convincing results of the constructive dialogue between scholarship and practicing law enforcement, as openness to the scientific mindset holds a sincere promise to ultimately become a benefit for law enforcement in general in its various areas and aspects.

The key-note delivered to the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology last September by the Executive Director of Europol (the “European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation”), **Ms Catherine De Bolle**, can be taken indeed as a strong indication, how the process of rapprochement between police leadership and (critical) scholarship – even on this high level - has progressed and is progressing. We are delighted to present her contribution to this conference statement as a statement for closer future cooperation here in our publication.

One could see the Europol Director’s speech as a particular form of trust-building between two wary communities – here is where the general topic of the first of four original research articles, discussing police trust-building strategies connects. **Dorian Schaap** presents a summary of his findings from his doctoral thesis, where he examined comparatively the approaches of police institutions in three European countries in generating and designing solid and positive relationships with their citizens and communities and their prospect for success or failure.

Being trusted by the public in large is for sure a fundamental condition for sustainable and effective law enforcement work and a headstone for any community policing concept. **Robin Hofmann & Thomas Feltes** inform us about the role social media could take for good practices in this regard. Their contribution is built on set of empirical data and insights, gained in H2020 research project and documented in an publicly accessible handbook for practitioners.

Again based on scarce empirical research, **Roddrick Colvin** updates us about the emergence and evolution of and gay and lesbian police associations in Europe – that is some major West-European countries, to be more precise. Nevertheless this is a relevant topic, which does not only touch upon intra-organisational issues of reform for the various police forces in the Member States, but also relates to higher-level concerns about diversity and

police culture as such and eventually refers back to the theme of trust-building with citizens and communities.

Hard figures outlining the illegal business of trading and smuggling of endangered animal and plants and the efforts to curtail those activities are presented in the article by **Hans Ditrich**. Not necessary seen as a hot-spot of organised crime, the public interest in the enforcement of protective environmental laws can be expected only to rise in line with growing concerns about the global level of destruction of natural habitats and the looming climate-crisis.

The emergent threat of organised crime on the European level, as well as the institutional settings to counter those dangerous developments, are analysed from contrasting ends in articles by **Klaidas Kuchalski** and **Evangelos Stergioulis**. While one outlines comprehensively the various areas where organised crime is undermining lawful business, societal coherence and democratic procedures, concluding in a call for enhanced European efforts, the other takes a look at the development of Europol as the principal institutional vehicle to actually tackle the organised-crime-thread, with a particular view on national sovereignty. Reading both contributions in parallel might generate new questions for research and research.

Finally, and with a strong logical link to the pandemic crisis, we present two articles from the ongoing H2020-funded IMPRODOVA research on domestic abuse respectively domestic violence. Criminologists raised early on in the crisis the prospect the general lockdowns, curfews and imposed residential quarantines that cases in this area will sharply raise due to a lack of opportunity for “social distancing”. The articles by **Jarmo Houtsonen** and **Catharina Vogt** were actually written and submitted before the pandemic crisis took off, but we expect more to hear more about this problem soon.

## Editorial Board News

The European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin has established itself as an open-access scientific publication, especially in Europe, and is now regularly indexed on Google Scholar and EBSCO Discovery Service. The number of submissions are on the rise and there is more editorial workload to be done.

Prof. **Lucia G. Pais** (Portugal) recently had to end her commendable term on the Bulletin's editorial board – we are grateful for her commitment and we trust she will continue her support for this publication. With Prof. **Thomas Görden** continuing his membership of the Editorial Board for a while, CEPOL issued a call for new nominations to the Contact Points of the EU-Member States. In order to provide a swifter editorial service for submitting authors, we extended the number of editors on the board and are pleased to present their professional profiles to the readership:



**Ioana Lucia Bordeianu**, PhD, holds the rank of Police Chief Superintendent and is Head of the Foreign Languages and Socio-humanistic Sciences Department at Border Police School “Avram Iancu”, as well as Associate Professor at the Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences of the University of Oradea - both located in Oradea, Romania. Her research is focussed on matters of sociology, education and security studies, while teaching among other subjects Professional Communication, International Cooperation and Security Management.



**Ksenija Butorac** obtained her MSc in Forensic Sciences (1990) after a Law degree and received her PhD degree in Criminology (1996) from the University of Zagreb, Croatia. She has been working as a Full Professor of Criminology, Penology and Addictions at the Croatian Police College of the Ministry of Interior, also teaching at the Military Studies and at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb. She was a Visiting Professor in Law Enforcement at the Police College in Lower Saxony, Germany and at the Faculty of Public Security, Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania. Her areas of research include Phenomenology and etiology of modern crime, especially Drug related crime, Juvenile Delinquency, Organised Crime and Terrorism. She has over 50 peer-reviewed academic book chapters and papers to her publication list.



Maj. **Zagon Csaba** is Assistant Professor at the National University of Public Service of Hungary and is an experienced customs officer with almost 30 years of practice in customs enforcement, risk analysis, and integrated border management. He graduated in Customs Administration and Security Studies and has been awarded his PhD degree in Military Sciences in 2015. He gathered extensive experiences in capacity building for border security agencies in several countries. Main areas of research are infrastructure networks, criminal intelligence analysis, law enforcement risk management and their influence on complex security.



**Herminio Joaquim de Matos** is an Assistant Professor at Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna (ISCPSI) in Lisbon and Invited Assistant Professor at the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (ISCSP), Lisbon University. He holds a BA in Anthropology, a post-graduate diploma in Law Medicine and Forensic Sciences as well as Master- and PhD-degrees in History, Defense and International Relations. For more than 20 years, doing police work in Criminal Investigation and Criminal Intelligence areas (also as a trainer), he is actively involved in research in the fields of International Security, Terrorism & Political Violence, Terrorist Organizations, Counterterrorism, Organized Crime, Intelligence, Anthropology of Crime & Violence and Transnational Organized Crime. His research articles and reports have been published in national and international scientific journals since 2010.



**Miklós Hollán** is an Associate Professor at the Hungarian National University of Public Service a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Legal Studies of the Centre for Social Sciences (both in Budapest). He graduated in Law at Eötvös Loránd University in 1999, and obtained his Doctorate degree at the University of Szeged in 2007 (with his dissertation on confiscation). Main fields of his research experience are trafficking in human beings, criminalization of corruption and constitutional aspects of criminal law.



**Vesa Huotari**, PhD, has been working as a Senior Researcher at the Police University College in Tampere, Finland, since 2006, joining from his previous position at the University of Tampere. He has published on wide range of criminology and law enforcement topics on national and international level.



**André Konze** has been a Senior Police Officer from the State Police of North Rhine Westphalia, holding several positions at a national and international level. Inter alia he was the Dean of the German Police University, and had been the Programme Manager of the Police and Human Rights Programme of the Council of Europe. André Konze holds a Master's Degree from the University of Portsmouth in International Police Science and a Doctoral Degree from the University of Phoenix as a Doctor of Management. Currently serves at the European External Action Service as a Seconded National Expert, dealing with Human Resources within the Civilian Conduct and Planning Capability.



**Jozef Medelský** is an Associate Professor at the Academy of the Police Force in Bratislava, Slovakia, lecturing Criminal Law, International Security, International Public Law and International Police Cooperation at the Department of Public Law. He is an author of various publications in the field of international security and international police cooperation.



**José Francisco Pavia** is currently Associate Professor at Lusíada University in Lisbon and Porto, Portugal, Coordinator of the CLIPIS (Lusíada Research Center of International Politics and Security), and "National Defense Auditor" at the Institute of National Defense of Portugal. He was Visiting Professor at Sciences Po, Grenoble, France, where he is Associate Researcher of CERDAP2 (Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur la Diplomatie, L'Administration Publique et le Politique). Holding a PhD in International Relations and Political Science, his main research areas are Security Issues at Europe's Southern Border, CSDP Missions, Terrorism, Migration Flows, Maritime Security and Foreign Policies. He is the Editor of the Journal "Lusíada – International Politics and Security".



**Dr. Aurelija Pūraitė** is Associate Professor and a Vice-Dean for Science at the Academy of Public Security, Mykolas Romeris University, where she has been teaching since 2006. In 2011 she defended PhD thesis “State Regulation of Higher Education”. Her main fields of interest are Human Rights, International Public Law, Higher Education, Public Security. Dr. Aurelija Pūraitė is actively involved in various international and interdisciplinary scientific research projects, related to law enforcement activities and training, and she serves as Deputy-Chief-Editor of the journal „Public Security and Public Order“.

CEPOL is looking forward to the new term of excellent cooperation with the new members of the editorial board.

Dr. Detlef Nogala

Managing Editor

# Reviewer Thank You

All articles submitted for publication are subject to peer-review, initially by the board of editors and then forwarded to external referees, depending on the type of contribution. The editors of the *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin* would like to take the opportunity to thank our external reviewers for the effort and expertise that they contribute to reviewing, without which it would be impossible to maintain the high standards of peer-reviewed journal.

## List of external referees who have reviewed manuscripts for the Bulletin in the period 2018 to 2020

Name	Institution	Country
<b>Almeida, Telma</b>	Instituto Universitário Egas Moniz	Portugal
<b>Bartkowiak-Théron, Isabelle</b>	University of Tasmania	Australia
<b>Castro, Claribel</b>	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia	Spain
<b>De Smet, Patrick</b>	Nationaal Instituut voor Criminalistiek en Criminologie	Belgium
<b>Di Gregorio, Claudio</b>	Guardia di Finanza	Italy
<b>Felgueiras, Sérgio</b>	Universidade de Lisboa	Portugal
<b>Ferreira, Eduardo</b>	Escola Polícia Judiciária	Portugal
<b>Hołub, Adam</b>	Wyższej Szkoły Policji w Szczytnie	Poland
<b>Hufnagel, Saskia</b>	Queen Mary University of London	UK
<b>Jakštienė, Ramunė</b>	Mykolas Romeris University	Lithuania
<b>James, Adrian</b>	Liverpool Centre for Advanced Policing Studies	UK
<b>Kersting, Stefan</b>	Landeskriminalamt Nordrhein-Westfalen	Germany
<b>Konze, André</b>	European External Action Service	Germany
<b>Kordaczuk-Was, Marzena</b>	CEPOL	Poland
<b>MacLean, Roger</b>	John Abbott College	Canada
<b>Malkowska-Michalak, Roksana</b>	GCU, NTU, CEPOL	Poland

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Country</b>
<b>Martinjak, Davorka</b>	Policijska Akdemija	Croatia
<b>McClean, Janice</b>	UN and EU Development Consultant	UK
<b>Mészáros, Bence</b>	National University of Public Service	Hungary
<b>Metenko, Jozef</b>	Akademia Policajneho zboru v Bratislave	Slovakia
<b>Morgado, Sónia</b>	Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna	Portugal
<b>Mugellini, Giulia</b>	Institute for Public Communication (ICP)	Switzerland
<b>Neyroud, Peter</b>	University of Cambridge	UK
<b>Nitsch, Holger</b>	Hochschule der Bayrischen Polizei	Germany
<b>Odeljan, Renata</b>	Police College, Ministry of the Interior	Croatia
<b>Puraite, Aurelija</b>	Mykolas Romeris University	Lithuania
<b>Rauschenbach, Michael</b>	German Police University	Germany
<b>Reutemann, Michael</b>	Hochschule für Polizei und öffentliche Verwaltung Nordrhein-Westfalen	Germany
<b>Riesner, Lars</b>	Landeskriminalamt Schleswig-Holstein	Germany
<b>Roskogler, Gerald</b>	Europol	Germany
<b>Singh, Gurchand</b>	An Garda Síochána	Ireland
<b>Turawa, Gamal</b>	Metropolitan Police Service	UK
<b>Wagner, Daniel</b>	German Police University	Germany
<b>Zubrzycki, Waldemar</b>	Police Academy in Szczytno	Poland





# CONFERENCE CONTRIBUTION

# The Role of Europol in International Interdisciplinary European Cooperation

**Catherine de Bolle**  
Executive Director



## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

*Europol's mission is to support the EU Member States and Europol's partners in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. To accomplish this goal it is crucial to collaborate with many non-EU partner states, international organisations, academia and private entities. This article illustrates Europol's cooperation with academia and other non-law enforcement partners and the benefits of this cooperation for Europol in its efforts to work more effectively and make innovation a key part of the agency's business model. First, the introduction presents an overview of Europol's activities and services. Following this, Europol cooperation with academia, interdisciplinary entities and the private sector is assessed. Finally, challenges are evaluated before the conclusion.*

**Keywords:** *Europol, law enforcement, academia, cooperation, criminal policy*

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<sup>1</sup> The article is based on the plenary keynote delivered by the Executive Director of Europol at the 19th Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, held in Ghent, Belgium, on 21 September 2019.



## 1. Introduction: About Europol

Europol's mission is to contribute to making Europe safer by supporting EU law enforcement in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other forms serious and organised crime. As the EU agency for law enforcement cooperation, Europol collects information from ongoing investigations from EU Member States and non-EU countries, to make connections and find relevant links to provide actionable intelligence and leads in return. As a criminal information hub, it connects EU Member States with its operational partners like Canada, Colombia, and the US, which has liaison officers at Europol from 13 federal agencies including the FBI, US Secret Service and Customs and Border Protection<sup>2</sup>.

Europol has approximately 1 000 staff members and in addition, its headquarters hosts a community of 240 liaison officers from EU Member States and over 50 partner countries<sup>3</sup>. This environment offers law enforcement a unique networking platform, which facilitates day-to-day communication leading to shorter reaction times, closer cooperation,

2 Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA.

3 Europol statistics and data, accessible at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/statistics-data>.

sharing of knowledge and immediate support in investigations. Moreover, Europol provides the EU and non-EU law enforcement community with a secure and swift communication system, the Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA)<sup>4</sup>, which enables the exchange of operational and strategic information between over 14 000 law enforcement entities and Europol. The agency also has a toolbox of innovative tools and techniques to complement national capabilities such as facial recognition, automated entity extraction, automated translation of cyber slang using machine learning, malware analysis system and many more.

During my first months as Executive Director, I made it my personal mission to discuss the future work of Europol with police chiefs in all EU Member States. Talking to each of them was valuable in understanding how best we, as Europol, can support police across Europe. This was mirrored in the new strategy for Europol to develop the agency further, which was presented last year. Europol's Strategy 2020+ provides the framework for Europol's work and level of ambition to address evolving security threats in an effective and efficient manner.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in short, the work of the organisation focuses, in addition to its operational work, on delivering the most important services to law enforcement and to develop policing solutions for the future. Another priority is to establish Europol as a hub for innovation bringing together law enforcement, the private sector and academia, to facilitate the development of innovative solutions tailored to the needs of law enforcement authorities. Europol has a strong culture of innovation and it is currently working on complementing national capabilities and reducing the need for investments at national level by developing a highly specialised, state-of-the-art decryption platform, forensic services, and facial recognition tools based on artificial intelligence, among others. Europol will continue to invest in innovation to support EU law enforcement and help find solutions in an evolving security landscape, as it is important for the future security of all citizens.

In addition to delivering operational and strategic support to Member States, Europol's role in shaping criminal policy on a European level has also expanded considerably in recent years. By delivering input to the EU Policy Cycle against Serious International and

4 Europol, Secure Information Exchange Network Application (SIENA) (10/08/2012).

5 Europol Strategy 2020+ (13/12/2018), accessible at [https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol\\_strategy\\_2020.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/europol_strategy_2020.pdf).

Organised Crime<sup>6</sup>, Schengen Evaluations<sup>7</sup>, the Internal Security Strategy<sup>8</sup> and many other policy devices, Europol shapes policy-makers' understanding of the security threats facing the EU. Europol has a unique role in the setting of crime priorities on a European level implementing a true intelligence-led approach to operational work and policy setting. This also extends to providing a law enforcement perspective on topics that are not immediately within the realm of its mandate, but nonetheless have a significant impact on the ability of law enforcement authorities in the EU to fight crime and terrorism. One such example is Europol's involvement in the discussions around the implementation of 5G technology, which entails some serious consequences for cross-border investigations. These consequences need to be recognised by policy-makers to allow them to make fully informed decisions. In the case of 5G, Europol provided an in-depth policy paper to highlight some of the issues for law enforcement. Law enforcement joined this discussion at a later phase and efforts need to be devoted to get involved in these deliberations at an earlier stage.

Europol continues to work on its ability to communicate with law and policy-makers to ensure the voice of law enforcement is heard at the European level. It is vital that Europol not only relies on the intelligence delivered by the Member States, but also incorporates academic insights into this work to assist in developing effective actions in the fight against some of the most threatening criminal phenomena.

## 2. Cooperation with academia

Law enforcement can derive immense value from academic research to deliver better and smarter policing services for citizens.

Over the years, Europol has continually expanded its cooperation with academic partners by participating in research consortia and bringing academics into the headquarters for conferences and meetings. Moreover, academic researchers provide invaluable input to the agency's work through their membership in academic advisory groups hosted at Europol's headquarters. These help to strengthen practical cooperation between law en-

6 The EU policy cycle to tackle organised and serious international crime (2018), accessible at [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37340/20185274\\_qc0418775enn\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37340/20185274_qc0418775enn_pdf.pdf).

7 Council Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 (07/10/2013) establishing an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis and repealing the Decision of the Executive Committee of 16 September 1998 setting up a Standing Committee on the evaluation and implementation of Schengen, accessible at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5123b-f5f-46bc-11e3-ae03-01aa75ed71a1>.

8 Council Document (EU) No 9798/15 (10/06/2015) Draft Council Conclusions on the Renewed European Union Internal Security Strategy 2015-2020, accessible at <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9798-2015-INIT/en/>.

forcement and key domains, such as internet security, telecommunications and financial services.

Their contributions have also been very valuable in developing and implementing the methodologies for some of Europol's flagship products such as the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment, (SOCTA)<sup>9</sup>, which updates Europe's law enforcement community and decision-makers on developments in serious and organised crime and the threats it poses to the EU. Similarly, the Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA)<sup>10</sup>, Europol's strategic report on key findings and emerging threats and developments in cybercrime, draws on contributions from partners in academia.

Europol is committed to further developing these forms of collaboration and bringing academic research even closer to its work. Making innovation an integral part of the business model is one of the key elements that will drive Europol forward – and academic expertise and research insights are indispensable ingredients of that strategy.

### 3. Interdisciplinary cooperation at Europol

Just as academia has increasingly moved towards a stronger focus on interdisciplinary research, in the same way, law enforcement has increasingly recognised the value of working in an interdisciplinary way.

Europol no longer only works with police authorities – it is at the heart of a network that connects all types of law enforcement authorities including customs and border guards, judicial bodies, financial and tax authorities, environmental and consumer protection agencies, cyber security bodies and many more.

Some of Europol's strongest cooperation partners among EU agencies such as the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon or the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) in Alicante are not directly related to law enforcement and have a much stronger focus on research or technological innovation respectively. Pooling their respective expertise has proven to be very valuable and allows Europol to create new insights into criminological phenomena.

9 Europol, Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA), accessible at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment#fndtn-tabs-0-bottom-2>.

10 Europol, Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2019 (IOCTA), accessible at [https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/iocta\\_2019.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/iocta_2019.pdf).

## 4. Cooperation with the private sector

Likewise, cooperation with the private sector is increasingly becoming a requirement if we are to effectively tackle some of the most serious types of crime and terrorism.

Europol cooperates closely with the private sector via various consultative fora. This includes fighting financial crime and money laundering in cooperation with the financial services industry in the framework of European Financial Intelligence Public Private Partnership (EFIPP). This partnership is crucial in identifying new tools and methods to enhance Europol's response to financial crime, which results in losses of billions of euros each year. Cooperation with the private sector will also be a key pillar for the new European Financial and Economic Crime Centre (EFECC) to be inaugurated at Europol in 2020 and which will provide support and coordination for Member States in the fight against financial and economic crimes. In addition, the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3)<sup>11</sup> at Europol has been at the forefront of establishing practical and effective collaboration with private industry. Similarly, Europol's Internet Referral Unit (IRU)<sup>12</sup> works closely with social media companies to remove terrorism-related content from their platforms.

Europol has gone to great lengths to develop these partnerships and embedding them in a strong framework that balances data protection, fundamental rights and the need to ensure the safety and security of European citizens. The private sector is undoubtedly a motor of innovation and Europol can only gain from tapping into the dynamic developments in various industries.

## 5. Challenges

Of course, working in an interdisciplinary way and across industries does not come without challenges.

Exchanging information with private partners and law enforcement partners outside the EU is still not as frictionless as the exchange of data with Member States. Europol needs to engage with these partners to align expectations as to what is possible and to ensure its strict data protection regime is respected in all instances. The agency continues to work on streamlining its cooperation framework and on ensuring transparency in its

11 EC3 Partners, available at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-cybercrime-centre-ec3/ec3-partners>

12 EU Law Enforcement Joins Together With Facebook Against Online Terrorist Propaganda, press release (12/01/2019), accessible at <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/eu-law-enforcement-joins-together-facebook-against-online-terrorist-propaganda>



exchanges with these partners. Ultimately, Europol has to be accountable to Member States, European lawmakers and the public.

There are also significant technological challenges that face Europol as the law enforcement agency of the EU. Technology fundamentally shapes security challenges and responses in the EU. Law enforcement must engage in foresight activities to understand emerging challenges, formulate innovative countermeasures and, where necessary, challenge established business models and embrace organisational change to keep pace with technological developments. Indeed, disruption through technological progress occurs as a result of the convergence of new technologies becoming available, challenges to existing legal and regulatory frameworks and the emergence of previously unseen use cases and applications for this technology. Disruption through new technologies presents both challenges and opportunities for law enforcement authorities through the emergence of new or significantly altered criminal activities as well as through the potential exploitation of these technologies by law enforcement authorities. Some of the disruptive emerging technologies with an impact on law enforcement and crime include Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, 5G, alternative decentralised networks and cryptocurrencies, 3D printing and biotech.

Europol is an ideal platform to enable deeper cooperation at home in the EU and wider cooperation with partners outside the EU. In fact, Europol can deliver additional value in an age of rapid technological development by increasingly engaging in expertise coordination and collective resource management, which avoids unnecessary duplication of resources and expertise at national level.

## 6. Conclusions

In conclusion, as demonstrated, there are many instances where Europol's work benefits from cooperation with the academic world and other non-law enforcement partners. In particular, Europol can benefit greatly from academic research and can also contribute to research efforts with its up-to-date insights into the developments of serious and organised crime, cybercrime and terrorism. Certainly, working in an interdisciplinary way and across industries does not come without challenges; for instance, information exchange with third parties needs to be improved and facilitated. Additionally, rapid technological development can generate disruptions, which would need to be addressed. However, such developments also provide opportunities, which could and need to be harnessed. In this context, cooperation with non-law enforcement partners is to be upheld and improved further. Europol is committed to deepening and intensifying this cooperation.

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# ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLES

# Citizens' Trust in the Police and Police Trust-Building Strategies: Main findings from a comparative, dynamic study

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## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

*Trust in the police is a topic of both scientific and practical relevance. It is therefore surprising that research has so far neglected the police perspective on trust. This article reports on an international comparative attempt to address this issue by not just studying trust in the police, but also police trust-building strategies. Through the notion of a dialogue between citizens and the police, two empirical halves of the study reflected the citizen perspective on trust and the police perspective, respectively. The research was guided by three theoretical traditions: proximity policing, instrumentalism, and procedural justice. The first part of the study aimed to compare a large number of European countries in terms of trust and its determinants. Results showed that trust in the police was mostly determined by procedural justice (or rather, procedural injustice) and that crime rates were unrelated to trust. The relationship between proximity policing and trust was inconclusive. The second empirical part of the study concentrated on police trust-building strategies in England and Wales, Denmark, and the Netherlands, tracing continuities and discontinuities over the span of several decades. Police trust-building strategies are shaped and influenced by a wide variety of factors and actors, showing that public trust in the police is only one aspect of a much larger complex in which context, events and agency play essential roles. This shows that citizens' trust in the police and police trust-building strategies are subject to fundamentally different logics, seriously complicating the dialogue between the police and the public.*

**Keywords:** *Trust, legitimacy, trust-building, comparative, dynamic.*

<sup>1</sup> This article summarises a number of main findings of the book 'The police, the public, and the pursuit of trust. A cross-national, dynamic study of trust in the police and police trust-building strategies' (Eleven International Publishing).

## Introduction

Trust in the police is an issue of the greatest importance for police scholars, policy makers, and police officers. We know from a large body of research that citizens who trust the police are more compliant and cooperative with the police, are more likely to report crime, act more proactively in cases of minor disorder and incivility, are more likely to show trusting and risk-taking behaviour in general, and feel more secure in their daily lives. In short, public trust makes the life of a police officer considerably easier (Goldsmith & Harris, 2012; Goudriaan et al. 2006; Murphy, 2017; Skogan, 2009; Tyler, 2011). With the police forming the frontline of interactions between government and the public, trust in the police is also an important symbolic indicator of the legitimacy of the state (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2017). Understandably, much research on trust in the police has focused on factors influencing citizens' trust. An increasing number of these studies has been cross-national (or even longitudinal) in nature in attempts to increase the scope and generalizability of research results (Alalehto & Larsson, 2016; Boateng, 2018; Cao et al., 2012; Kääriäinen, 2007; Morris, 2015). An important goal here is to help advise the police on how to gain public trust.

Despite this attention to citizens' trust in the police, there are still many gaps in our knowledge. The most glaring omission of most studies is in their neglect of the most important actor in shaping citizens' trust in the police: the police themselves (Gourley, 1954; Tyler, 2011). How do their attempts to gain public trust relate to what we know about factors influencing trust? This is an issue I have addressed through a large-scale study on citizens' trust in the police and police trust-building strategies (Schaap, 2018). This article summarises some of the main findings of that project.

Police trust building strategies are strategic answers to the question of *'how institutional arrangements and practices associated with policing can be reshaped so as to make them more deserving of public trust'* (Goldsmith, 2005: 457). The study consisted of two component parts. The first part was a large-scale international comparative, longitudinal assessment of levels of, developments in, and determinants of citizens' trust in the police across Europe. This was based on survey data from the European Social Survey (2002-2014) and the European Values Study (1981-2008). The second part was an in-depth analysis of how police trust-building strategies were shaped and changed over time in three European countries: England & Wales, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

These two parts were connected through what Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) called the *'dialogic approach'* towards police legitimacy. This means that when studying trust and legitimacy, the perspective and actions of the *'audience'* (the public) are as important as that of the *'powerholder'* (the police). Hence, we should study both trust and trust-building strategies. At present, we know neither what police strategies are best equipped to

gain citizens' trust, nor how the police actually try to earn or maintain public trust. To address both trust and trust-building, three theoretical traditions were used throughout the study. They fulfilled two different functions corresponding with the distinction between trust in the police and trust-building strategies. First, to help formulate expectations or hypotheses on what factors influence citizens' trust. Second, as a theoretical basis that police trust-building strategies are derived from.

The theoretical tradition that I label *proximity policing* assumes that trust in the police increases when the police are locally involved, collaborate with citizens and local actors, know what is going on in their neighbourhoods, and view their responsibilities and tasks in a broad, also non-criminal way (Peyton et al. 2019; Skogan & Hartnett, 1997; Skolnick & Bayley, 1988; Terpstra, 2010). Trust-building strategies based on this tradition are extremely diverse but are usually known by labels such as community policing or neighbourhood policing.

The *instrumentalist* school of thought is of a very different nature: its main assertion is that citizens judge the police by their performance in their 'core task' of fighting crime. A police organisation that fights crime effectively and efficiently and can prove that this is the case, will in this perspective gain public trust (Hough, 2007; Manning, 2008; Terpstra & Trommel, 2009). As a trust-building strategy, the focus is (influenced by New Public Management principles) on measurable output and achieving numerical goals especially connected to crime rates.

The final theoretical approach is that of *procedural justice*. This school of thought emphasises correct interactions between citizens and police officers, characterised by fair, ethical, honest, consistent, respectful and ethical behaviour by police officers, giving citizens the opportunity to explain their views (Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Huo, 2002). If police officers act according to these principles, citizens are expected to trust them more (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Sargeant et al., 2016). This has clear implications for a trust-building strategy: process-based policing attempts to implement these principles in police practice and attempts to avoid procedural injustice (Tyler, 2005; Reisig, Mays & Telep, 2018).

## Citizens' trust in the police across Europe

In the first empirical part of the study, I was guided by three main research questions:

1. To what extent are measures of citizens' trust in the police empirically comparable across European countries?

2. What are the differences between European countries in terms of citizens' trust in the police, and how has trust in the police developed across Europe over the past few decades?
3. What factors on the national and on the individual level explain differences between countries in terms of citizens' trust in the police?

In the first empirical part of the study, large-scale survey data from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2002-2014, including 29 countries) and the European Values Study (EVS, 1981-2008, including 28 countries) were used to compare European countries in terms of levels of trust (where is it high and where is it lower?) and developments over time (where has it increased and where has it decreased?).

Rigorous testing through multi-group structural equation modelling was conducted to ensure that the data were indeed validly comparable across countries and within countries over time. This way, we can be reasonably confident that for example a 6 on a 0-10 scale of trust in the police means the same in the Netherlands as it does in Poland (see also Schaap & Scheepers, 2014). Results indicated that most, but not all, countries and years could be validly compared in terms of their scores on citizens' trust in the police. Non-comparable countries were removed from further analyses.

Trust in the police was clearly higher in Northwestern European countries (especially in the Nordic countries) and lower in Southeastern Europe (especially in the Balkans). More surprising was that levels of trust had shown rather diverse trajectories over time. While the British Isles were characterised by a long-term decline in trust in the police in the period under study (1981-2014), most of continental Europe featured fairly positive trends in trust both in the long and short term. While trust in the police had, in many European countries, witnessed some drops briefly after the onset of the 2008 economic crisis, trust in the police fared much better than trust in other institutions and in most countries recovered swiftly.

After these descriptive analyses, I proceeded to explain differences between countries and individuals in terms of trust through a series of multilevel regression analyses. The ESS 2010 wave contained the best information for this endeavour in 21 European countries. Indicators used as determinants of trust in these analyses were derived from each of the three theoretical perspectives, both on the individual and on the national level, in addition to a substantial number of individual- and national-level control variables. The main question here was to what extent each of the theoretical perspectives could help explain trust in the police.

Proximity policing was operationalised through an individual-level indicator of how good citizens consider the police to be at preventing crimes from happening, and a na-



tional-level index of proximity policing. For this index, I had previously approached police scholars across Europe to complete a questionnaire on the extent to which the police in that country adhered to ten different elements of proximity policing. While imperfect, these measures still offer the possibility to provide at least some form of a comparison in terms of the relationship between proximity policing and trust in the police.

Instrumentalism was operationalised on the individual level by citizens' assessments of how likely the police are to catch criminals and how quickly they will respond to calls for help. On the national level, victimisation rates of burglary and assault were used, as well as homicide rates.

Procedural justice was measured on the individual level through a procedural justice-index (three questions on how likely the police were to treat people respectfully, fairly, and how likely they are to explain their actions when asked to) and by asking citizens how likely they think the police are to take bribes (an indicator of procedural *injustice* rather than justice). On the national level, corruption as measured by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index was used to approximate procedural *injustice* by government services including the police.

Results indicated the strongest support for procedural justice, both on the national and the individual level. The vast majority of differences between countries in levels of trust in the police was explained by corruption. A substantial amount of variation between individuals, moreover, was explained by individual perceptions of police bribe-taking and police procedural justice.

Weaker support was found for proximity policing, although there were indications that proximity policing helped explain at least some of the difference between countries as well as individuals. Results regarding proximity policing had to be interpreted with caution, because of the provisional nature of the proximity policing index.

Weakest support was found for instrumentalism. Remarkably, there was even a weakly positive relationship between homicide levels and trust in the police: higher crime rates were related to more trust. This is the exact reverse to what could be expected on the basis of the instrumentalist logic that citizens judge the police by their capacity to control crime.

Based on the results outlined above, it would make sense to recommend police organisations to focus especially on procedural justice (and particularly avoiding procedural *injustice* through, for example, corruption). Yet in reality, this is not what we see. Police organisations across Europe often have rather different trust-building strategies than ones

merely built on procedural justice. Why is this the case? The second empirical half of the study aimed to shed light on this question.

## Police trust-building strategies

I have attempted to make explicit the logic that police organisations, officers and policy makers follow when dealing with the problem of trust in three European countries: England & Wales, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Once again, this was done through three research questions.

- 4: When and how was citizens' trust in the police defined as a problem in different European countries, and how did it evolve?
- 5: Since that time, what strategies and 'solutions' have been adopted by whom to address the problem of trust in these countries, and to improve police–public relationships in general?
- 6: How can we understand the differences that we find between and within countries in terms of problem definition and trust-building strategies?

Guided by Kingdon's (1995) distinction between problem definition, policy generation, and political events, I first aimed to distil from each country the moment citizens' trust in the police was first defined as a police or policy problem. Then, I traced the different trust-building strategies that have since been generated and designed from the moment of 'invention' (Lee, 2007) of trust in the police as a policy issue to the moment of study. By analysing different phases, continuities and discontinuities, of police trust-building strategies in these three countries, we can gain a much more profound insight into what the police do and why when it comes to trust. Finally, a comparison of the three cases aimed to achieve overarching insights into how trust-building strategies come to be and how they develop.

All three countries<sup>2</sup> have considered trust in the police to be a policy problem for a substantial amount of time. In the case of the Netherlands, this has been the case since at least the 1970's; in the UK, since at least the 1980's, and in Denmark since the 2000's. Trust-building strategies and thinking about trust predates these moments in all three countries, yet as a policy-wise relevant issue, these are the periods when trust in the police was 'invented' as a problem.

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2 For more detailed information on the in-depth case studies, I refer to the full study (Schaap, 2018) or a recent contribution with a somewhat different emphasis, but using the same source material (Schaap, 2020).

The circumstances surrounding this invention consist in each country of a confluence of a range of factors, but in all cases, there was some sort of trust-related shock or crisis that played a vital role. In England and Wales, these were the inner-city riots of the early 1980's; in the Netherlands, the societal unrest of the second half of the 1960's and the loss of legitimacy of state institutions surrounding this period. In Denmark, the crisis was arguably government-led, with a controversial police reform in 2007 and its botched early implementation.

After the inception of trust as a policy issue, a range of strategies was formulated in each country to address the problem. These strategies diverged strongly in nature and core assumptions (see the three theoretical perspectives that most strategies are in some way derived from). They also varied in the extent to which they were actually adopted, how long they lasted, how wide-ranging they were in implications, and how successful they were perceived to have been. I provide three fairly randomly selected examples just to briefly illustrate some of the complexity involved.

In England and Wales, one of the responses after the Brixton riots and the ensuing Scarman Report (1982) was to introduce community policing experiments to restore the connection between the police and the public. However, these experiments hit the rocks soon after, when all political and police attention and resources were drawn to dealing with the 1984-1985 Miners' Strike. It would take until the early 2000's before community policing (although then termed neighbourhood policing) made a comeback under the New Labour administration to address the paradox of falling crime rates coinciding with declining trust.

In the Netherlands, too, a progressive task force of mostly young police officers had designed a trust-building strategy based on proximity to deal with societal unrest (Heijink et al., 1977). However, the trajectory of this strategy was completely different. Lack of organisational support meant that for about ten years after the release of the report, its recommendations were ignored. However, after a new police system was implemented in the early 1990's, the proximity policing strategy proposed by the task force was increasingly, although in altered shape, adopted and implemented—to the extent that it remains an important part of Dutch trust-building to this very day.

Meanwhile, these two responses to urban unrest can be contrasted with the Danish response to the (on the surface) rather similar riots in the Nørrebro neighbourhood of Copenhagen in 1993. The ensuing violence (during which 113 shots were fired by police) was framed not as a problem of police legitimacy or public trust, but as the outcome of poor public order policing strategies. Hence, it led to reforms in riot police practices, but not to widespread trust-building strategies. When police trust-building emerged in Den-

mark, it was initially because of an individual police chief's interest in community policing, not because there was a perceived problem with trust (see Holmberg, 2002).

So how to understand such differences between countries? Key here is to take context and agency into account, as well as the occurrence of (unexpected) events. These two factors play essential roles in problem recognition, policy generation, and adoption of trust-building strategies. After extensive cross-national analysis, I drew up a summary of what I termed the trust-building complex, where each process in the stage of trust-building was defined and influenced by a range of factors and actors. Here, whether and how a problem of trust is recognised depends on the conceptual understanding that key actors have of trust and what their diagnosis is of the problem they are facing.

What type of strategy is then generated or developed, depends strongly on the main actors involved and what sort of 'rationalised myth'—images of how a legitimate organisation is supposed to operate—dominates among them. Such strategies can take the form of proximity policing, instrumentalism, process-based policing or a different strategy altogether. Finally, a wide range of factors that can stimulate, impede or transform the strategy into something else than was originally intended shape the adoption of trust-building strategies.

How each of these phases turned out, the study indicated, was shaped by a specific constellation of context, events and individual agency. Elements of language and culture, ideology, unexpected events or crises, all of these could contribute to the shaping of trust-building strategies.

**Table 1: The trust-building complex<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Process:</b>	<b>Factors defining process:</b>	<b>Context, events and agency:</b>
Problem recognition	Conceptual understanding of trust Diagnosis of problem	Language and culture Acuteness of problem or crisis
Generation of strategies	Dominant rationalised myth Main actors involved	Influence from other countries or sectors Ideology and politics (Unexpected) events and open situations Preferences of key individuals/actors
Adoption of strategies	Factors that stimulate the strategy Factors that impede the strategy Factors that transform the strategy	Police support Historical and structural aspects

The point of this analysis was not to provide a complete overview of what factors shape police trust-building. Rather, it was to show that police trust-building strategies are de-

<sup>3</sup> This table has also previously been published in Schaap (2018) and Schaap (2020).

pendent on a wide range of different factors and occurrences, often coincidental or unplanned. This makes police trust-building strategies not irrational *per se*. They are goal-oriented activities but determined and shaped by factors far beyond what we know 'works'. Surprisingly, procedural justice was in none of the three countries under study the main strategy to gain public trust, although elements of process-based policing were recognizable in each of the three countries at some point in time.

## Conclusions

In this study, I attempted to contrast (determinants of) trust in the police with police trust-building strategies. This analysis questions the lazy metaphor of the policy dashboard where interventions or strategies can be implemented by flicking a switch: 'for more trust-building, push A'. Such a reductionist view of how strategies come to be cannot tell us why police organisations across Europe behave so differently (at different moments in time) to one another. After all, the first empirical half of this study indicated that procedural justice is strongly related to trust and instrumentalism is not. This suggests that police organisations would do well to focus on procedural justice rather than crime fighting. That police organisations act differently, however, than I would recommend on the basis of this analysis, does not mean that they are irrational.

What has become clear is that these two different angles show the different logics and rationalities that govern citizens' trust in the police as opposed to those that shape police trust-building strategies. The social-psychological approach that works when attempting to understand why citizens trust or distrust the police falls far short when studying police trust-building efforts. The police follow an institutional, rather than social psychological, logic in building trust. That does not imply that considerations about what citizens want, provided through for instance research results, has no influence on police trust-building efforts. It just means that these are not the only factors involved, nor possibly the most important ones. For the police, just as important is the notion of institutional support and of key individuals for trust-building strategies. A strategy also has to fit into (national) cultural and structural features of society and of the police organisation.

A mixed-method approach of the type the present study applied provides us with richer information and insights than a single-method research strategy would. Quantitatively, we have learned that the strongest relationship is between trust and procedural justice and the weakest with instrumentalism, while proximity policing falls somewhere in between. Qualitatively, the study has shed light on the way police organisations follow (or do not follow) strategies based on these theoretical notions, when they do, why, and how. It is my hope that an understanding of both sides of this dialogue contributes both to the scholarly study of trust and to police trust-building strategies in practice.

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# Social Media for Community Oriented Policing: Best practices from around the world and future challenges

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### Abstract<sup>1</sup>

*Information Communication Technologies and particularly social media have influenced policing in the past decade significantly. New opportunities for communication and image building are especially promising for Community Oriented Policing (COP). The article outlines some of the main developments in this field of policing illustrated by numerous case examples from around the world. In addition to best practices, it analyses potential risks and challenges in form of enhanced surveillance, breaches of privacy and different forms of vigilantism. A special focus will be on the opportunities that social media tools may offer to create collaborative forms of security production in developing and post-conflict countries. The article provides an overview of the current state of research on the topic.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Community Oriented Policing, Developing Countries, Facebook, Vigilantism

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the handbook 'Information Communications Technology for Community Oriented Policing: An international Handbook for Kosovo' by Thomas Feltes and Robin Hofmann. The handbook was a deliverable in the research project ICT4COP funded by the EU Commission in the framework of the Horizon2020 Research and Innovation Programme and can be downloaded free of charge from [www.cop2020.eu](http://www.cop2020.eu).

## Introduction

Law enforcement agencies (LEAs) worldwide increasingly integrate digital tools in their operations. In emergencies and crisis situations Twitter or Facebook is used to keep citizens informed and gather relevant information instantaneously (Procter et al., 2013; Dencik et al., 2018). Moreover, while police services worldwide have leveraged visible digital spaces to communicate with citizens, influence their public perception and augment enforcement, social media tools allow citizens to expose, discuss and mobilize around perceived injustices (Walsh & O'Connor 2018; Mawby 2013; Bullock, 2016; Schneider, 2016). We observe a growing phenomenon called “Do-it-yourself policing” (DIY policing), where citizens become increasingly active in supporting the police in investigations, identifying suspects and even taking traditional police tasks in their own hands. At the same time, ‘dataveillance’, the surveillance of citizens on social media by law enforcement, becomes a growing risk (Brayne 2017).

This ‘datafication of policing’ (Van Dijck, 2014), for example, takes the shape of police officers befriending and communicating with citizens on social media platforms under false pretences sometimes circumventing or even in breach of civil rights (Jewkes, 2015; Bankston & Soltani 2013; Reeves, 2017). Practices of “online stop-and-frisk” produce pernicious self-fulfilling prophecies by generating suspect places and populations thereby producing data points to justify further scrutiny and enforcement (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018; Patton et al., 2017; O’Neil, 2016). Collected data can be integrated with other metadata and big data sources, while public or semi-public content can provide new justifications for offline interventions (Amoore, 2013; Brunty & Helenek 2014; Sandberg & Ugelvik, 2016). Not only social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook regularly cooperate with police agencies (Joh, 2014), but numerous security and technology companies offer monitoring and data analytic services to forecast behaviour and pursue preemptive interventions (Mateescu et al., 2015; Harcourt, 2015).

However, risks are not only related to the collection and (mis)use of data by law enforcement agencies or other stakeholders. Platforms like Twitter are utilized not only by peaceful political protestors but also by rioters to organize themselves, circumvent police actions and undermine their tactics (Gerbaudo, 2018; Bonilla & Rosa, 2017). During so-called “flash robs”, robbers organize themselves via social media to rob stores in groups (Media4sec, 2016b). Illegal migration is to a large extent organized via social media networks used by illegal migrants as much as by human traffickers and smugglers (Europol, 2017). New digitized crimes have surfaced, that make use of social media reaching from cyber attacks, financial crimes, initiation of violence, recruitment of terrorists, to more grey areas such as cyberbullying and grooming.

No doubts, social media affected policing in various and complex ways. In this article, we will deal with what Walsh and O'Connor (2018:6) consider a 'less common' use of social media as a tool for bidirectional communication contextualized as community (oriented) policing (c.f. Beshears, 2017; Kelly, 2014). Most commonly, when speaking of Community Oriented Policing in relation to social media, formal or less formal question-and-answer sessions hosted by police departments are meant to promote partnerships and information-sharing; ultimately enhancing law enforcement (Eren et al., 2014; Dai et al., 2017). As much as this, indeed, makes for a substantive part of web-related COP, this article seeks to expand this scope of study in two ways: firstly, the rather scarce research on the use of social media for the enhancement of security in communities often overlooks initiatives and tools developed and implemented by citizens rather than authorities. Based on a relatively wide definition of Community Oriented Policing as a philosophy rather than a policing method (see Feltes & Hofmann, 2018a), we include some of these initiatives in the following. Secondly, it seems the academic discussion dealing with policing and social media is mainly focused on the developed Western world. This narrow view - besides running the risk of ethnocentrism - overlooks that especially in developing countries and post-conflict settings, social media use for COP and collaborative forms of security production unfold their full potential (Nelken, 2009). To fill this gap, this article maps out some of the latest developments in the social media and the broader spectrum of Information Communication Technology for COP. This is achieved by featuring a variety of case examples from around the world to illustrate best practices and challenges for authorities and communities.

## Social media and Community Oriented Policing

Today, police officers across the globe walk the beat through cyber neighbourhoods (Hofmann 2017). Policing, if not revolutionized, has already been strongly influenced by social media tools. Roughly, three main categories of police engagement on social media can be identified (Police Foundation, 2014):

- Firstly, providing specifically targeted information to be shared quickly, easily and cheaply.
- Secondly, providing the police with a way of connecting and building relationships with local communities and members of the public.
- Thirdly, for investigation and intelligence purposes, allowing the police to listen to what their communities are saying and to build evidence for investigations by monitoring social media content.

In daily police work, these categories often overlap.

Most commonly, social media platforms are used by police agencies for searches and the identification of criminals or missing people. This is mostly achieved by posting photos and depending on useful information provided by social media user. Most common is the use of social media by LEAs and other state institutions in case of emergencies and crisis management, specifically when a large number of people have to be informed or guided very quickly. The medium of choice is mostly the microblogging platform Twitter or Facebook as user rates are generally high.

One of the early and well-researched examples are the England summer riots of 2011. Their spread from London to other cities gave rise to levels of looting, destruction of property and violence not seen in Great Britain for more than 30 years (Procter et al., 2013). During the riots, police and neighbourhood officers used Twitter to calm the public and refute rumours of disorderly incidents. Some Twitter accounts soon functioned as networks in which people exchanged news and voiced their concerns towards other like-minded people.

Image building campaigns using social media have become increasingly popular among law enforcement organisations. For example, the Manchester Police, as well as the Berlin Police, regularly conduct so-called 'tweetathons'. For 24 hours, all emergency calls that reach the control room are posted on Twitter. Besides giving citizens the opportunity of having a look inside daily police work the aim is to raise awareness of the misuse of emergency call lines. Activities like these may increase legitimacy, transparency and trustworthiness – but these outcomes are far from being guaranteed (Aeillo, 2018; Bullock, 2018; Ruddell & Jones, 2013). Image work, presentational strategies and influencing public audiences and press coverage have always been important aspects of police work (Manning, 1992). However, it is social media that allegedly has become the most powerful tool to steer media and public relations. (Lee & McGovern, 2013; Goldsmith, 2015).

With a view to COP, communication and interaction with citizens in communities is vital. Traditional policing methods like walking the beat, introducing themselves and their work to the citizens are sometimes time-consuming, ineffective and exhausting for police officers. By using social media, police officers can enhance their visibility and reassure the public that they are active in an area as well as making it easier for the public to contact them (Media4Sec, 2016a). For example, in Whitby, UK, the police introduced the so-called 'Virtual Community and Police Meeting' (NPIA, 2011). Residents are given the opportunity to interact with their COP officer and raise issues affecting their neighbourhood by using a virtual chat room. In the Netherlands, the police have launched a mobile app that posts the latest security-related news and provides direct contact with the COP officer (*wijkagent*). The Finnish police have even introduced an internet police force called *Nettipoliisi*. This community policing unit is specialized in social media in an effort, to shift commu-

nity policing activities from the streets to the internet, taking an entire virtual approach to Community Oriented Policing (Calcara et al., 2015).

However, it is a common misconception that successful interaction with citizens via social media is easy to achieve and does not require a professional approach. Departmental policies often rigidly dictate communication and content that is difficult to communicate and hence appear sterile and inauthentic (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018). With the clear aim to control image building and information flows, police-interaction on social media is not only at risk of being fictitiously democratic and not actually enabling citizens to influence decision-making (Kudla & Parnaby, 2018), but also of achieving undesirable results. For instance, the sharing of pictures of fugitives with the public via social media can result in the creation of platforms for hate speech if the forums are not properly moderated. Disseminating mugshots may quickly foster the public perception that crime is raising or that criminals with migration backgrounds are overrepresented. The same caution must be used for image building campaigns. For example, a tweet by the Police of Cologne from New Years Eve 2016/2017 backfired immensely and brought the organisation under accusations of racial profiling. The public outcry was triggered by tweeting about the containment of 200 people at Cologne central station using the word "Nafri", police slang for migrants from North Africa. No crimes were committed at this point but the experiences from New Year's Eve one year before where hundreds of offences were committed by migrants in front of the central station had made the police of Cologne very cautious. For weeks, a political debate ensued about criminals migrating from North Africa to Germany (FAZ, 2017).

Another example for an image backlash is a campaign launched by the New York Police Department in 2014. The idea was to boost the police image by asking users to upload photos of themselves with NYPD officers. Instead of friendly photos, users began posting photos depicting aggressive arrests especially of Afro Americans and violent riot controls. The NYPD reacted considerably stating that Twitter provides an open forum for an uncensored exchange and that an open dialogue is good for the city (BBC, 2014).

A last example: a neighbourhood policing team in the UK posted a tweet depicting a female car passenger having a seatbelt over her mouth under the headline 'New Seatbelt design: 45% less car accidents!'. The author commented 'A car designer has won an award for designing a seatbelt which helps to cut down on vehicle noise pollution #IwantOne'. This tweet was widely regarded as offensive by the public resulting in negative exposure in the mainstream media and damaging the image of the police (Bullock, 2016).

## Do-it-yourself-policing

Not only LEAs make increasingly use of social media. A growing phenomenon worldwide is Do-it-yourself (DIY)-policing where citizens employ social media for criminal investigations, crime prevention or public security mainly independent of the police. DIY-policing occurs in three main forms (Media4sec, 2016a): Firstly, citizens sometimes act entirely on their own and independently of any public security organization to investigate crimes and punish suspects and offenders. Secondly, citizens limit themselves to connecting and finding or checking facts and act as information providers for public security organizations. Thirdly, citizens combine aspects of the two.

A good example to illustrate these forms are the summer riots of 2011 in England. In the aftermath of the widespread destruction, the massive engagement of citizens via social media helped to arrest over 4000 rioters. A similar dynamic unfolded after the Vancouver Stanley Cup riots in 2011 resulting not only in arrests but also in online shaming campaigns, with a number of rioters losing their jobs and even being violently threatened by online vigilantes (Schneider and Trottier, 2012; Trottier 2012). But DIY-policing is not reduced to mass events. Private Facebook searches for stolen goods like bicycles are conducted on a daily basis. Neighbourhood watches are coordinated via mobile apps to prevent burglaries. Sexual harassment reporting apps crowdsource data to create heat maps of incidents that are made publicly available to help women avoid certain hotspots.

A more ambivalent example of DIY policing is the Boston Marathon bombings of 2013 (Media4sec, 2016). In the aftermath of the attacks, an unprecedented manhunt unfolded via the social news platform Reddit. The police had retrieved a small part of the backpack that had contained one of the bombs. The challenge taken up by hundreds of thousands of users was to gather all available material, like photos and videos, and search for this one backpack (Nhan et al., 2017 refer to the phenomenon as 'diligantism'). Apparently, the Boston police retrieved some useful information for their investigations from this platform that eventually led to the arrest of the perpetrators. The downside of this mass engagement was misinformation on suspects and rumours being widely circulated on Reddit and even picked up by the press. Several alleged suspects were incorrectly identified putting them in serious danger of becoming victims of vigilantism from an emotionalized online crowd (see Marx, 2013; Lally, 2017). Despite all founded criticism that unfolded in the aftermath of the aforementioned events: the digital communities amplified surveillance and outreach to an extent law enforcement authorities alone would not have been able to (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018; Reeves, 2017).

## Information Communication Technologies (ICT) for COP in Developing Countries

The discourse about social media and ICT often focuses on Western countries. This narrow view may have its roots in the assumption that ICT environments in developing countries are rudimentary, smartphones and computers are scarce, and user rates of social media platforms are low. However, although varying from country to country, the so-called 'digital divide' between the developed and less developed world is shrinking (Douglas, 2015; Poushter, 2016; Sobaih et al., 2016).

ICT tools in the broader area of community policing and collaborative security production are attractive for societies struggling with the implementation of functioning security structures. The reasons are simple: ICT is easily accessible, can be used by nearly everyone and is cheap (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018). Therefore, in recent years, international, national and local actors have increasingly included ICT-tools in conflict prevention and peace-building programs. Among experts there seemingly is a strong consensus that technologies improve the capacity to predict, describe and diagnose conflict by generating, accessing and sharing data in conflict-prone situations (see De Zan et al., 2016). A good example is Ushahidi<sup>2</sup> (Swahili for "testimony" or "witness") a website that was created after the Kenyan presidential elections in 2007 when a violent crisis erupted after electoral manipulations were discovered and the mainstream media was banned from reporting. The purpose of Ushahidi was to collect eyewitness reports of violence sent in by email and text-message and to use the collected data for the creation of maps on Google maps. It tackled the problem that people were only able to find out about violence that happened nearby, but had no broader picture of the situation to understand what was going on or to offer their help. The website used different sources, such as international media, NGOs and Kenyan journalists, to verify eyewitness reports of violent acts. By avoiding official sources and only relying on citizens, the data collected by Ushahidi was superior to that reported by the Kenyan mainstream media at the time. Since then, the website was used in a number of occasions, such as mapping violence in South Africa and Congo, to track pharmacy stock-outs in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia or to monitor elections in Mexico and India.

In 2016, Amnesty International implemented a project named Décor Darfur.<sup>3</sup> Via crowd-sourcing volunteers analyzed satellite imagery of the country by looking for human rights violations. By comparing images from different times, the destruction of remote villages can be pinpointed and reported (see also Convergne & Snyder, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.ushahidi.com/about>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/10/digital-volunteers-to-expose-darfur-human-rights-violations/>

In Kosovo, a sexual reporting app crowd sources data to create heat maps of sexual harassment incidents.<sup>4</sup> The maps are made publicly available to help women avoid hot spots for sexual harassment around the country. A similar principle is used for the detection of illegal dumping sites<sup>5</sup>. Via a mobile app, dumpsites can be geotagged and photos uploaded.

Safetipin is a map-based safety app developed for New Delhi providing crowdsourced safety scores for certain places in a city including information on street lighting. By using a GPS locator, the app updates the user if he is currently in a safe location. Through a GPS tracker, family and friends can keep track of the user's whereabouts. In addition, the developers cooperate with local taxi drivers that mount smartphones in their vehicles to take photos of the streets by night to assess the street lighting in certain areas. Using these parameters, the app helps to perform so-called safety audits of certain areas, which are carried out jointly by community volunteers and local police officers.. Meanwhile, it is available in a number of cities, such as Jakarta, Nairobi and Bogota.<sup>6</sup>

These examples (which could be easily expanded) may not be considered COP tools in a classical sense since most of them did neither involve law enforcement authorities in the development nor in the implementation process. However, security-production through social media is not monopolized by state authorities. On the contrary, the transformative potential of innovative approaches becomes most apparent where institutional control and state structures are weak (Miklian & Hoelscher, 2018).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The use of social media by law enforcement authorities or, more broadly, by other stakeholders for purposes of collaborative security production is constantly changing and evolving, making this article no more than a snapshot of the most recent developments. Walsh & O'Connor (2018: 9) conclude that not only the dearth of empirical work limits knowledge on social media's impact to mostly theoretical, anecdotal and speculative studies. But also have scholars overwhelmingly privileged dissenting voices particularly in relation to grassroots monitoring and activism. Consequently, they plead for the development of a more nuanced view of the polarizing landscape of digital environments including more positive interactions between authorities and citizens. By featuring best practices and numerous case examples of Community Oriented Policing from all over the world, this article aims to contribute to a more nuanced view. In addition, we argue that

4 See <http://iwalkfreely.com/>

5 Available at <http://opendatakosovo.org/app/illegal-dumps/> the app called Trashout can be viewed here <https://www.trashout.ngo/>

6 See <http://safetipin.com/>



research should include more developing and post-conflict countries in its scope. COP strategies are increasingly regarded as a mainstay for international police missions and security sector reform in fragile and post-conflict states (Feltz & Hofmann 2018b). Here, the potential of social media unfolds as an easily accessible, cheap and participatory tool to create transparency and transformative powers.

However, one should not forget that it remains an ambivalent technology. Information provided on social networks can be used to incite violence and to promote conflicts. Where law enforcement agencies see an opportunity for controlling crime and increasing public safety, the citizens run the risk of becoming subject to more control and less privacy. The current discourse on social media or ICT, in general, has a tendency to view technologies and innovations as magic bullets for security problems. It is, however, important to keep in mind that they are no panacea for crime control and conflict resolution. We agree with Mancini and O'Reilly (2013) when they conclude: "[e]ven if you crowdsource your hammer, not every problem is a nail".

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<https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12648>

# The Emergence and Evolution of Lesbian and Gay Police Associations in Europe

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## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

*Four nearly 30 years, LGBT police associations have been working within police agencies to create better working conditions for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) officers and staff as well as to improve relations between the agencies and LGBT communities. The exploratory research examines the formation, structure, and impact of these associations on police agencies throughout Europe. Based on focus group and survey data from eight lesbian and gay police associations in Europe, this research highlights unique and common elements of their evolution and articulates a path forward to stay relevant in ever-changing political and social environments. Based on the data gathered, there appear to be opportunities to expand the efforts of these associations to include more visibility and open interactions with local LGBT communities. Through collective action and support via the European LGBT police association, current lesbian and gay police associations could be more extensively utilised to form and expand LGBT police associations in other parts of Europe and beyond.*

**Keywords:** *Police associations, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), police agencies, employee resource groups*

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## Introduction

This research explores the formation, structure, and impact of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) police associations in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Since the founding of the first formal LGBT police association in 1990 in the United Kingdom, 14 additional associations have emerged across the continent. These associations, while differing significantly from state to state, share many common interests and objectives that are coordinated through the umbrella organisation: the European LGBT Police Association. In studying these police associations, this research seeks to better understand their roles within policing, their structure and design, and impact on law enforcement, criminal justice, and communities at large.

## Literature Review

Beyond research on unions, there is a dearth of information about employee associations (Welbourne et al., 2015). Research on police or LGBT employee associations is even rarer (Holdaway & O'Neill, 2004; O'Neill & Holdaway, 2007; Colvin, 2012; Ozeren, 2014; McNulty, McPhail, Invers, Dundon & Nechanska, 2018). Employee associations are "groups of employees in an organisation formed to act as a resource for both members and the organisation" (Kaplan et al., 2009: 2). Such associations are typically based on a demographic (e.g. women), life stage (e.g. Generation Y), or function (e.g. sales). Minority status-based associations are usually dedicated to fostering a supportive work environment within the context of the organisation's mission, values, goals, practices, and objectives (Kaplan et al., 2009). Employee associations can be sponsored and/or recognised by the organisation, but they are usually staffed and operated by volunteers. Employees take it upon themselves to support the organisation by being members of one or more associations in their organisation (Bell, 2011). Thus, these associations can be environments where employees are engaged in organisational citizenship. Although associations can originate at the management or leadership level of an organisation, in most cases, employees are the individuals who initially start the associations (Creed & Cooper, 2008). It is not uncommon for associations to begin as informal social meetings of like-minded individuals (O'Neill & Holdaway, 2007; McNulty, McPhail, Invers, Dundon & Nechanska, 2018).

Employee associations have been to produce several benefits at the organisational level. Kaplan et al. concluded that employee associations were "a critical element in creating a culture of inclusion and a workplace that supports the diversity of background, though, and perspective" (2009: 3). Furthermore, they suggested that associations are beneficial in leadership development, helping employees to bridge cultural differences across

2 Sometimes referred to as employee resource groups, employee networks, or affinity groups.

organisational boundaries, and build a connection with the community (Kaplan et al., 2009). Githens and Aragon (2009) observed that LGBT associations can effectively aid in changing the culture and operations of their organisation.

In addition to organisation-level outcomes, employee associations are designed to benefit employees. Employees receive personal and professional development opportunities, such as educational and networking activities (Kaplan et al., 2009). Friedman and Craig (2004) observed that mentoring within the employee associations contributed to positive outlooks for black managers regarding their careers. Employee associations also appeared to help aid the process of information sharing between members, along with enabling “creative problem solving and collaboration” (McGrath & Sparks, 2005: p.48). Similarly, Van Aken et al. (1994) identified several positive outcomes of employee associations: communication within and across groups, problem-solving, professional development, building a culture of trust and community, and increased knowledge of the organisation.

## LGBT Employee Associations

Rod Githens and Steven Aragon (2009) have identified four categories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employee associations: conventional, internally responsive informal, organised unofficial, and queer/radical. Each type of association is defined, in part, according to its relationship to its broader environment. Conventional associations are commonly commissioned or approved by the employing organisations and usually emphasise connections to the goals of the employer, such as diversity or employee satisfaction. Internally responsive informal associations are generally not officially recognised, are loosely structured, and are responsive to the needs of constituent employees on an “as needed” basis. Organised unofficial associations are formed outside the workplace and usually seek change both within the workplace and throughout the broader society. Finally, queer/radical associations are focused on more extensive social changes and have little desire to formalise their relationships with other institutions. As Githens and Aragon noted about all of these types of associations, “the groups typically exist to bring about some type of change. Change can be aimed toward improving organisational effectiveness or toward broader social goals, which can include the betterment of society” (2009: 26). While organisational goals and societal goals might seem contradictory, in many cases they are actually complementary. Thus, lesbian and gay police associations may have the additional goals of providing social support for officers (internal focus) and of improving policing-LGBT community relations (external focus).

In addition to Githens and Aragon (2009), Bell et al. (2011) found the LGBT employee associations were emerging as vehicles that provided employees with a collective voice within the organisation. Similarly, Raeburn (2004) found that employee associations

could serve as particularly powerful tools and resources to promote change within organizations. These groups can facilitate the increased awareness of managers and other employees of LGBT issues.

Although the LGBT community's relationship with law enforcement has been a turbulent one (Hodge and Sexton, 2018), the acceptance of openly lesbian and gay officers in the police services have helped to change institutional behaviours and attitudes (Colvin, 2012). Of all the factors aiding in the acceptance and integration of openly lesbian and gay police officers, LGBT police associations are significant, because they operate as both external and internal mechanisms for change within law enforcement. These associations have been relevant to both individual lesbian and gay officers and the police agencies for which they work. For individual officers, the associations provide support and advice and create a sense of community or group identity (Holdaway and O'Neill, 2007). For police agencies, such associations create partners for diversity training and access points for community policing within the lesbian and gay community.

## LGBT Police Associations in Europe

At present, there are 15 LGBT police associations (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland [together forming ENWI], Germany, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Serbia, Scotland, and Austria).<sup>3</sup> These associations collectively form the umbrella organisation, the European LGBT (formerly Gay) Police Association.<sup>4</sup> The international association was founded in 2004 and is charged to bringing together LGBT police organisations from across Europe “to provide a platform to share knowledge, best practice, and working together to tackle discrimination facing LGBT people both within policing and externally” (EGPA, 2019). Specifically, the objectives of the association include: supporting police employees who are LGBT; collaborating with LGBT community members to improve reporting of crimes in the community; supporting the development of additional nation-based associations; supporting police forces and national police in the development of operational policing knowledge and services specific to the LGBT community that will enhance services to the LGBT community; and encouraging representativeness and inclusiveness of the LGBT community in law enforcement (EGPA, 2019).

Although affiliated and committed to similar aims, the state-level associations maintain the autonomy of their organizations. Their specific objectives – as well as structure and design – have all been informed by the police culture and context in which they were

3 At the time of this research, there were only eleven associations: United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Sweden.

4 For simplicity, the association uses its original acronym, EGPA, which this paper also uses.



developed. For example, while the Irish LGBT police association (G-Force) is a nationally representative body that is based in Dublin and administered from the city, the German association (VelsPol) is decentralised, with German states (where police functions are carried out) leading the initiatives for each state. This difference in design and decision-making is a result of a national versus a state-level law enforcement system.

## Methods: Data about LGBT Police Associations in Europe

To gain data about lesbian and gay police associations, in-country focus group sessions were conducted. For each state association, the current president and secretary for the association were contacted via the e-mail address available through the European LGBT police association's main website. The requests to meet with each association asked for a session with „founders, current leaders, and members with extensive knowledge about the history and development of the association.“ Included in the e-mail solicitation were seven semi-structured, open-ended questions that were to frame the focus group session. The proposed focus group questions were presented in English and the official language of the respective country. In addition to the questions, associations were given the option of participating in the focus group sessions in the official language of their respective countries. Of the 11 state associations in the European LGBT police association, eight associations participated in the study.

The focus group sessions for the eight participating associations occurred between September 2015 and January 2016.<sup>5</sup> The focus group sessions were coordinated around each association's schedule. At the request of three associations, the researcher was accompanied by a translator for other-than-English focus group sessions. This ensured maximum participation for all individuals. Each focus group session was audio-recorded and lasted on average one hour. Each of the seven focus group sessions consisted of three to six individuals, and all included at least one founding member of the association. Survey data from the UK was based on over 300 responses.

<sup>5</sup> The data and results include information about the UK, which participated in a survey and interview in the previous year, prior to its disbandment. The results and analysis will reflect eight participants.

<b>LGBT Association</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Focus Group Date</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Time</b>
FLAG! (France)		Paris	10/2/2015	3	1 hour
Vespol (German)		Munster	9/18/2015	4	1 hour, 5 minutes
G-Force (Ireland)		Dublin	11/27/2015	4	1 hour, 15 minutes
Polis Aperta (Italy)		Pistoia	10/24/2015	6	45 minutes
Roze in Blauw (Netherlands)		Amsterdam	10/9/2015	5	45 minutes
Gaylespol (Spain)		Barcelona	11/4/2015	5	1 hour, 30 minutes
Gaypolisen (Sweden)		Stockholm	11/17/2015	4	1 hour, 10 minutes
Gay Police Association (UK)		London	6/1/2014	NA	NA

Once all the focus group sessions were concluded, the audio recordings were transcribed over the next year. Since translators performed on-the-spot translation, all of the transcripts included conversations in English. After the transcription, approximately 10 percent of the audio-recorded focus group sessions were transcribed by a second person to check for inter-coder reliability. Few errors were identified between the coders. The coefficient was .90. After transcription, common themes and ideas were drawn based on each of the seven semi-structured questions. Like the original transcriptions, approximately 30 percent of the transcriptions were examined and coded for common themes and ideas by a second coder. The inter-coder reliability for this coding was .95.

## Analysis and Results

The participating associations included: UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Ireland, Spain, Italy, and Sweden. As noted earlier, the associations across Europe are as diverse as the countries in which they serve. However, we can aggregate some of the focus group responses and note commonalities across the units. See Table 2 for an overview.

## LGBT Police Associations in Europe

	UNITED KINGDOM	GERMANY	NETHERLANDS	ITALY	IRELAND	SPAIN	SWEDEN	FRANCE
Year of Inception	1990	1994	1998	2005	2005	2006	2000	2001
Primary Focus: Internal, External or Both	Internal	Internal	Both	Internal	Internal	Internal	Both	Internal
Focusing Event for Association	Media story	Media story	Behest of the Commissioner in Amsterdam	Other GPAs	Other GPAs	Other GPAs	Europride 1999	General unrest by LGBT officers
Initial LGBTQ Community Reaction	Neutral	Neutral	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Neutral
Initial General Public Reaction	Neutral	Neutral	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Neutral	Neutral
Initial Police Organization Reaction	Negative	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Did you get support from other GPAs	NA	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirect
Relations with other Associations	No - None exists	No	Yes	No - None exists	No - None exists	No	No	No - None exists
Official Relationship with Police Agency	Independent	Independent	Internal	Independent	Independent	Independent	Independent	Internal
Funding Source	Force, member donations	Membership	Force	Membership	Membership	Membership	Membership	Force, member donations
Involved in Recruitment	No	No	Yes (Ads, outreach)	No	No	Yes (Ads)	No	No
Involved in Retention	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

## Origin and Support

The first LGBT police associations were founded in the 1990s in the UK (Lesbian and Gay Police Association) and Germany (VelsPol Deutschland). In both cases, the need for an organised association emerged from rank-and-file officers in large forces – in London and Berlin. Founding officers in both associations mentioned feeling isolated and longing to connect with other officers in their respective forces as reasons for seeking others out.

One German officer noted, *"... in 1994, I knew one other gay police officer, and this person knew one other. That is 3 officers in my state."*<sup>6</sup>

During this early period, social media was limited, so officers used LGBT print media and word-of-mouth to form informal social networks. The eventual formation of the associations brought with it, structure, mission, resources, and attention. Although the official creation brought few consequences from the general public or the LGBT communities, however, both associations encountered resistance from their respective police agencies. One German officer noted, *"...there was no internet, there was nothing. We started with announcements in local and regional [gay] magazines ... it took two or three years before we were able to meet and form the network ... each state was different. In my state, the ministries nor the chiefs would meet with us. In states, like Berlin, it was much easier."*

Although also formed in the 1990s, the association in the Netherlands (Roze in Blauw) had a different origin and formation. Created in 1998, Roze in Blauw was established in Amsterdam at the behest of the Police Commissioner in conjunction with the Gay Games that were to be held there. The Games of 1998 were the first in Europe, and the municipal government wanted to send a positive message to the participants from around Europe and the world. Because the Dutch had a history of supporting police officers and staff of variable backgrounds and had been working toward equity for LGBT police officers over the previous decade, the establishment of the association was a logical next step.

As one Dutch officer told it, *"... Gay people were coming to Amsterdam and the Commissioners said we needed to do something for them. We want them to feel welcomed ... it was very easy [to formalise our network]. Our Commissioner wanted these networks. He knew it is a big plus for our work ..."*

Over the initial years of association formation (between 1990 and 2006), the reception from various stakeholders varied from state to state. Table 1 shows the general level of support from each of the three major categories: the public, the LGBT community, and police agency.

<sup>6</sup> Some quotes were edited slightly for clarity.

In terms of the public, we can see that the reception for local associations was either positive or neutral. In no case, among the associations, was there an overtly negative reception by the public. In the case of England and Germany, media outlets ran stories that questioned the need or utility of such associations, but in both cases, members of the organisations did not feel that these news stories represented the general attitude of the public about their police associations.

In terms of the LGBT communities, the reception for the lesbian and gay police association was also either positive or neutral. While the positive responses were expected, the indifferent reception probably reflects historical animus between the police and LGBT communities. Like the public, there were no adverse reactions from LGBT communities. In the case of Spain, there were community members who voiced some concern over the negative history between the LGBT communities and the police, which had manifested as anti-LGBT harassment (and in some cases, violence).

As one Spanish officer noted, "... after we explained our goals, community members basically said, 'we like it, we like that inside the police there are gay people who understand us ...'"

It is in police agencies that we see the most varied reactions to the formation of lesbian and gay police associations. As noted earlier, only in the Dutch situation was the inception and creation of a police association at the behest of police leadership, and thus positively received. In addition to Roze in Blauw, the Spanish were well-received by their police agencies. In all other contexts, the lesbian and gay police associations were viewed with suspicion, hostility, and/or ambivalence by their police agencies.

As one German officer noted, "... the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior ignored us for the first three years. We wrote at least five letters to the chief of police but, we didn't get an answer..."

An Irish officer noted, "I remember going to meetings with assistant commissioners, and it [sic] was very, very hostile towards us ... I remember leaving those meetings thinking that I will never last in this organisation if this person has anything to do with it."

Finally, as an Italian officer explained, "A police officer from Bologna, the commander of a district there, declared to a newspaper there that he was very afraid of this; he was very disappointed about the creation of this association."

Of the participating association members, there were only two cases where the inception and formation of the association were met with positive support from the general public, the LGBT communities, and the police agencies. This trifecta of positive support was received by Roze in Blauw in the Netherlands, and GaylesPol of Spain. In all other situations, the associations were created with some stakeholder opposition.

## Focus, Funding, and Activities

The focus of each state-level lesbian and gay police association and their funding sources provide insights about the activities and interests of each association. In terms of focus, we can determine whether or not an association is primarily interested in police officers and staff, or if they have an external focus -- facing outward to the LGBT communities or other stakeholders. The overwhelming majority -- six out of eight -- of the associations have an internal, employee-facing focus. The remaining two indicated that they focus on both employees and the broader LGBT communities. There were no associations that focused exclusively on external stakeholders.

As a police officer from Ireland noted, *"... our restriction is [that] there is a part of the organisation that deals with policy and community relations – which would deal with the LGBT community – but they have not brought us in to work with them even though we've offered. So we are restricted in what we can do."*

Additionally, an officer from France offered another perspective, *"...we started in the beginning only between us ... our directive was only for police officers – to combat against homophobia. Most officers did not understand how we could be police officers and gay. That continues to be our primary mission."* A review of the associations' mission and objectives confirms their goals and focus (EGPA, 2019).

As the focus of associations directly connects to the activities of the organisation, the sources of funding also inform us about the capacity and scope of the association. For the majority of the associations in Europe, membership dues are the primary source of revenue. In only two cases did associations report receiving funding from their police agencies and/or other-than-membership sources, and in only two situations did funds come from both membership dues and the police agency.

LGBT police associations may engage in an array of different activities within policing and the public. It is common for US-based police associations to participate in recruitment and retention as a common practice to help bring in qualified individuals who can add to the diversity of the organisation. However, this design is not typical within the European association context, where there were three associations involved in the recruitment of officers and only one association engaged in retention strategies with the police agency. As one Spanish officer noted, *"... so we had been talking to Cataluña's Police director, to see if we could place ads on the street as we made ads in the newspapers, also in the gay magazines as well, and they approved it and they said that it was very positive."*

The Dutch reported both active and passive recruitment of LGBT people, namely tabling events, passing out flyers, and attending community organisation meetings. Roze in Blauw in the Netherlands was the only association to have organised retention activities.

The focus and funding of the associations also help to explain how they describe their relationships with their respective police agencies. In the five cases where funds were raised from membership dues, each association described themselves as independent of the police agency.

A German officer viewed this design as positive, noting, *"We are an association, we are not part of the department ... We can criticise the department officially as an officer."*

One Irish officer suggested that their outsider status was a hindrance. She noted, *"... but the fact that we are not part of the organization means that it is very difficult to really affect change where it is needed."*

In the three cases where associations reported funds from their police agency, the associations described themselves as internal to the police structure.

In summary, the most common design for the lesbian and gay police associations is a membership-based organisation that is independent of the official police agency. The associations are mostly focused on internal endeavours to improve the policing environment for officers and staff. Since the associations are primarily focused on police officers and staff as employees, it is not surprising that their efforts have not extended to external recruitment of police officers. Surprisingly, associations report minimal activities in terms of specific retention activities or plans for LGBT police officers and staff.

## Measurable Association Outcomes

When asked about the impact of their gay police associations, members noted several achievements they thought were directly related to the efforts of the association. The most common outcome noted was inclusive training efforts. These training efforts ranged from simple awareness training for leadership (where police officials are made aware of issues or concerns of LGBT officers and staff) to structured and formalised training efforts for cadets in the academy.

The training efforts to leadership, fellow officers, and cadets helped to raise the visibility of LGBT officers and staff, and their concerns – both as police officials and as employees in the police agencies.

As one Irish officer noted, *"Increased visibility helped people see the need for training..."*

A French officer noted, *"last year we sponsored a communication campaign inside every academy and workplace to say whether you are gay or straight you are doing the same job. It was very positive."*

In the case of the Dutch, external visibility was also a measurable outcome of their work. Members of the LGBT communities recognised them in the community and often reached out to them for advice.

A Dutch officer expressed it this way: *"...there is a lot of discussion with straight police about the [Pride] boat. Most of them are ignorant as to why we are there [at the Pride parade]. They mostly see us as only partying, but it is about being visible for the LGBT community."*

Finally, the associations all reported social and professional support for LGBT officers and staff as a measurable outcome of success. As noted earlier, many associations started as social gatherings with a focus on supporting members of the law enforcement community regardless of their disclosure status (out or not). Even after formal recognition within policing, the associations have maintained the social aspects of their activities. In addition, social support comes with professional support and advice.

## Challenges and Struggles

The state of LGBT police associations is not without its challenges and struggles. Three issues surfaced across associations: statewide representation, external visibility, and mission loss. The first issue commonly mentioned was the lack of statewide representation. While officers felt uniformly positive about the recent changes in their police agencies, they also noted that many of these gains have only been realised in the urban centres across Europe. LGBT officers and staff in smaller communities may still be isolated from the larger communities in the cities.

As one German officer noted, *"The city of Berlin has a really big community. You can't replicate it to the landscape of Bavaria – there is no community. The only community is on Grindr or Scruff... you have to take a different model... the only group that has no members is called the Group 17. There are 16 states in Germany, and we call them the members of Group 17 if they come from a state without a local association..."*

A Swedish officer said, *"...but mostly for Stockholm. There is still a big difference between Stockholm and the smaller cities. They have had huge problems with openly gay officers in Gothenburg, the second largest city in Sweden."*

The second challenge faced by lesbian and gay police associations is that of external visibility to the LGBT community. There are several components to this challenge that make visibility more difficult. As noted earlier, the members of the lesbian and gay police associations are primarily focused on the internal culture and operations of police agencies. They are in effect, as Githens and Aragon (2009) noted, conventional employee resource groups. This inward focus makes it difficult for the associations to work with, or support, external community-based organisations in meaningful ways. While several



associations did mention some community-based interventions and interactions – for example, working with community groups around hate crime issues – for the most part, external relations or collaborations are minimal. As the Irish officer noted, the community outreach division handles external relations and the association does not want to cross into their territory. One of the challenges mentioned by a British police officer was the fact that community members have a hard time identifying LGBT police officers, as they are an invisible minority within policing. Some LGBT officers in the UK were allowed to wear small pins on their uniforms that indicated they were part of the association, but this varied from agency to agency. This small concession was not common among other lesbian and gay police associations in Europe, except the Netherlands.

Finally, several individuals in the focus groups mentioned a sense of their primary mission being accomplished or the need to find new goals to reinvigorate their lesbian and gay police association. Through the efforts of associations, unions, and other employee groups, many of the issues and challenges faced by LGBT police officers have been changed positively. However, since 2019, two associations have closed their doors in Europe (Sweden and the United Kingdom), and two others reported minimal activity in their associations.

One Swedish officer captured the issue when she said, *"We have done many good things, and many members now have left because they don't think they need us anymore."*

## Discussion

Lesbian and gay police associations play many different roles in police agencies as well as in communities. All over Europe, such associations primarily serve as bridges between police agencies and their LGBT employees, with an emphasis on collaboration. These associations are also semiautonomous, in that their work with police agencies is usually unofficial and independent. Lesbian and gay police associations and police agencies have worked together closely in several areas, including advice and support to lesbian and gay officers on the force. Of course, some chiefs and agencies were less gay-friendly than others, and so revealing one's sexual orientation at work is not always a good idea. Thus, police associations also play a vital role in supporting officers in ways that police agencies do not. For example, associations might raise money to help police officers or connect the officers to resources that are gay-related or gay-friendly.

More recently, lesbian and gay police associations have also been active in developing training modules for police officers and staff, including training for new recruits, training for current officers, and specialised training for lesbian and gay liaison officers. For new recruits, training takes place at the academy and therefore may present recruits with their first exposure to the LGBT community. These modules complement the training that new

officers receive in diversity, hate crimes, profiling, and intimate-partner violence. For officers who have completed academy training, the associations have fought hard to ensure that training certificates and advancement standards include sufficient understanding of the lesbian and gay community and its unique challenges.

Of course, these associations have also been very active in recruiting lesbian and gay police officers and in helping develop recruitment strategies. For instance, an association may use its membership to provide outreach to friends, family, and acquaintances who may have an interest in policing but have never talked to an openly lesbian or gay officer. Associations' recruiting efforts also include coordinating outreach at gay-related events and networking with other organisations that serve the lesbian and gay community.

Whether developing policies or conducting outreach, lesbian and gay associations provide a critical connection between police agencies and lesbian and gay officers. The collective knowledge and expertise of such associations can help improve the work lives of police and staff, and the collective energy of these associations can force police agencies to become more gay-friendly and supportive.

Lesbian and gay police associations have had a profound effect on police agencies, lesbian and gay communities, and individual officers. Forming groups and advocating en-masse has served other police groups well, therefore it makes sense that these strategies have also proven useful for lesbian and gay officers. The external nature of these organisations has given lesbian and gay officers a place outside the chain of command, where they can gain support and share information. This external nature has also given these associations the ability to force change through external pressure and influence.

As Marc Burke (1993) noted, *"in the United Kingdom the Home Office had no idea about the size or influence of the Gay Police Association. It did not know whether the GPA represented 10 officers or 1,000 or 10,000. This led to significant victories in reforming the police to become more inclusive."*

The emergence of lesbian and gay police associations traces closes with the trend of individuals identifying themselves as lesbian or gay, and with the growing insistence by minority communities for more equitable and effective police service. While varying in form, structure, and activities, the associations have shown to be a positive contribution to police agencies and lesbian and gay individuals in law enforcement.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

The success of lesbian and gay police associations in Europe as employee resource groups has been notable. Early innovators such as the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands forged through uncharted issues, such as training in LGBT-specific policing matters, recognition by various actors and stakeholders, and developing safe environments for all employees regardless of sexual orientation. Most recently, lesbian and gay associations have benefited from the collective knowledge of other EPGA member associations. This is evidenced, for example, by the universally positive reception received by the Italian lesbian and gay association by the LGBT community, the broader community, and the police agencies in the country. The EGPA worked closely with Spanish police officers to create a Spain-centered lesbian and gay police association in 2005. Most recently, the EGPA has worked to launch associations in Serbia, Finland, Greece, and Norway.

While the association has increased in size in recent years, there have also been some closures as well. The 2014 disbandment of the UK LGBT police association and the 2016 disbandment of the Swedish LGBT police association is concerning. Their dissolution raises questions about the future for “mature” or established Europe-based lesbian and gay police associations. With social values changing, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people joining more facets of society – including law enforcement – is there still a need for such associations? Some have called for a more intersectional approach as a way to keep these associations relevant. That is to say, moving beyond the single identity model (in this case, sexual orientation) and instead embracing efforts this ensure other aspects of officers’ identities, like ethnicity, sex, class, and religion are central to improving the work lives of police officers. This more intentional and inclusive approach would acknowledge, as Paik noted, “that experiences and lives cannot be separated into distinct identities of race, class, and gender. Rather, those identities overlap, crossing over into one another in various ways, depending on the context and situation” (Paik, 2017, 5).

There are three specific areas where associations might look for future successes. The first recommendation is to consider continuing and expanding lesbian and gay police associations to other European states. The Dutch, Irish, and Swedish noted working with other countries, in an informal manner.

The Dutch noted the challenges for such an endeavour, “... In Albania and Ukraine, it is difficult to find openly LGBT officers, maybe one or two... we gave a four or five hour training in Albania. Someone from Albania stood up and told us how they cannot offer a chair to someone who comes into the police station, that they do not even have a chair for themselves. Someone from Ukraine said they only have one computer for the entire police station.”

Despite its challenges, this effort has to hold benefits as well. Through the efforts of establishing and supporting new associations, the EGPA can expand its capacity and support throughout Europe. With each new member state, the international association’s

best practices and innovations will emerge. For example, best practices for interviewing same-sex partners in criminal investigations could be developed. Of course, there will be states that will be more amendable than others, for forming an association. The EGPA should prioritise those states most likely to support the creation of such associations.

Second, existing associations should consider increasing their external funding to support broader and deeper connections in the LGBT communities and neighbouring countries. The additional external funds will ensure the autonomy of the state associations and the EGPA to engage in recruitment and capacity-building in other states. Given that a large number of associations who described their activities as primarily internal and employer-based, there appears to be an excellent opportunity to expand the efforts, thereby increasing external collaboration among the states. This is especially important in our current environment of community policing and problem-based policing. An external-facing campaign with the LGBT community could focus on many issues, including bullying, hate crimes, youth empowerment, and substance abuse. These issues have historically been of interest to the LGBT communities and could be better addressed with the support and expertise of a lesbian and gay police officers association.

Finally, in addition to efforts in helping police agencies recruit LGBT individuals to serve in law enforcement, lesbian and gay police associations should become more active in retention efforts for these individuals as well. While social support and networking exist in all eight associations, a more deliberative and systematic approach to retention is critical. Recruitment of individuals is only one aspect of the issue. Retaining good officers through retention efforts should also be part of the goal.

## Conclusion

This exploratory research attempts to show the breadth and depth of state-level lesbian and gay police associations across Europe. There is much diversity among the associations, yet many of the issues, challenges, and successes that they face are similar. The police associations in this study share a common desire to make police agencies more LGBT friendly and inclusive through training visibility, and social and professional support. Since the creation of the first association over 30 years ago, these groups have led the effort for training leaders, coworkers, and future police officers about the unique aspects and issues of the LGBT communities. There is room to expand the focus, mission, and goals for these associations to include more visibility and open interactions with the local LGBT communities. Current social media technologies make available collaboration tools inexpensive and more attainable across nation-states. Through collective action and mutual support, the benefits of the innovation gathered from present lesbian and gay police associations could be realised and expanded to police agencies in the east.

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# Illegal Trading in Endangered Animal and Plant Species – an Austrian perspective

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## **Abstract**

*Illegal trading in protected animal and plant specimens as well as their products is an important part of organized crime. It is estimated to rank number four in the trading of illegal goods, after drugs, counterfeit products and human trafficking. Austrian statistics on confiscations of contraband between 2011 and 2017 were used in this study in an attempt to estimate the extent of trading of products from protected species. In addition, the seized goods were categorized to get an impression of the possible motivation of the customers.*

*The controls used for this study were carried out mainly in international air travel and postal transport. The largest confiscations were therefore assigned in the categories 'souvenirs' and 'para-medical products/cosmetics'. As Austria is situated within the EU, most border controls have become obsolete. Thus, larger illegal transports are discovered either by chance or as part of multinational initiatives. A significant reduction in demand for products of protected animals and plants might be achievable by changes in consumer orientation, e.g., using new media. However, increased controls remain indispensable.*

**Keywords:** species protection, CITES, smuggling, confiscations, customs;

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## 1. Introduction

International trading of certain animals or plants and their products is regulated by the 'Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora' (CITES – in Austria, BGBl 188/1982). Included in this treaty are approximately 5 000 animal and 25 000 plant species. Of these, about 600 animal species and 300 plants are listed in Appendix I (highest threat). Commercial trading of these species is prohibited. The animals and plants that are included in Appendices II and III are protected less stringently. Trading in these species can be permitted by the authorities of the exporting and importing country in individual cases (in Austria according to BGBl 16/2010 - ArtHG 2009). The lists of protected specimens are revised by regular conferences of the partner states (see e.g. UNEP-WCMC, 2004). In addition to this treaty, the common execution of these rules is regulated by the European Convention on the Protection of Species (Artenschutzabkommen - EG 338/97) for the European Community.

As with other controlled goods that are in demand (e.g., weapons, drugs, etc.), there is a considerable black market for protected species and their products (e.g., Mackenzie, 2002). This is a classical 'dark field'. The global volume of such illegal trafficking is estimated to be at least USD 19 billion per year, and would thus rank number four in a (notional) ranking of illegal trading, after drugs, counterfeit products and human trafficking (see Broad, Mullikan & Roe, 2003; Laws, 2017; see also IATA, 2014).

Austria is of relevance for this commerce as a consumer and transit country and, to a lesser extent, for exporting animal and plant species and their products. In international terms, the role of Austria might be regarded as being of minor importance. The main exporter nations in this context are Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa and India. China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Vietnam are the main importers (Patel et al., 2015). This situation is partly reflected by seizures that take place in Austria (see Fig. 3), however, these are largely independent from the involved species. In addition to the aforementioned countries, the USA is also an important exporter to Austria.

As a small, economically prosperous European country, Austria might be a suitable model for estimating illegal trafficking of CITES-protected species and their products in a Western, industrialized country. The statistical data from official sources may allow (limited) conclusions to be drawn on the extent and elements of this illegal market.

Large-scale land use (e.g., industrialized agriculture) and over-exploitation of populations (e.g., by over-fishing) are probably more severe dangers for the diversity of species and the protection of natural resources than collecting, poaching, or smuggling. Still, the high selective pressure to single species that is caused by their aggravated use is a decisive factor in their decrease in numbers, sometimes to extinction, together with continuous

loss of their habitats. The accompanying destruction of biotopes and food chains is often neglected in conservation discourses, as are the connections to organized crime (see e.g., Broad, Mullikan & Roe, 2003).

Several factors hamper the quantification of both legal and illegal trading of endangered animals and plants. The official data on international imports and exports are sometimes inexact due to the often demanding identification of the objects (Blundell & Mascia, 2005). Furthermore, national engagement and political initiative for executing international directives is not equally strong across the various nations. Practical difficulties in enforcing of legal regulations in remote areas, and occasionally unstable local security situations, additionally hinder the detailed assessment of the situation.

In an attempt to obtain an (inherently imprecise) estimation of this criminal domain, the data from official statistics on confiscations of CITES-protected species and their products, as well as requests according to BGBL 16/2010 - ArtHG 2009 for legal trade, were used. In the following text the data are arranged according to the presumed usage of the goods instead of grouping adherent to the biological system. Thus, the possible motivations of consumers may be deduced by a 'purpose-orientated' focus of attention.

## 2. Method

Data on confiscations by customs services, the postal service and from other controls (police, veterinary, etc.) between 2011 and 2017 were obtained from the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism – Department for National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection. These were compared with the data on legal imports and exports within that time period.

In Austria, the confiscations carried out by customs control - Federal Ministry of Finance or by the police - Ministry of the Interior are collected in the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism in a data bank. The files include, among other data, the number or weight of the objects, the species (or genus), the country of (presumed) origin/destination and - if applicable - which product or part was seized (e.g. leather product, cosmetics, souvenir, etc.).

Similar data are recorded by the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism in processing the requests for legal im- and exports of protected species according to BGBL 16/2010 - ArtHG 2009. Both data sources are processed at the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism. National reports as well as the internationally agreed regular reports, e.g., to the EC, CITES, UNEP, etc., are based on these records..

The products were organized according to the following categories to determine their relative proportions and to draw conclusions on the possible motivation of the offenders:

- trophies (skins, horns, antlers, skulls, etc.)
- living plants (orchids, cacti, etc.)
- pets (exotic animals, falcons, etc.)
- fashion goods (jewelry, carvings, objects made from the skin of crocodiles or other reptiles, tortoiseshell, feathers, tropical wood, ivory, etc.)
- ethnic- and pseudo-medicine, esoteric goods (including 'food' like caviar, turtle-soup, snake-wine, bush-meat, etc.)
- souvenirs (e.g. corals, seashells, snail-shells, cobras, etc.)

Assignment to these groups was based on criteria of (subjective) plausibility. For objects that could be attributed to multiple groups, maximum consistency of data was preferred. For example, a purse from snake-skin that was purchased as a travel souvenir (small leather product - SML) would be classified as a 'fashion good'.

It must be noted that the data on seized objects are primarily derived from controls at international airports and from postal traffic. This is an important restriction which strongly influences the relative distribution of the goods into the categories. Accordingly, more souvenirs and fewer heavy or large goods can be expected. Furthermore, the relative number of air passengers and postal traffic differs greatly between various regions. Consequently, the data used here are not derived from a homogeneous pool. Additionally, the suitability for smuggling or, conversely, the probability of getting caught differs greatly among various products.

In addition, inquiries have been carried out in pertinent interest groups like e.g., animal protectionists, merchants and owners of exotic pets.

A large 'dark-field' must be assumed for some of the applied categories, especially for the 'professional' trade in living animals, food and pseudo-medical products. For example, reliable data on the trading of turtle or shark-fin soup are lacking (Weissenbacher, 2018<sup>2</sup>). These products are transported in cans as processed food, and can therefore hardly be discovered by sniffing dogs. However, insider informations indicate that these 'delicacies' are still available in certain shops or restaurants.

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2 Personal communication.

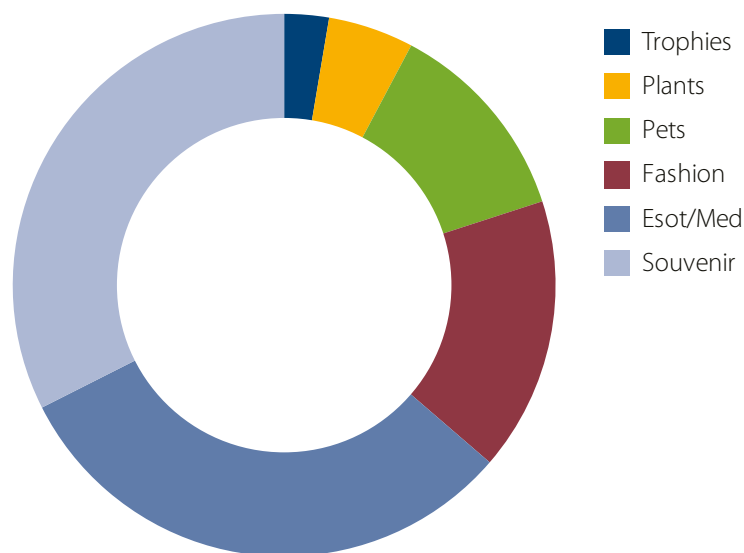
### 3. Results

In the period 2011-2017, the majority of confiscations can be attributed to the categories 'souvenirs' and 'pseudo-medical/esoteric goods' (Fig. 1). The quantity of individual objects was not used in this analysis since it is rather difficult to acquire in absolute terms, especially for parts of plants, corals or powdered substances.

As stated above, the confiscations were mainly carried out at airports and in postal centers. Seizures from other controls, e.g. traffic controls or house searches, are rare and usually occur by chance. As a consequence, no valid relation between seized quantity and potentially transferred quantity can be deduced for certain goods, e.g. caviar.

Relative to approximately 14.5 million passengers and about 200 000 tons of freight per year at Schwechat airport (VIE) alone, the total number of confiscations - 50 to 100 per year - is rather low. This indicates a considerable 'dark figure' for the transfer of illegal goods.

**Fig. 1:** Confiscations of (parts of) CITES-protected species, sorted to categories, from 2011 to 2017



### 3.1. Trophies

Confiscations categorized here as ‘trophies’ are the smallest group of illegally transferred CITES-protected products, totaling about one to three seizures per year. Specifically, these are probably animals that were bagged above the legal limit on hunting travels. For example, wildcats (*Felis silvestris* – several cases in the relevant time span) are listed in Annex II of the CITES treaty. Legal import of such a trophy would therefore be possible with a pertinent permission. Refusal to make such an application may be a result of dislike for the bureaucratic expenditure. However, it seems more likely that an animal that was shot ‘by chance’ is brought in without adhering to the legal regulations.

It should be noted in this context that the smuggling of trophies, like the illegal import of living animals, also bears the risk of transmitting diseases since veterinary inspections of the animals are evidently lacking.

Compared with the relatively small amount of confiscations, the legally approved import and export of trophies to/from Austria is relatively high (50-100 per year). This might be due to the fact that the application for permissions is calculated as a part of the total expenditures of a hunting expedition. Additionally, objects that are imported only for taxidermy and then re-exported are counted as well. In an analysis of CITES databases from 2004-2014 (IFAW, 2016), Austria ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in international trophy trading. However, over 70% of the total global trade in trophies end up in the USA.

Hunting tourism as such may also have positive effects for the conservation of populations of animals, as it provides incentives to local economies to conserve local fauna (as game). However, without continuous, detailed surveillance and sustainable management of the populations, the risk of adverse effects for regional ecosystems and food-chains arises (see e.g., Packer et al., 2009). The argument that commercial exploitation of wildlife improves its conservation is controversial.

### 3.2. Living Plants

The category of living plants is probably affected by similar motivations as that of living animals. Consumer ‘demand’ for exotic plants (predominantly orchids and cacti) is supplied by individual collectors as well as commercial dealers. A partial overlap with the ‘souvenirs’ category seems likely, since offers of living plants are made to tourists in numerous countries without information on the legal issues involved in their purchase (e.g., Viet Nam - see e.g., Bale, 2017; Hinsley et al., 2017; Hinsley, 2018). Consequently, most confiscations are made from travelers from Eastern Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and China) for orchids and South and Central American countries (Chile, Argentina, etc.) for cacti. A part of the seizures might be explained by ignorance of the legal issues and by spontaneous purchases.

The threat to the local flora by commercial collectors is often severe due to the high number of collected specimens. It must also be considered in the case of both touristic and commercial imports that the collection of the plants in their native countries naturally takes place near villages and roads. Accordingly, populations that are already threatened are further reduced.

The taxonomic groups that are predominantly confiscated (mainly cacti and orchids) suggest that the risk of transfer of invasive species, plant diseases or parasites for commercially relevant local plants is probably rather low. However, the potential danger from illegal importing of plants should not be ignored.

### 3.3. Pets

As stated before, the motivation for the illegal trade in living animals is probably similar to that for living plants. It is largely based on the ambition of 'collectors' who – like all collectors – desire (ideally exclusive) possession of objects that are as rare as possible. CITES-protected animals are rare per definition, often difficult to breed and, as living beings, can not be permanently stored. These factors drive a continuous demand, but the animal protectionist doctrine that an animal is best left in its natural habitat seems widely disregarded.

During the time span of this study, the most frequently seized animals were turtles, tortoises, lizards and parakeets, with single confiscations of up to 60 individuals (2016: *Testudo hermanni* – tortoise). The number of confiscations varies strongly year by year: a total of three confiscations of living animals was made in 2014, compared with 168 specimens in 2016. It may therefore be concluded that this high variability is largely due to the chance discovery of illegal specimens and not to fluctuations in demand. Nevertheless, the confiscations internationally are substantial. In 2018, for example, 27 000 reptiles and 4 000 birds were confiscated in a joint action (Operation Thunderstorm, 2018)<sup>3</sup>.

Austria is an importing country in most offenses of the CITES regulation. However, a certain amount of attempted exports was noted in the category of pets as well. The animals involved are mostly turtles, tortoises, lizards and parakeets. It is possible that Austria serves as a transit country for other EC countries in these cases. One recorded confiscation pertains to a hawk (*Accipiter gentilis*, 2011). A limited illegal trade in birds of prey can be assumed, with countries in the Near and Middle East as targets. However, most of these exports are carried out legally with governmental permits: 124 falcons were exported in 2015, predominantly to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

3 In addition to concerns over animal and species protection, the illegal import of animals always bears the risk of transferring diseases and parasites due to the lack of veterinary controls. These are not necessarily restricted to the species in question: a certain risk of spreading human diseases also pertains.

In light of the often cruel transport and concealment methods that are used in animal smuggling, it is clear that love of animals plays a negligible role in this business. The animals are frequently mechanically and/or chemically immobilized, hidden in luggage without food or water, and with little air supply (e.g., DW, 2018; 2019; EC question, 2017). Transport losses – which sometimes even means the death of all the animals being transported – are regrettably calculated as a part of this ‘business model’.

Quantitatively, the legal trade in pets represents a much higher volume with about 200 approved transactions per year compared with approximately ten confiscations. Corals predominate in the legal trade, followed by reptiles.

### 3.4. Fashion Goods and Cosmetics

Some of the mentioned motivations regarding collectors and the demand for status symbols may also be valid for the smuggling of goods that are listed in this category. Spontaneous or chance purchases of these products is quite improbable as many of the relevant products are also expensive in their countries of origin. It can therefore be assumed that most customers are aware that they are buying illegal products. However, this might be less applicable for some jewelry artifacts (necklaces, bracelets, etc.), carved from tropical wood, mollusks, corals, etc. For purchasing the latter products, the aesthetic or artistic aspect may be predominant. Nevertheless, it can be assumed, that a traveler from a western country who buys e.g., an ivory object is neither naive nor negligent in doing so.

It is important to note that a limited number of certain fashion goods, for example, up to four objects made of crocodile leather from less threatened species, may be imported legally without a permit. Errors probably do occur due to ignorance of these regulations. Also, deceit by local dealers about the species or the protection status of the material can not be excluded, at least for goods in lower price categories.

Fashion goods made from protected animals like fur, reptile leather products, shahtoosh wool, turtle shell, etc., can be obtained in many countries of their origin, either openly or upon request. A further complication arises from local dealers that offer counterfeit export documents for their products. The relevant forms can be downloaded on the internet, and possess no security features. Occasional buyers might not be aware that the documents issued by dealers are invalid. Accordingly, a potential for purchases in ‘good faith’ can not be excluded.

Commercial legal and illegal imports to Austria are often affiliated with jewelry and antique stores, as well as ‘Asia-shops’. As with other illegal products, internet orders and postal delivery form an important mode of distribution. In a study of just four European countries (France, England, Germany, Russia), large amounts of such animal products were



offered (totaling nearly USD 4 billion in value) in addition to a large quantity of living protected animals (IFAW, 2018). The high amount of ivory (approximately 11% of total offers) indicates evasion of the existing trading prohibitions (IFAW, 2018). 'Antique' ivory, i.e., from elephants shot before 1947, can be traded legally. Ivory hunted between 1947 and the inclusion of elephants in CITES Appendix I (highest protection status) in 1990, may be traded legally with an individual permission. Accordingly, ivory articles are assumed to be frequently declared 'old' and thus included in legal trading. This suspicion was confirmed in an analysis of test purchases (AVAAZ, 2018). In addition to the mentioned European states, the USA ranks number one in the trade of CITES-protected animals, representing 70% (China and UK are tied for second place with 8% each; CITES, 2009). The importance of the USA as a home of international trading platforms is one probable reason for this.

In the examined time span, over 50 permissions for elephant tusks and about the same amount for ivory objects or pieces of ivory were issued for Austria. The majority of this material was probably used in the restoration of antiques, e.g., for piano keys. In Austria, the international trend of supplementing elephant ivory with the teeth of hippopotamus or warthogs seems negligible, both in official imports and in seizures. Restoration purposes, seems also to be the usage for imports of tortoiseshell (scales of the hawksbill turtle). However, these reach a much lower extent (14 permissions). Exotic leather is also officially traded, mainly the skins of reptiles, but also the skin of sharks and rays is imported and partly re-exported after processing (e.g., as watch straps). Summarizing, the most frequent legal imports concern reptile leather (alligator, crocodile, monitor lizards, etc.).

### 3.5. Esoteric, Ethno- and Pseudo-medicine, Food

Many protected animals, and especially plants, go into mixtures that can be considered 'ethnic medicine'. A discussion on the effectiveness of such products is beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, an in-depth discussion on the common infringement of laws on medical imports, various food and medical compliance standards, licensing and production regulations and the like, exceed the limits of this text.

Components – whether physiologically active or not – that are regulated by laws on the protection of species are part of numerous pseudo-medical medications. Internationally, the most important 'consumer' of protected animals and plants is *traditional Asian medicine* (TAM), which includes *traditional Chinese medicine* (TCM), Ajurvedic healing and smaller ethnic curative systems (see also e.g., Deephak, 2018). In contrast, the amount of such materials used for the production of talismans, fetishes and other 'magical' products is comparatively small, at least considering the relevant populations. While the latter predominantly takes place in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, the production of pseudo-medical preparations is mainly situated in Asia. Import and distribution of these products is usually carried out by the respective ethnic groups. However, esoterically oriented persons of Austrian origin or those who deny modern medical treatment progres-

sively contribute to the demand for such products (e.g., Presse, 2009; Wildenrath, 2017). Increasing demand for pseudo-medical preparations leads to rising imports of such mixtures and of their ingredients. Illegal imports from Asian countries comprised the majority of entries during the investigated time span. However, the USA also has an important share of this market as an exporter of such articles, probably as an intermediate station.

Differences can be observed in the declaration of illegal components. Ingredients from protected plants, e.g. Hoodia (*Hoodia gordonii*, see Smith & Krygsman, 2014) or the African Cherry (*Prunus africana*, see Bodeker, van 't Klooster & Weisbord, 2014) are often listed as constituents. Ingredients from protected animals like rhinoceros, tiger, pangolin, sea horses, etc. are usually declared under false names or not at all. In marketing such products, slang or code-names are often used, similarly to drug deals. As with pets and numerous fashion articles, the internet/'darknet' plays an important role in trafficking certain substances like tiger or rhinoceros parts (e.g., AVAAZ, 2018; IFAW, 2018; see also CITES, 2009).

Extreme volumes can be reached in international traffic. A single seizure in China yielded over ten tons of pangolin scales (Reuters, 2017). This is the equivalent of about 20 000 killed animals. These large amounts are particularly amazing when one considers that pangolin scales, like the horn of the rhinoceros, consists of ordinary keratin, a substance without any verified pharmacological effect. Several large confiscations in Vietnam (Marex, 2018) indicate that pangolin scales and meat are traded intensely despite all official efforts to curb it. Although consumer demand is practically restricted to Asia, the USA is the most important exchange location for this animal (Heinrich et al., 2016).

The situation for sea-horses (Syngnathidae) is quite similar. Up to four specimens can legally be imported to Austria as souvenirs. In the catching grounds, usually in Asia, the animals are collected in the thousands, dried, pulverized and used in TAM (TCM) mixtures. However, the potential effect might be comparable to that of any other fishmeal. Together with the widespread destruction of habitats, this practice leads to the near extinction of several regional populations.

Import of medicinal drugs and similar products is legal up to three units for personal use. The high number of confiscations is therefore probably not due to orders from final users or occasional customers.

Religious use of CITES-protected species is quantitatively of minor importance when compared with TAM usage. Plant and animal parts are frequently included in the production of amulets, but because of their rarity and high price, only small amounts or cheaper substitutes are used. Additionally, controlling authorities are increasingly effective. For example, the world's largest fetish market in Akodésséwa (Lomé, Togo) is regularly con-

trolled by authorities, allegedly also for the usage of poached animals (cf. brunodeceuk, 2014).

## Food

Food products deserve special attention within this group. They are treated as a part of this category because for certain goods, like 'snake-wine', it is difficult to ascertain whether pseudo-medicinal or luxury motivations are dominant. Chinese dietetics is an important part of TAM that promises not only treatment of existing diseases but also protective effects. Additional factors in the use of protected animals and plants as food are often ethnic/cultural traditions (e.g., for 'bush-meat'), and/or also a lack of knowledge of the endangered status of the species and methods of gathering (caviar, shark fins, turtle soup, etc.).

Besides caviar and a few other luxury foods that are also consumed in western societies, Asian countries and ethnic Asians dominate in the importation and consumption of such foodstuffs. For example, shark fin and turtle soup are imported to Austria (in cans) and offered in shops and restaurants (partly upon request - own observations). The main problem of such specialties is that an increased demand results in an over-exploitation of resources. A strong factor for this development is the growing wealth of a larger number of persons – thus making luxury foods purchasable to more individuals.

Catching tunny fish in the Mediterranean is a tradition going back several thousand years. Currently, about 75% of Albacore caught in the Mediterranean (*Thunnus alalunga* – potentially endangered) is exported to Japan (e.g., Swartz, 2004; Fritz, 2010). In addition to negative effects for local fisheries, the highly endangered Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus* – on the red list of the IUCN) is incorrectly declared and hidden in these transports. Frequently, only the very valuable belly flaps of the fish are smuggled, thus complicating the identification of the species. The international character of these transactions and the necessary logistics make clear that such smuggler rings are associated with organized crime.

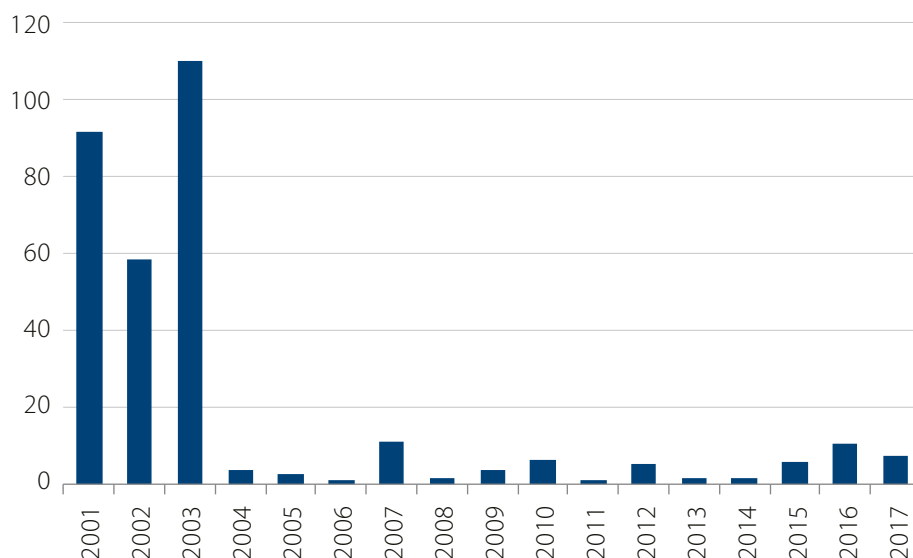
Likewise criminal networks trade species like 'geoducks' (or 'king clam' - *Panopea generosa*) that are collected at the northwestern coasts of the USA and Canada, and which are almost exclusively consumed in Asia (as Sashimi - see e.g., Guardian, 2011). The desired effect, improvement of erectile dysfunction, would probably take place to a comparable extent with other protein rich foods. A similar medical issue influences the consumption of eggs from sea turtles or of 'snake-wine'.

Smuggling of caviar might demonstrate the effectiveness of even random spot checks. Confiscations of caviar that exceed the legal amount of 125g for specific sturgeon species has decreased drastically since 2003 (Fig. 2). The amazing reduction in the year 2004 is

apparently connected to the joining of several of Austria's neighbors with the EC. The dropping of custom controls resulted in a decrease of confiscations from about 100kg to about 4.5kg per year.

This development might indicate that even spot checks are quite effective, and may give a baseline for the actual amount of illegally traded caviar (see Engler & Knapp, 2008; Doukakis et al., 2012).

**Fig. 2:** Caviar confiscations in kg/year<sup>4</sup>



### 3.6. Souvenirs

Objects that have been categorized as 'souvenirs' were slightly more often confiscated than those in the previous category in the investigated time span (159 vs. 153 cases; see Fig. 1). The probable reason for this distribution is – as mentioned before – that the data are mainly based on luggage controls at airports and postal traffic. Other (illegal) means of transportation are only discovered by chance. The statistics therefore include hardly any large-scale transports of commercial smugglers.

The goods that are most common in this category are corals, shells and stuffed reptiles (especially Cobras). While the latter are mainly imported as 'snake wine' (and therefore categorized as 'food' in this study), they are also used as decorative objects after taxidermy.

<sup>4</sup> Data from the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism – Department for National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection.

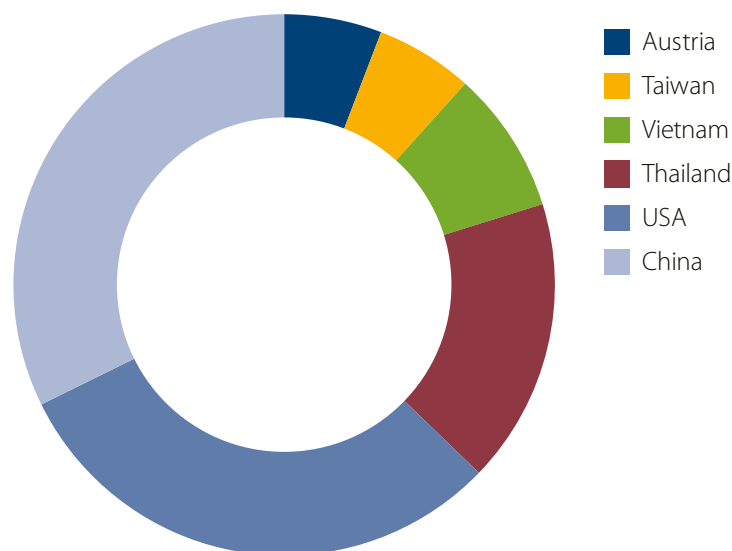
Confiscations of these taxa naturally reflect their countries of origin, i.e., tropical touristic hotspots. However, a considerable amount of tropical corals (sometimes artificially colored) and mollusks is also offered at street markets in Mediterranean countries. These objects do not enter the confiscations statistics since relevant controls for transports within the EC are lacking and the import controls of the countries where these items are sold are, evidently, insufficient.

Ignorance of legal regulations and/or a lack of insight into the problem of buying products from protected species can be assumed for many travelers. In addition to this factor, local dealers often exert a considerable pressure. While controls of returning travelers can partly punish individual transgressions, a more efficient strategy against souvenirs from protected animals or plants can probably be exerted by the local authorities.

### 3.7. Geographical Distribution

Asian countries have a dominant position in trading protected species as estimated from the confiscations in Austria (Fig. 3). Four of the six countries with the highest seizures are in Asia. Attempted illegal imports from these countries account for 65% of total confiscated goods. The high proportion of confiscations from the USA is probably partly due to the central position of this country in internet trading. For example, many TAM products can be obtained by mail-order from the USA.

**Fig. 3:** Confiscations per country of origin from 2011-2017. Only the six countries with most entries are shown. The values for Austria represent attempted illegal export or transit/re-export.



The relatively high proportion of souvenirs, especially corals, and the comparatively low number of trophies is conspicuous in Austria. As mentioned before, this effect partly results from the assignment of the products to the categories used here and to the focus of the data pool to controls at airports and postal centers. The high number of corals is probably also affected by ignorance of the legal regulations and by spontaneous purchases from local dealers who pretend to sell legal souvenirs. The CITES-status of corals is sometimes disputed (see e.g., Green & Hendry, 1999). Corals are used as building blocks in many countries and the destruction of reefs is mainly caused by factors that do not underlie species protection agreements.

Confiscations of pseudo-medical and esoteric products were nearly as frequent than goods listed as souvenirs during the investigated period. Asian countries (together with the USA) are central for these goods in the international market, either as consumers, in processing, or in re-exporting (e.g. Rosen, 2010; Patel et al., 2015; Heinrich et al., 2016).

The (trivial) fact that decreased controls result in fewer seizures can generally be stated. For caviar, as an example, the confiscations decreased from about 100kg/year to approximately 5kg from 2004 on. The reason for this phenomenon is likely not a reduction in demand but the loosening of customs controls after the joining of the EC by several neighboring countries. Increased controls of CITES-regulations instead, might have an advantageous effect for preservation of the involved fish species (Doukakis et al., 2012). These controls should be coordinated with the relevant origin and transit countries, but mainly be aimed at internet trade and the traffic of some related companies.

Illegal exchange of CITES-protected goods, as far as can be deduced from the confiscations, is far below the trade volumes of legally approved merchandise. In 2017, for example, 1 891 permissions for crocodile, alligator and caiman products were issued. Import of living corals was granted in 381 cases, and the import for ivory or ivory-derived products was granted in 49 cases. However, there were only four confiscations of crocodile leather products, 12 corals (living or dead) and two ivory products. As mentioned before, it may be assumed that the quantitative proportion of illegal imports can only be roughly estimated from these numbers.

## 4. Discussion

The rules and effectiveness of CITES are frequently criticized (e.g., Blundell & Mascia, 2005; Sollund, 2013). Still, it can be assumed that its positive effects for preserving endangered wildlife prevail (e.g. Doukakis et al., 2012). However, pressure from destruction of their biotopes is probably the most important peril for most species (UNEP-WCMC, 2004; UNEP-WCMC, 2010; Estrada et al., 2018; Strindberg et al., 2018; Kock et al., 2018; see also Lenzen et

al., 2014). It should also be kept in mind that the CITES treaties pertain specifically to international trading. National rules for the protection of threatened species differ markedly in the various countries. In addition, such rules are not executed rigorously by all states.

Trading in protected species is inherently an international issue. However, the highest threats facing many species, like e.g., over-exploitation and biotope loss, are predominantly local or national problems. It can therefore not be expected that preservation of a threatened species is warranted, even if illegal consumption could fully be abolished. Also, evaluating the effectiveness of protection measures is very complicated. The desired ecological effects are happening slowly, and their documentation is costly and requires qualified personnel (Gibbs & Currie, 2012).

In addition to the aspects of species conservation, serious risks result from the lack of import controls. The possible danger by invasive species and transmission of infectious diseases from illegally imported animals and plants is rarely discussed in Austria. Nevertheless, possible transfer of invasive animal and plant species involves severe problems. In Austria, several of these species have spread in recent decades, frequently with negative consequences for the ecosystem or economy. Examples are ragweed (*Ambrosia sp.*), the Zebra or Wandering Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*), and the spread of Pond Slider Turtles in domestic rivers and ponds.

The lack of veterinary controls of illegal imports bears the risk of transferring infections to the local fauna and flora. If domestic animals are affected, this may cause serious financial losses (e.g., rabies, bird flu, etc.).

Indisputably, 'bush-meat' – game – has always been an important source of protein for the local population in tropical countries. However, the extent of hunting, particularly when supplying growing urban populations, along with biotope loss (clearing), often endangers the survival of the local populations (see e.g. Estrada et al., 2018). As a consequence of lacking sanitary controls, the illegal import of bush-meat might also transfer human pathogens, eventually even Ebola.

Several studies indicate the considerable international differences in the usage of protected species. An analysis on the trade of several typical illegally traded animal species and their products (tiger, rhinoceros, elephant, etc.) shows that the majority of issues is contributed from only a few countries (Patel et al., 2015). Export is naturally conducted predominantly by African states (South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, etc.) while import is mainly undertaken by East Asian countries (Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, and especially China/Hong Kong). Significant improvements in these countries would have a substantial impact. For example, according to the mentioned study, blockage of illegal

trade by only six states would stop 98.1% of trafficking in tiger products. Similar success was calculated for the other species in this study as well (Patel et al., 2015).

The production of (pseudo-)medical preparations is an important motive in the request for protected species (see e.g., Deephak, 2018). Extrapolations from the quantities of seized objects indicate that the production of TAM preparations severely aggravates problems of species conservation.

The oft-criticized 'western' medicine abandoned most ineffective constituents like bear bile, rhinoceros powder, snake oil, etc., in the last centuries. Nevertheless, products of 'alternative' or 'holistic' medicine, homeopathy, Bach flowers and the like, are increasingly in demand. The reasons for this phenomenon are complex and beyond the scope of this text. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the motivation of many Asian consumers of TAM products, in addition to cultural reasons, also stems from unavailability or high prices of western medications. However, the European market is primarily prompted by esoteric and pseudo-scientific factors (e.g., Presse, 2009; Wildenrath, 2017). This expansion of the market to non-Asian consumers aggravates the connected problems. This refers not just to the quantitative aspects, since western/European consumption is still comparatively small. Instead, an attitude of tolerance and acceptance of pseudo-medical therapy is formed or fostered. Ironically, this trend is strongest in consumers who are often positively inclined toward questions of environmental and animal protection. Better information on the components of several 'natural' preparations might therefore raise consciousness of these problems. This refers mainly to the usage of protected plants, since their over-exploitation and protection status is often unknown to consumers. This may less often be the case for endangered animal products, as users of tiger, rhinoceros or pangolin components are probably well aware of the state of these species. The fact that more than a third of the global population uses TAM products (WWF, 2008) suggests a deeply negative prospect for the involved animals and plants.

In addition to the aspects of endangered species preservation, the production of TAM and other pseudo-medical preparations often does not conform to the standards of hygiene, homogeneity and purity that are required for production of medical or even nutritional products.

'Alternative' medicine products are not just often ineffective and therefore delay or inhibit evidence-based therapy and treatment of the underlying disease. Some of them can be directly unhealthy. One example is the frequently confiscated Hoodia-preparations (*Hoodia gordonii*) that are marketed for losing weight. According to control studies, the effect of weight reduction is the result of an intestinal inflammation that is caused by consumption of the drug (see Smith & Krygsman, 2014).



Increased efforts from several governments and also some producers to manufacture products without using endangered species, or substituting them with cultivated constituents, has shown positive effects for several species in the last years (e.g., Meijer et al., 2017). Increased law enforcement initiatives were often successful. However, a large amount of illegal trade remains where the legal initiatives are apparently insufficient.

Still, it must be acknowledged that not all ethnic medicine is based on quackery or superstition. Newer (traditional) Chinese medicine attempts to identify the active components of traditional formulations and study these (normally plant-based) drugs with scientific methods. Youyou Tu was awarded the Nobel Prize for medicine<sup>5</sup> in 2015 for identifying an agent that was used in ethnic medicine. The fact that pharmacologically active substances are contained in some of the over 1 500 animal and 5 000 plant species that are used in TAM is not surprising. Many components are usually present in traditional formulations, and psychological factors – especially placebo-effect and suggestion – influence the subjective effectiveness of the medications so a perceived ‘healing’ is often felt. The same licensing tests should therefore be required as are conducted for conventional medical products. This also refers to western pseudo-medicine like homeopathy, Bach flowers, etc.

## 5. General Aspects & Conclusion

Smuggling of protected animals or plants is practically absent from the public perception of ‘threats’, notwithstanding its close relations to organized crime and the financing of terror organizations. As mentioned before, it is estimated that the total volume of such goods ranks fourth in illegal trade, after drugs, counterfeit products and human trafficking (e.g., IATA, 2014; Laws, 2017). Local poachers or producers of artifacts hardly obtain a noteworthy profit. Instead, terror groups and militias (especially in Africa), organized crime (see Mackenzie, 2002; Rose & Smith, 2010; Tyler & Sheikh, 2013; Patel et al., 2015; Avis, 2017) and corrupt officials reap most of the the gains. Local conflicts between poachers and gamekeepers can reach an intensity that is comparable to civil wars (e.g., Lang, 2017; Vira, 2017; see also Guardian, 2012). The few existing investigations on the opinion of the local population indicate that they are well aware of the problems resulting from poaching, over-exploitation and biotope deterioration, and that they agree with (or are open to) actions for preserving the ecology of their environment (e.g., Gore et al., 2016).

Frequently, attempts are made to counter illegal trade networks with stronger ‘policing’ (controls, task forces, etc.). For example, several INTERPOL projects (INTERPOL, 2017a) analyze targets and connections of trade networks that are searched then by the local

<sup>5</sup> for the isolation of the anti-malaria agent Artemisinin from the Sweet Sagewort/Wormwood (*Artemisia annua*) used in ethnic medicine.

authorities within internationally coordinated operations (e.g., Operation Thunderbird – INTERPOL, 2017b). The confiscations from such large operations can only deliver a single, momentary insight into the problem, but provide an indication of the real volumes that are traded in the ‘dark field’. However, sustainability of such concentrated measures is difficult to obtain in some countries (see e.g., Kaaria & Muchiri, 2011; Basu, 2014).

Like in other fields of organized crime, a considerable problem is posed by corruption of those authorities that are in charge of executing local laws and international agreements. Similar difficulties persist for the exploitation of other natural resources, as in the support of international fishery agreements or logging. Execution of the pertinent rules is strongly dependent on the political situation and technical infrastructure of the specific country. For example, an investigation on law enforcement in the Arusha wildlife preserve in Tanzania showed that only 16% of accusations resulted in a sentence. This is probably due to deficits in forensic evidence (Salum et al., 2017). It would therefore be useful to improve and extend multilateral assistance, like e.g., the INTERPOL campaigns. In addition, targeted international support, like improvements of park rangers equipment and especially fighting corruption, could provide help in fighting criminal networks. Furthermore, certain administrative means like better security measures for export / import certificates, might additionally be useful.

While improvements in law enforcement in the exporting countries (see e.g., Salum et al., 2017) and the fighting of international trafficking networks (see Moreto & Lemieux, 2015; Moreto, Cowan & Burton, 2017) are important factors, a sustainable improvement in the protection of animal and plant species can probably not be reached in a predominantly ‘supply sided’ approach, but more likely from the side of the consumers – i.e., by a reduction in demand. Systematic investigations on the motivations of consumers would be important in this respect. Presumably, consumption that is largely motivated by prestige and collecting might even be boosted by decreasing resources and effective repression measures as these factors make their desired objects more valuable. Conversely, consumers who form the market for ‘alternative’ goods and are determined by civilization-critique, may respond to directed information campaigns by shifting to products that can be produced without components from endangered species. Targets for such campaigns could probably be found in the segment of cosmetics and health products, but improved information on hunting or collection methods (e.g. ‘finning’ for shark-fin soup) could also reduce the demand for certain other goods.

Enhanced information on the real status of endangered populations (e.g., Courchamp et al., 2018), the ecological consequences to the collecting regions, and the inefficiency of pseudo-medical products may induce a paradigm change and lead to improved consciousness in consumers of such products. This may ideally result in an improved conservation status for many protected species in the middle term (see also Offord-Wool-

ley, 2017). It seems promising to provide this information to consumers in a manner that is adjusted to their specific state and culture (e.g., by 'micro-targeting'). By using 'new media', it might be possible to change the minds of western-minded as well as more traditionally oriented customers. This is not necessarily a futile effort. As an example, the attitude towards using pelts of big cats has changed in practically all western countries. Analogous campaigning might also change the attractiveness of other products.

## Acknowledgements

The author owes special thanks to Dr. Abensperg-Traun and his co-workers from the Department for National Parks, Nature Conservation and Species Protection of the Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism for sharing the data and their valuable help. Furthermore, the author gratefully acknowledges the help of Dr. Weissenbacher – Head of the Aquarium-Terrarium House of the Schönbrunn Zoo for providing valuable information.

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# OTHER ARTICLES



# Organised Crime: New challenges and response

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## **Abstract<sup>2</sup>**

*At the political level, organised crime has long been regarded as a threat to national security. This also applies to the security threats on the European Union level. However, real urgency of this threat has not been defined. Why is this issue “securitised”? Or, in general, should it be included in the list of the most prominent threats? Maybe this phenomenon should be considered as a typical problem that would be resolved by usual means? The article aims to find answers to these questions. Organised crime is analysed by comparing the perspectives of Lithuania and the European Union. It is sought to evaluate its impact on economic and social values. In this work, the author 1) examined the European Union and national strategic documents identifying the threats posed by organised crime, 2) assessed organised crime groups, their spheres of activity, impact on social security, the factors determining the peculiarities of organised crime development, and 3) revealed the link between organised crime and other threats. The objectives of this article are: 1) to analyse threats posed by organised crime from the Lithuanian and European Union perspectives; 2) to examine structures of organised criminal groups, areas of illicit activities, so-called “engines of crime”, and the main “crime enablers” influencing the evo-*

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2 This is an updated version of the original article which was initially published in 'Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review' (2017-2018, vol. 16) by the Military Academy of Lithuania.

lution of criminality;<sup>3</sup> 3) to assess new challenges and propose specific measures of response towards organised crime as a threat to national security. The author applies systematic evaluation, comparative methods, and analysis of documents and judicial practice.<sup>4</sup> The information derived from interviews with civil servants and operational officers is presented as well.

**Keywords:** *Organised crime, policy cycle, SOCTA, national security, terrorism*

## Introduction

Organised crime started to be discussed at the international level back in the nineteenth century, yet only after the restoration of independence did this topic begin to be examined more broadly in Lithuania. Organised crime in so-called Eastern European block existed during the Soviet occupation, but at that time, one would avoid talking about that issue and the information was available only to security structures.<sup>5</sup> After 1990, criminologists, law enforcement officers, journalists, and politicians started analysing the actual state of crime in Lithuania. Whilst organised crime has been often identified by authorities as a threat to national security, this particular aspect was little researched. The Council of the European Union (2003) adopted its first European Security Strategy where Europe is considered as prime target for organised crime. Report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy submitted by Javier Solana, Secretary-General of the Council of the EU/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, for the first time referred to organised crime as continued *'menace to our societies, with trafficking in drugs, human beings, and weapons, alongside international fraud and money-laundering'* (Council of the European Union, 2009). Although Šimkus (2000) put forward the question of the features of international organised crime posing the biggest threat to national security, one hardly finds any scientific works into this topic. The novelty of this article is to be evaluated through the research object – that is, the factors influencing the threats posed by organised crime and the means of creating and implementing an efficient policy of dealing with this phenomenon. The key task of the research is to evaluate the influence and impact of organised crime on public security and economy at the social, legal, and political levels by referring to today's relevant issues. During the research, while analysing the scientific literature and legal acts of the European Union and Lithuania, and considering the author's long-term experience in combating international organised

3 "Engines of crime" are cross-cutting horizontal criminal threats that facilitate other types of crime. "Crime enablers" are factors fostering the development and evolution of crime.

4 Throughout the article, the author evaluates, assesses and compares numerous relevant legal, policy and strategic papers and proposes improvements. Research documents and scientific articles as well as judicial practices are also analysed. Lithuanian organised crime is assessed comparing it with the European Union situation.

5 The Soviet Lithuanian SSR Criminal Code did not even include the definition of organised groups.

crime, a wide spectrum of factors was taken into consideration, including social changes that affect the dynamics and development of organised crime.

Nowadays, organised criminal groups operate according to the model of a legal business that pursues pre-planned constant proceeds. The damage they cause influences human, economic, and social factors. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania (2004) designates that:

*'if organised crime were not prevented and organised criminal groups (syndicates) were not prosecuted, the constitutional values, inter alia, the rights and freedoms of the person, the legal bases of the life of society entrenched in the Constitution, the state, [...] and the entire society would be under the threat.'*

Operational law enforcement services on the regular basis gather information about the members of criminal groups and their activities; however it is not always possible to "transform" this material to the pre-trial proceedings, disintegrate these groups, and sentence their members. Some countries (e.g. the Netherlands, the United Kingdom) make up the so-called lists of the top 100 most prominent criminals, allocate enormous investigative resources, yet it often happens that the gathered information does not suffice to bring suspects to justice. Sometimes, it is even acknowledged that leaders are invulnerable. Observing how influential criminal groups are, these facts make one feel worried.

The article comprises of three parts. In Part I, organised crime is analysed throughout the prism of the threats facing Lithuanian national security. In Part II, organised crime is evaluated from the perspective of the European Union; the structure of criminal groups, their activities, and evolution are disclosed. In Part III, the relationship between organised crime and terrorism as well as other threats is assessed; the insights of why organised crime cannot be treated as a typical phenomenon and requires specific attention are presented.

## Threats to National Security

In order to have a good understanding of organised crime, it is indispensable to examine the strategic legal acts that identify the problem and present ways of resolving it. The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (*Seimas*) approved the National Security Strategy (hereinafter: the Strategy) of a new edition which embraces 15 threats, dangers, and risks, that *'must be given particular attention by national security institutions'* (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, 2017: 4-7). One of the threats is organised crime:

*'The dissemination of this phenomenon to and its penetration into the national economy and financial markets may cause a serious threat to public security and have a negative impact on the country's economic and political life.'* (The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2017: 7)

The legislator expressed its political will and obligated the responsible authorities to undertake immediate steps in reducing the dangers posed by organised crime. It encourages examining organised crime more comprehensively; as a threat to national security. There are, however, some uncertainties while analysing the Strategy:

- It states that organised crime *may* cause a serious threat to security. It can be presumed that, at present, such a threat does not exist; crime does not impact the country's economic and political life.
- Organised crime is identified as threat No. 13. It remains unclear whether the threats are presented randomly, or by their importance, yet it has to be assumed that organised crime is not regarded as a priority phenomenon.
- In the previous edition of the Strategy, organised crime is also described as a threat to social stability, negatively affecting public security, and economic development (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, 2002). Comparing Strategies, it can be noticed that both have almost identical provisions on organised crime; hence, it can be concluded that the situation has not changed in 15 years.

The Strategy stipulates 18 priorities and objectives of the national security policy. The strengthening of public security is identified as priority No. 11 (still, it is not clear whether the priorities are provided either according to their importance or randomly):

*'In order to reduce threats posed by organised crime [...], the Republic of Lithuania will: strengthen prevention and control of the organised crime, with a particular focus on organised criminal groups with links to [...] terrorist organisations [...]; ensure credible protection of the external EU border [...] and strengthen prevention and control of illegal migration [...]; develop capacity and capabilities of public security institutions [...] by strengthening coordination of activities of these institutions and [...] cooperation by increasing investment in advanced technologies [...].'* (The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2017: 12-13)

Analysing the Strategy scientifically, it is necessary to understand the concept of the term "strategy". It was Professor Alfred D. Chandler Jr. who presented the first contemporary definition of the strategy. According to Chandler (1962), the strategy incorporates three main elements: long-term goals, a course of action, and resources for carrying out these goals. It is of overriding importance in strategic planning to define concrete *'desirable results which must be achieved within a given period'* (Kuchalskis & Gutauskas, 2009). Long-

term goals and priority areas of a secure state are formulated in the Strategy; however the ways of implementation are roughly outlined only in the final provision:

*'The provisions of the Strategy are implemented through long-term state programs of the strengthening of national security. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania ensures that the provisions of the Strategy are incorporated into other documents of strategic planning.'* (The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2017: 17)

To implement the priorities of national security policy, the *Seimas* (2015) approved the Public Security Development Programme 2015–2025, (hereinafter: the Programme), a long-term plan for the strengthening of national security. The Programme provides for specific measures to reduce organised crime and draws attention to the importance of inter-institutional cooperation and to the involvement of communities. One of the goals stipulated in the Programme is: *'to create an environment unfavourable for organised crime [...] and reduce the damage that serious and very serious crimes and those perpetrated by organised crime groups inflict on society'* (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015: p.17). The goal is clear, but the tasks set forth to achieve it are abstract, declarative, cannot be measured, and without implementation criteria:

*'To create the effective systems of [...] evaluation of serious crimes, establishment of general priorities, and control of organised crimes; [...] to create unfavourable conditions for criminal activities [...]; to develop cooperation and information exchange [...] between law enforcement institutions [...]; to increase [...] the efficiency of money laundering prevention measures; to enhance the effectiveness of the mechanism of identification, freeze and confiscation of assets acquired by criminal means; [...] to reduce the threats linked with illegal [...] receiving and use of international financial assistance [...]; to actively cooperate with the European Cybercrime Centre [...].'* (The Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania 2015: 17-18)

It is difficult to evaluate what specifically the Government aims to achieve and how it is going to be accomplished by creating "effective systems" and "unfavourable conditions", "reducing threats" or "actively cooperating". Only a single criterion for fulfilling the tasks is envisaged – that is, a potential increase of the resolved serious and very serious crimes, provided for in the corresponding articles of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania. The SMART methodology<sup>6</sup> seems to have been forgotten. Priority measures are also implemented through the Programme of the Seventeenth Government of the Republic of Lithuania (the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016). Although little attention is paid to organised crime in the Programme, the Government aims to contribute to an effective way of overcoming international challenges such as terrorism, migration crisis,

6 SMART principle: the goals and tasks should be: specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time-related.

and protection of the European Union's borders, and foresees the measures of reducing corruption.

Organised crime is to be analysed alongside corruption. According to *Transparency International* (2018) data, in 2017 Lithuania scored 59 out of 100 on the Corruption Perceptions Index,<sup>7</sup> that is, ranked 38<sup>th</sup> amongst the list of 180 countries. Among EU Member States, Lithuania takes the 16th position (Denmark scored 88 and tops the list) (Special Investigation Service of the Republic of Lithuania, 2018). Currently organised crime is actively penetrating into the sphere of business, trying to legalise illegally acquired funds and investing in real estate, construction, transport, and logistics; it has also sought to manipulate the European Union's structural funds. Criminal groups, using the schemes of bribery, conflict of interest, and influence, try to create easier conditions for conducting criminal acts. In this way, the lawful competition is distorted, and the public trust in state institutions and the system of governance are eroded.

The state's supreme institutions identify organised crime as a real threat to national security and provide the authorities dealing with this phenomenon with a clear mandate for tackling it. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania is expected to produce concrete results in reducing a degree of organised crime and corruption. Inter-institutional cooperation, coordination of actions, information exchange, and stable financing of measures are imperative to achieve these ambitious goals. In order to respond effectively to organised crime, it is necessary to analyse the current situation; to understand the essence of organised crime and its development trends; and to identify the main priority areas for combating this phenomenon. A further analysis of these topics is presented in Part II and Part III.

## Assessment of Organised Crime

Lithuanian organised crime cannot be assessed separately from the European Union situation. The issues caused by international organised crime are globally relevant and, therefore, countries must unite and tackle these challenges together. Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council (1998) identified organised crime as a serious threat to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, in that *'it penetrates, contaminates, and corrupts the structure of governments' legitimate commercial and financial business and society at all levels*'. Although, since 2015, the security problems in Eastern Europe have been mitigated by the fight against terrorism and migration crisis, these issues remain paramount on the agenda of both the European Union and NATO. Europol, the European Union's Law Enforcement

<sup>7</sup> The corruption level is evaluated by concrete figure numbers using the 100-point scale, wherein 0 indicates that the country is very corrupted, and 100 – very transparent.

Agency (2017a), conducted the serious and organised crime threat assessment (hereinafter: SOCTA), wherein a set of conclusions on the major crime threats facing the European Union was provided. The European Union Member States' discussions on the priorities of combating criminal threats are based on the SOCTA Report. This analysis was prepared as part of the European Union Policy Cycle for organised crime between 2018 and 2021.<sup>8</sup> With reference to the factual data of criminal intelligence, and from the interdisciplinary point of view, the Policy Cycle aims to identify crime threats, approve them at the political level, and implement strategic and operational objectives. It consists of four key steps, which are:

- Policy development: SOCTA. Threat analysis is presented whereon the Council of Justice and Home Affairs Ministers of the European Union define the priorities of combating organised crime.
- Policy formation: MASP – Multi-Annual Strategic Plans are developed to define the strategic goals for combating each priority threat.
- Implementation and monitoring: EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats). MASPs goals are achieved through operational action plans (OAPs) developed for each priority threat.
- Review and assessment: Effectiveness and impact of the Policy Cycle on priority threats is assessed, and the experience gained is used in the preparation of the next Policy Cycle.

In drafting the SOCTA, 2,300 questionnaires, 10,000 criminal intelligence contributions, and the information derived from Europol's databases were analysed. It is important to notice that the analysis was performed according to unified methodology which was reviewed and approved by Council of the European Union (2015). On the basis of this methodology, the characteristics of organised crime groups, their activity areas, and specific geographical aspects were assessed, and a general influence and impact of organised crime on society as a whole was analysed. Using a quantitative and qualitative analysis, the SOCTA aims to identify the criminal groups posing the biggest threat as well as their areas of activity. Lithuanian police, analysing the national threats posed by organised crime and providing Europol with information, apply the same methodology. Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau (2017) prepared the national serious and organised crime threat assessment, whose aim is to systematically perform strategic analysis, which should become a basis for the policy development on control and prevention of the most dangerous criminal activities.

<sup>8</sup> The EU Policy Cycle is a system dedicated for the fight against organised crime (adopted in 2010). Each cycle lasts four years and optimises coordination and cooperation on chosen crime priorities.

The SOCTA recognises that organised crime is a major threat to the security of the European Union and combating this phenomenon should remain one of the main priorities of the European Security Agenda. Lithuania's situation, in terms of the threats posed by organised crime, is in line with the European Union's approach. The difference is that the European Union Policy Cycle for organised crime clearly outlines priority areas, strategic goals, and operational actions for their implementation, as well as the assessment of the effectiveness. However, in Lithuania we miss this consistency: it is unclear for what period the Strategy is formed; the strategic goals are insufficiently defined, the implementation of certain measures is only partially discussed in the Government programme, and there is almost nothing mentioned about the monitoring and evaluation process.

When analysing organised criminal groups and their structure, it is important to define their scale. The European Union agreed on a uniform definition of a criminal group (Council of the European Union, 2008). A criminal group is considered to be a structured organisation existing over a long or definite period of time and consisting of more than two people who work together and commit crimes that carry a sentence of more than four years' imprisonment, seeking direct or indirect financial benefit and operating at the international level.<sup>9</sup> Although this definition does not fully correspond to the description of an organised group, established in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, it does not affect the process of gathering and analysing criminal intelligence because the assessment of the threats posed by organised crime is different from the objectives of criminal prosecution: the SOCTA aims to assess criminal intelligence data and put forward recommendations for identifying crime threats.

Organised crime in the European Union involves a great spectrum of offenses that become increasingly complex, and their scale escalates each year. Criminal groups generate enormous proceeds, which sometimes compete with well-known international corporations. The majority of criminal groups are flexible, easily adaptable to a changing environment, and have special and technical knowledge and experience. The most dangerous are those which invest substantially in the legitimate economy and in the continuation and expansion of their criminal activities. The Crime-as-a-Service phenomenon is increasingly spreading. Internet-based trafficking in illicit products and services allows individual criminals to carry out their criminal activities without the traditional "infrastructure" of organised crime. According to the SOCTA, there are more than five thousand international organised crime groups operating in the European Union (Europol, 2017a). The Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau provided Europol with information on international criminal groups operating in Lithuania that meet all of the above criteria, but the exact number was not disclosed.<sup>10</sup> According to Kiškis, Head of the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau

<sup>9</sup> Here a simplified structured definition of a criminal group is presented.

<sup>10</sup> An interview with Lithuanian operational officer on 11 March 2018.



(2017), *‘Several dozen organised crime groups operate in Lithuania, and their highest concentrations are in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai’.*

Organised crime will further be analysed according to the following characteristics:

- Types, structure, and international dimension of organised criminal groups.
- “Crime enablers” and “engines of organised crime”.
- The most dangerous activity areas of organised crime.

### Organised Criminal Groups

The SOCTA provides a rather concrete number of organised criminal groups; that is more than five thousand. For comparison, in 2013 Europol identified 3.6 thousand groups. However, this significant increase does not necessarily mean a sharp rise in the level of organised crime. The author believes that this is more influenced by a better collection of criminal intelligence data and more detailed analysis.<sup>11</sup> The structure of criminal groups, their size and scale, are very diverse: 76 % (or about 3,800) of criminal groups consist of six or more members (Europol, 2017a). It can be estimated that more than 40,000 criminals can operate in the European Union. Whilst it is hard to evaluate whether that is a large number (742 million citizens live in the European Union), we will see later that after having examined the profits generated by this part of population – 0.005 %, the figures are alarming. The members of organised criminal groups “represent” more than 180 nationalities, 60 % of whom are citizens of the European Union (Europol, 2017a). Seven out of ten groups operate in three or more countries (10 % of criminal groups are active in seven or more countries) (Europol, 2017a); this reveals an international dimension of organised crime and a high degree of mobility of criminal groups. In the past, they tended to operate based on a particular specialisation; for example, while some criminal groups were involved in robberies or drug trafficking, others were producing synthetic drugs. In the modern world, these trends are rapidly disappearing. More and more criminal groups (about 45 %) are engaged in so-called poly-criminality (Europol, 2017a); they are not concerned on what crime to commit, the aim is always to gain more profit. The migration crisis has contributed to the spread of such phenomenon. A considerable need for illegal smuggling services has made it possible for organised crime to adapt and retrain. Some of the criminal groups – formerly involved in other crimes – have entered this area, which is profitable and does not require much experience.

The structural composition of criminal groups is also changing. Although the majority of them still operate on the basis of a hierarchical structure, the number of criminal groups formed on the horizontal basis (from 30 to 40 %), as well as those gathered for a short

<sup>11</sup> In 2013, the first assessment of organised crime threats was produced according to the conception of the European Union’s policy cycle on combating organised crime and the methodology of data collection and analysis.

period of time to commit a specific crime (up to 20 %), is increasing (Europol, 2017a). The structure of criminal groups depends on the nature of crimes they commit. For example, the organisers of illegal migration are particularly hierarchical, as this makes it possible for them to monopolise this illegal business and eliminate smaller competitors. Large and hierarchical criminal groups, consisting of up to 100 members and with a solid structure, control the large-scale drug trafficking. Mafia-type criminal organisations exclusively composed of the representatives of one nationality – especially Chinese, Colombian, Russian, and Italian – can have up to a thousand members worldwide. Outlaw motorcycle gangs are operating almost throughout the entire territory of the European Union. These are groups with a strong hierarchical basis and a clear leadership e.g. president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeants, logistics captains, and other members. Motorcycle gangs are usually involved in drug trafficking, racketeering, and trafficking in human beings. Their manifestations are also visible in Lithuania. Cyber criminals, on the contrary, do not create structured groups but assemble on an ad hoc basis to commit certain types of crime (e.g. online drug trafficking, fraud) or help other criminal groups in terms of providing them with some specific technical or mechanical knowledge. Such high-level professionals can simultaneously assist several criminal organisations, who do not know that these facilitators work for their competitors, too. Some criminal groups operate “on demand”; that is, they become active when new opportunities for profit-making emerge, and it does not matter what type of crime they will have to commit.

Organised crime groups have a large number of income streams, so it is very difficult to calculate, even roughly, their potential proceeds. According to the data of the United Nations (2011), the turnover of criminal activities constituted close to 2.1 trillion US dollars of criminal proceeds in 2009. In the European Union, the drug business is a major source of income for organised crime groups with estimated retail value of at least 30 billion euros per year (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction & Europol, 2019). For comparison, Lithuania’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 was about 48 billion euros (*Trading Economics*, 2019). In the European Union, Europol estimates that the average criminal group of 6–10 members annually reaches a profit of around 1.5 million euros (Europol, 2017a). Illegal profit varies depending on the nature of criminal acts; however, criminal groups engaged in certain types of fraud are able to generate billions in revenue.

With the rapid development of technology, organised crime groups undertake counter-measures against law enforcement actions in an attempt to compromise criminal investigations. This requires good knowledge of law enforcement techniques, tools, tactics, and technical capabilities. The key factor is to know the particularities of a legal framework and police interoperability in different countries, which is especially relevant for mobile (“traveling”) criminal groups. To protect communication between the members of criminal groups, the following innovative and communicative methods are utilised: encrypted channels, satellite telephones, foreign SIM cards, coded language, slang, and specially de-

signed software for mobile phones.<sup>12</sup> Financial transactions are often carried out by using hidden methods: crypto currencies, alternative banking services, or non-formal money transfer systems (e.g., Hawala, Hundi).<sup>13</sup> The use of such countermeasures is closely linked to corruption. Criminal groups are trying to find connections within the operational services, the public prosecutor's office, and in the courts. Lawyers, financiers, and engineers are also often employed.

Twenty or more years ago, organised crime was unimaginable without violence, which members of criminal groups demonstrated almost openly, with the aim of frightening people: businessmen were harassed and cars and buildings were burnt. Modern-day criminals, on the contrary, avoid violence as it may attract law enforcement attention, which is absolutely not needed for those organisations that “make profit” illegally.

In Lithuania, according to the level of danger (assessed in 2016), 30 % of criminal groups scored very high, 28 % – high, and 40 % – average. Criminal groups were mainly concentrated in Vilnius and Kaunas counties (where 51 % of all the criminal offenses were registered in 2016). Most of them have a hierarchical structure and commit crimes in different areas. About 70 % of criminal groups are active at the national level (activities are not limited to one county; they have links to other groups), and about 30 % of them operate internationally (Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau, 2017). Most often, their members have criminal ties or commit crimes in Scandinavian countries, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and Russia.

### Factors Influencing the Development of Organised Crime

Criminality is rapidly developing in this age of technology. The main driving force is the financial benefit, regardless of whether it will be obtained in the event of theft or smuggling of prohibited goods. Criminals are adapting well to the geopolitical situation, are flexible, quickly change their ways of committing crimes, and exploit the networks of organised crime. Crime is evolving alongside society and concentrates in territories where welfare is the greatest since it is easier there to commit crimes. Identifying societal needs and ways in which one can make a profit, criminals quickly deliver goods and services (including prohibited ones) which the market lacks. The main “engines of organised crime” are: document fraud, money laundering, and the online trafficking of illegal goods and services. These threats incorporate and facilitate all other forms of organised crime. The business models of organised crime, which cover a whole range of serious criminal offenses, often depend on the possibility to use counterfeit documents and success in the

12 A criminal group used a special software application allowing communicating after having turned on an airplane mode. Thus, law enforcement services were not able to determine their actual place.

13 Hawala or similar service providers are money transfer systems related to specific geographical regions or ethnic groups that carry out transactions and make cash withdrawals. Money transfer does not usually require any physical or electronic money movement.

legalisation of illicit money. Law enforcement interventions in dismantling such schemes greatly reduce the potential of criminal groups' opportunities for growth and expansion of their illegal businesses, as well as their penetration into legal business.

Money laundering allows criminal groups to invest money obtained from illegal activities into a legal or illegal economy. Almost all criminal groups are forced to "launder" their money. Law enforcement services find it difficult to trace illegal money flows, in that the transactions carried out within legal financial systems are disguised; it is almost impossible to link them to the criminals or to their criminal activities. Money laundering is a major technical challenge to law enforcement, since criminals are increasingly using crypto currency and anonymous payment methods. The emergence of new online platforms and non-traditional money transfer systems are often unregulated by law and operate underground or are "on the edge of legality". Cash smuggling is also conducted, in particular by using the postal service. Small and medium-scale money laundering is a means of investing in higher value goods, real estate, or gambling. For this purpose, legal business structures, professional accountants, and financial services are used. Criminal groups engaged in large-scale money laundering utilise sophisticated, innovative schemes. They make extensive abuse of banking systems by opening new accounts and creating transfer chains between cover enterprises and offshore companies. Often corruptive ties are used. The largest organised crime groups involve syndicates that specialise exclusively in money laundering. For a fee of five to eight per cent, such syndicates – by using complex money laundering chains – do the whole job, that is, legalise a huge amount of criminal proceeds.<sup>14</sup> According to Wainwright (2018),<sup>15</sup> Europol identified 400 professional money launderers who illegally earn billions by legalising the proceeds generated from drugs and other criminal activities through the banking system.

The counterfeiting of documents has become one of the main tools for carrying out serious and organised crimes and contributed significantly to the organisation of terrorist attacks. This phenomenon was particularly widespread as a consequence of the migration crisis. Fraud is when one uses fraudulent or illegally obtained authentic documents. Criminal groups employ highly skilled professionals, who are able to produce the highest quality documents for various purposes. In most cases, they produce fraudulent personal or travel documents (identity cards, passports, visas, invitations to enter the European Union), documents of origin (birth, marriage certificates), customs declarations, certificates, and licenses. With the Governments having implemented complex personal document security systems, it is becoming more difficult for criminal groups to make high-quality documents. Therefore, they are increasingly striving to acquire original documents (by

<sup>14</sup> An interview with the operational Europol officer on 15 February 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Rob Wainwright was Europol Executive Director in the period of 2009–2018. Catherine De Bolle took this position from 01 May 2018.

overlaying photos or manipulating biographical information). It has been noted that recently the number of lost or stolen documents has significantly increased. In Lithuania, about ten per cent of ID cards and five per cent of passports are lost, on average, annually (this amounts to approximately 37.5 thousand missing documents annually).<sup>16</sup> Some of these invalid documents are still used successfully in committing crimes. Unstable political situations and military conflicts allow criminals – functioning on the outskirts of the European Union – to purchase blank original forms from these regions, which can then be manipulated.<sup>17</sup> Another phenomenon is the increased number of false birth and marriage certificates and employment contracts. In the absence of any other personal documents, the purpose is to legalise with a false identity. Organised crime groups exploit legal business structures by falsifying employment contracts for visas or residence permits in the European Union. Falsifying these less protected documents is much easier and more difficult to control.

Since more sales and services are now being transferred to cyberspace, illegal business is growing online. This phenomenon fully reflects the peculiarities of the development of legal economy and trade. Legitimate business – where the internet has significantly changed trading habits and consumer expectations and when, without leaving home, one can have a new product coming from the rest of the world within a few days – has adapted to the new situation, so has crime. It is likely that this domain will be further developed and expanded in the future, and various online platforms will become the main tool for distributing illegal goods. Illegal products and services are advertised and distributed on both the open and “dark web”, depending on the severity and size of possible law enforcement sanctions. For example, heavy drugs or weapons are sold exclusively on the “dark web”, which is increasingly decentralised, making it even more difficult for law enforcement to investigate. It is believed that about 57 % of all illegal products offered on the “dark web” are drugs.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, various new “semi-legal” psychoactive substances, psychotropic drugs, anabolic steroids, or counterfeit clothing can be purchased on the open internet. Street-level drug dealing is moving rapidly into online mode. This gives the buyer excellent conditions to obtain drugs without meeting the seller “face-to-face”, hence significantly reducing the opportunity to draw the attention of law enforcement. Special smartphone applications have been developed in some US States that can be used to order marijuana and it will immediately be delivered to a designated location providing “uber-type” service, similar to pizza delivery or taxi reservations. It is practically impossible to assess and control the volume of illegal online sales. Firstly, what law enforcement is able to see online is just the tip of the iceberg since a large part

16 An interview with Lithuanian operational officer on 15 February 2018.

17 At the beginning of the Syrian conflict, it was easy to obtain thousands of original blanks of Syrian identity documents which helped to carry out illegal migration operations and relocation of radicalised individuals in the European Union.

18 An interview with the operational Europol officer on 04 December 2017.

of deals are carried out on the “dark web”; secondly, it is still a new domain for both law enforcement and policy-making institutions; thirdly, organised crime allocates huge resources – of which, unfortunately, law enforcement services cannot boast – to carry out their activity. Whilst there is no detailed research on the extent of using the “dark web” to commit crimes, some studies showcase that eight of the analysed “crypto-trades” generate monthly from 10.6 to 18.7 million euros in revenue from drug trafficking (not including prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) (*RAND Europe*, 2016).

Further on, organised crime “enablers” will be examined including crime-facilitating determiners and also those of vulnerability in society, which greatly contributes to the expansion of crime opportunities. Crime develops together with society. The most important factors shaping the nature of criminality, influencing its prosperity, and stimulating crime activity are as follows: technological innovation, geopolitical situation, local concentration of transport and logistics, public attitude, legal framework, and conflicts and crises in the vicinity of the European Union.

Innovations in communications, logistics, and finance provide opportunities for crime to be committed anonymously – wherever and whenever – without participating physically, as usual, in crime scenes. Since transport and logistics infrastructures increasingly rely upon online systems and automatic remote management, organised crime groups use them to manipulate transportation routes, exploit supply networks, and collect important and sensitive information. Virtual currencies and online payment platforms provide excellent conditions for disguising illegal money transfers and operations related to the legalisation of illegally acquired property, thereby severely impeding law enforcement counter-measures.

The situation of serious and organised crime in the European Union is substantially affected by geopolitical factors. The crises in Libya, Syria, and Ukraine have a direct impact on organised crime in Europe. Military conflicts are a key factor in the rise of the migrant crisis, terrorism and radicalisation, as well as in the intensification of firearms trafficking. Crisis-torn countries become a great shelter for organised crime groups to coordinate their actions. International agreements, such as visa liberalisation, the Schengen Agreement, and free-trade agreements, facilitate transportation of illegal goods or people. Free movement of people works well in the context of organised crime, reducing the possibility of being identified: criminals can move “without borders”, rapidly commit crimes in different countries, and reside in any European Union Member State. For law enforcement officers, such free movement is still severely constrained. There are situations where certain activities (e.g., new psychoactive substances) are legal in one country and prohibited in another. Organised crime, making good use of such legislative gaps and ineffective law enforcement cooperation, is able to adapt quickly or even anticipate future legislative changes. The author’s personal experience has revealed how an international criminal

group, which supplied psychoactive substances from China, monitored the legislative changes in the European Union Member States. As the laws evolved dynamically – the lists of controlled substances were supplemented by new preparations, and the transportation from China took several months – the criminal group had to plan very carefully to which country it was safe to deliver the merchandise, and in which country that substance, possibly after a few months, would become illegal, posing a risk to the whole “semi-legal” business.

In order to conceal its criminal activities and profits, organised crime extensively exploits transport companies and import-export business structures. Criminals often set up business firms to carry out illegal activities. Similarly, they corruptly hire companies for illegal operations or simply infiltrate them. In this case, it is worthwhile mentioning the shadow economy in Lithuania, which according to various estimates, ranges from 25 % to 30 % and is the largest in the European Union alongside Bulgaria and Romania (*Lithuania without shadow economy*, 2019). One of the “engines of organised crime” is the public attitude towards a particular problem. Extensive social tolerance, justification for risky behaviour or just too little information about a certain issue can create a favourable environment for crimes. Smuggled cigarettes, illegal alcohol or fuel, and counterfeit jewellery are just some of the examples of the highest level of social tolerance. Rarely does the public view these actions in a bad light; they are treated as “innocent crimes” that pose little risk to the consumer. According to police data, 62 % of Lithuania’s population tolerates shadow trade.<sup>19</sup> The findings of the empty pack survey conducted by The Nielsen Company revealed that smuggled cigarettes in Lithuania account for 17.5 % of the market (*Baltic News Service*, 2018). In order to educate society to recognise and not tolerate – that is, not to use smuggled goods offered in everyday life – modern interactive tools are needed to show people what the situation is like; how it can be dealt with; and what a person can do so as to create a better life.

The internet and technological innovations have greatly changed the influence of geographic circumstances on crime. Criminals are no longer constrained by territorial limits. Therefore, in today’s world, it is almost impossible to link criminal groups to any specific regions or centres of crime. Some areas, however, remain the key driving “engines of crime”. These are well-developed transport and communication infrastructures used for global distribution of illicit products. Such high activity areas are where there is a high demand for illegal goods or services, a convenient geographical location – proximity to the country of their origin and destination, good access to business or investment; 75 % of goods between the European Union and other countries are transported by sea; about 400 million passengers use the European Union’s water transport annually (Europol, 2017a). Europe has many developed seaports with excellent infrastructure and endless volume.

<sup>19</sup> An interview with Lithuanian operational officer on 17 March 2018.

Not surprisingly, they are becoming transit zones for illegal goods and are the most important drivers of organised crime. Criminal groups make good use of weaknesses in port control systems: false declarations, hidden compartments in legal containers, misleading sailing flags. The author's personal experience has revealed a unique fact when in the port of Antwerp, an organised criminal group, having broken into the control system, manipulated the information and changed the data of a container with large quantities of cocaine in order to prevent Customs from tracking it. Criminals also exploit an increased number of flights, small airports with a weaker inspection system, and low-cost airline companies. Smuggling is more often carried out using small parcels and postal services. It is, virtually, impossible to control and detect illegal goods in a huge stream of parcels sent by traditional methods. There are cases in which criminals themselves set up parcel expedition companies to transport smuggled goods without any risk.

### Organised Crime Activity Areas

Evaluating the Lithuania situation, it can be observed that the criminogenic background of serious and very serious crimes has maintained a steady downward trend since 2014 (Information Technology and Communications Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, 2019). In 2016-2019, drug-related crimes were most prominent; robbery and fraud occupied the second and third positions, respectively. Furthermore, the number of brutal killings increased, and therefore it is believed that the general criminogenic situation in the area of dominant crime remains a threat and requires constant political and operational attention. The following is a short overview of the priorities of the fight against organised crime in the European Union for 2018–2021. The conclusions of the Council of the European Union (2017) embrace ten priority areas for combating serious and organised crime:

- **Cybercrime**  
It is a global phenomenon. Cybercrimes are committed "without borders". Society has become more digitalised than ever, and criminals have learned to adapt technological innovations to new criminal business models. Every year, 400 billion euros are lost due to cyber-attacks;<sup>20</sup> in 2017 alone, 2 billion private data records were subject to cyber threats. Attacks against information systems, non-cash payment fraud, and dissemination of child abuse material were among the most serious threats (Europol, 2017b). It should be noted that Lithuanian criminal groups are actively involved in fraud of non-cash means of payment. Cybercrime threats are likely to be relevant in the future as well.

<sup>20</sup> An interview with the operational Europol officer on 15 February 2018.



- **Drugs**  
Illicit drug trafficking remains the biggest criminal area: 45 % of criminal groups in the European Union are involved in drug production and distribution (Europol 2017a). This activity generates huge profits, which later finance other criminal activities. The production of synthetic drugs on an industrial-scale in the European Union has made the region the main source of such substances throughout the world. Criminals are investing in new technologies to get higher drug yields and generate more profits at the same cost. Europol recorded the increase in organised crime groups in Lithuania in the areas of heroin and synthetic drug trafficking. Drug production, transportation, and trade will remain a major threat in the future.
- **Illegal migration**  
The unprecedented increase in migration flows since 2015 has made illegal migration one of the most profitable and widespread areas of organised crime; it can be compared to drug trafficking. It is feared that the migration crisis could become a catalyst for human exploitation of various forms. Large groups of migrants become potential victims – vulnerable due to their illegal stay in the European Union. In order to reach Europe, 90 % of migrants pay the traffickers in human beings. Although the problem of migration was partially managed by mutual efforts of the countries – its scale decreased considerably in 2017, due to military conflicts and poverty in certain regions – this area is predicted to further attract organised crime and remain a major threat.
- **Organised property crime**  
For some time, these crimes have not been recognised as a threat. A number of such crimes, especially committed by highly mobile organised groups operating across the European Union, have recently increased. By making use of the lack of interoperability of cross-border surveillance tools, such groups carry out organised thefts and burglaries. Developed online sales have made it easier to sell stolen goods. Lithuanian criminal groups are seen as one of the most active. It must be acknowledged that, notwithstanding accelerating activities of highly mobile organised crime groups, it is not a priority in most countries to investigate the aforementioned crimes; they are not regarded as serious acts.
- **Trafficking in human beings**  
The different economic development of the countries has become the main driving force of trafficking in human beings. The annual worldwide profit of all forms of human trafficking is 29.4 billion euros (European Commission, 2017). Organised crime groups target more vulnerable people in the area of sexual and labour exploitation, which contributes significantly to the growth of the shadow economy, reduces wages, and diminishes economic growth. Labour exploitation includes victims of 58

nationalities (Forte, Schotte & Strupp, 2017). Obviously, there were more victims than official figures presented; therefore, one of the most significant problems for law enforcement services remains the identification and protection of victims.

- Fraud

Financial fraud deprives the European Union and its Member States of significant revenues, which could be invested in infrastructure projects and regional development: *'Every year, criminal groups abuse the system of VAT on cross-border transactions and steal 60 billion euros'*.<sup>21</sup> The biggest loss is caused by excise fraud (shadow tobacco industry, smuggling of alcohol and fuel) and Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) fraud. In the case of excise fraud, Lithuanian criminals, as well as other criminal groups, are active.

- Trafficking in firearms

Illicit trafficking of firearms greatly increases the risk of terrorist attacks, and this domain has lately become particularly important. The recent jihadist attacks in the European Union were executed using illegal weapons. It is getting fairly easy to purchase firearms on the internet, further complicating the activities of law enforcement. Apart from organised criminal groups, an increased number of single individuals purchasing weapons is observed. An increasing number of armed clashes among criminal groups – in which innocent people often become victims – just confirms the trafficking of firearms as a high-risk factor for the European Union.

- Environmental crime

Such crimes have recently become one of the most profitable activities of criminal organisations globally. They affect not only the environment but the society and the economy as a whole. The biggest problems are caused by criminal organisations being engaged in wildlife and illicit waste trafficking. Corrupted links to local authorities and legal business structures contributes significantly to the successful development of such activities (manipulation in municipal competitions or in public procurement regarding waste management). This is a new priority area requiring greater law enforcement input and closer cooperation between countries.

- Financial crimes

The main purpose of criminal activity is to gain profit. Innovations in financial services, such as virtual currency and anonymous, prepaid cards, have provided new opportunities for those dealing with financial crimes. According to some sources, 0.7 to 1.2 per cent of the total gross domestic product of the European Union can be attributed to dubious financial activity; some suspicious financial flows account for

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21 An interview with the operational Europol officer on 15 February 2018.

over 29 billion euros annually, and more than 4 billion euros obtained by criminal activity are washed out with the help of virtual currencies.<sup>22</sup> The main objective of law enforcement is to confiscate funds and disclose criminal groups that provide money laundering services. This area is treated as one of the “vehicles” of criminal activity and, therefore, cannot be explored separately from other areas of organised crime.

- Document fraud

The security of travel documents is important in the fight against terrorism and organised crime and contributes to better border and migration management. The European Union seeks to effectively combat criminal organisations that falsify documents and provide them for other criminals. This kind of fraud is believed to be one of the fastest-growing criminal “markets” and should be considered as one of the greatest threats. This area of crime is horizontal, facilitating other offences of organised crime.

Summarising the threats posed by organised crime, it can be concluded that there is comprehensive information to impartially demonstrate the scale of this phenomenon, embracing the turnover related to financial activities, the structure of criminal groups, the areas of criminal activities, and the impact on economic and public security. In particular, those crimes that pose the biggest threat to the European Union are described in the policy documents. Most of them are also relevant to Lithuania. The major challenge for the authorities, and the whole society, is to find an appropriate response to criminal activities, hence considerably reducing these threats.

## Organised Crime and Terrorism

Assessing organised crime, it can be observed that it often interacts with other threats. This article analyses the interconnectedness of organised crime with corruption, cyber-crime, the migration crisis, and instability in the vicinity of the European Union. Hybrid threats are also widely discussed in Lithuania. One of the possible tools of hybrid threats is organised crime and uncontrolled migratory flows. British journalist and security policy expert Lucas (2017) discerns twenty of the Kremlin’s “toxic tactics,” including corruption, cyber-attacks, and organised crime networks targeting decision-makers and public opinion.

It is worth more closely exploring the links between organised crime and terrorism. This relationship can be demonstrated through firearm trafficking, financing schemes, document fraud, and the radicalisation processes, especially in prisons. In addition to that,

<sup>22</sup> An interview with the operational Europol officer on 15 February 2018.

both organised and terrorist groups use the same trafficking routes (e.g. the Balkan route); therefore, to achieve their aims they exploit the same logistics and infrastructure systems. Crimes such as document fraud and firearm trafficking significantly facilitate the process of preparing and executing terrorist attacks. In 2016, a lorry attack at a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people was carried out by a Tunisian refugee whose asylum application was rejected and who successfully travelled across Europe by using a variety of documents with different identities. The investigation into the Paris terror attacks in 2015 and in Brussels in 2016 revealed the links between some suspects and organised crime (Europol, 2017a); however, speaking about these issues, according to the author, we should rather refer to crime (not organised crime) and terrorism connections. Terrorist organisations seek to accumulate the proceeds of crime that are later used to finance terrorist activities. Money laundering syndicates are successfully providing services both to organised crime and terrorist organisations. It is not surprising that terrorists took advantage of the migration crisis and, with the help of organised groups, transported part of their trustees to Europe.

The threat of the connection between organised crime and terrorism is twofold. First, using organised crime infrastructure (purchasing firearms or documents and trafficking people) can lead to the acquisition of dangerous and deadly weapons for terrorist purposes. Second, the terrorists' involvement in organised crime allows them to generate tangible profits that will be used for carrying out terrorism-related activities. Although only 5.5 % of those known to Europol and connected with terrorism have had links to organised crime,<sup>23</sup> this phenomenon is becoming a matter of great concern, especially in terms of radicalisation. It is often the prisons where people become involved in terrorism. Knowing the modern criminals' flexibility and quick adaptation to new situations, this issue will become even more relevant in the future. Having ties to terrorism is one of the most important indications showing that organised crime is not only simply harmful to society. It must be viewed as a phenomenon that threatens national and European security. Although we do not have many examples of organised crime and terrorism threats in Lithuania, a well-known occurrence – when the representatives of the Lithuanian criminal world sought to supply weapons and explosives to the Irish terrorist group the Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) – succinctly illustrates the existence of such opportunities and encourages intelligence and operational services to treat similar phenomena as a matter of utmost concern (Court of Appeal of Lithuania, 2017).

There have been many speculations and conjectures over potential crossovers between terrorists and the drug trafficking. Terrorism in Europe overlaps with the drug trade in two primary arenas: amongst jihadists, and with paramilitaries in Northern Ireland (Basra, 2019). Whilst Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland tried to control

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23 An interview with the operational Europol officer on 15 February 2018.

the drug trade, many European jihadists have backgrounds in consuming or dealing drugs, and their radicalisation does not always change this behaviour. Indeed, of the 69 jihadists who carried out an attack in Europe between 2012 and 2017, there is evidence that at least 5 individuals (7% of the total) consumed illicit drugs in the days or hours prior to their attack (Basra, 2019).

Without overestimating a growing scale of interconnectedness, it is worth noting that organised crime and terrorism still pursue different goals. The clear nature of organised crime groups' profit-seeking is incompatible with terrorism that is predicated on religious beliefs and aims to kill as many people as possible. Organised crime does not, in any way, want to destroy the prosperous Western society from which it derives daily profit. Another point is that modern organised crime groups try to stay unnoticed and avoid any attention, whereas terrorists seek to attract much attention from media and law enforcement. However, despite relatively limited links between organised crime and terrorism, such phenomena must be closely monitored and analysed by law enforcement and security agencies.

## Conclusions

Having analysed the situation in Lithuania and the European Union, there is no doubt that organised crime is not just a standard issue. Observing how international organised crime penetrates into legal businesses, the scale of the generated proceeds, its impact on the economy and social development of the countries, its connection with other threats (illegal migration, corruption, cyberattacks, terrorism), as well as considering increasingly growing hybrid dangers, it becomes clear that it poses a tremendous and ever-growing threat to national and international security. It has a negative impact on public security, public health, democratic institutions, and economic stability around the world. Organised crime, as a phenomenon, develops in exactly the same way as society; it is becoming more flexible and dynamic and assumes new forms. These issues, therefore, cannot be resolved by ordinary means; there must be an innovative response to combat international organised crime. The main question is whether our society is ready to discourage all forms of crime, and whether we can become resistant to this threat?

For more than fifteen years, organised crime in Lithuania has been identified as a threat to national security. We can acknowledge that we have a well-developed legal framework, a clear political will, and public expectations. Operational services have sufficiently comprehensive and reliable information on organised criminal groups, their members, and activities. However, it must be admitted that although it is endeavoured to intensify the European Union Member States' response to this issue at the European level within the framework of the Policy Cycle for the fight against organised crime, no specific measures

have been taken in Lithuania thus far; in essence, this threat is inertly identified among the major threats, and the methods of dealing with them are simply limited to generic, standard measures (strengthening cooperation, coordinating actions, clarifying crime). In preparation for the assessment of national security, it should be proposed that in the future the Strategy defines threats and crime priorities more clearly. The author believes that the greatest attention in the fight against modern crime should be directed to:

- Exchanging information at the national and international levels, especially by ensuring smooth cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence services.
- Concentrating on the most serious threats as well as on the European Union priorities for the fight against serious and organised crime. It is necessary to allocate sufficient resources, monitor and assess the process of implementation.
- Monitoring constantly and responding quickly to the links between organised crime and other threats, in particular, terrorism.
- Forming a negative attitude of society toward the so-called “innocent crimes,” reducing social tolerance, fighting against the shadow economy, and corruption.
- Harmonising a legal system at the European Union level in order to avoid “semi-legal” forms of business by aligning the risk for organised crime to operate across the territory of the European Union.

Organised crime has no borders and has long been internationalised; however countries are still trying to fight this phenomenon on the basis of national solutions. Due to this, the current system hinders a smooth exchange of information and is relatively inflexible in terms of preventing financial crime schemes. All European Union Member States have financial investigation authorities (Financial Crime Investigation Service in Lithuania), whose main tasks are to analyse suspicious transactions and prevent money laundering and terrorist financing. At the national level, these services cope well with their tasks, but they do not regularly cooperate with each other and have no unified database. Europol’s study demonstrated that, in 2014, financial investigation services received almost 1 million suspicious transaction reports, and 65 % of them were made in just two countries – the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Wainwright, 2018). Another drawback is the European Union’s inability to cope with cyber threats. As in the case of money laundering, the European Union Member States usually operate individually. The European Community must radically change its perception and ensure a coordinated and rapid response to these threats. International organised crime cannot be overcome counting upon the endeavours of one service or even one country. Success largely depends on the capabilities of law enforcement agencies to bring together a global network of experts; to ensure reliable possibilities of criminal analysis; and to guarantee proper funding and resource provision.

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# Past, Present and Future Trends of Europol's Evolution in the European Law Enforcement Cooperation

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## ABSTRACT

*While Interpol has literally dominated in the field of international police cooperation, in the beginning of the 1990s Europol has emerged to complement and reinforce the then existing law enforcement cooperation at European level. Since then, Europol has remarkably evolved both strategically and operationally, though within a complex and diverse European legal, political and law enforcement framework. This study provides an in depth analysis of Europol's evolution through major political adversities and law enforcement constraints inextricably connected, while it also examines the impact of the principle of national sovereignty that has deeply affected Europol's establishment and its operational evolution to date. It concludes with quoting concrete remarks and concerns on Europol's current situation and its potential in combating international organized crime and terrorism.*

**Keywords:** Europol, EU Law Enforcement Cooperation

## Introduction

Historically, the cooperation of the international law enforcement community in fighting organized crime was based on the establishment of bilateral and multilateral collaboration agreements, which in due course evolved into strategic and operational networks (Das & Kratcoki, 2001:4-7). Cross-border law enforcement cooperation, however, has been always a complex venture due to politics and differences in the national criminal and

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procedural systems (Deflem, 2002:45). In the European Union (EU), the very first steps to strengthen law enforcement cooperation focused on the creation of Europol as a common law enforcement structure. Established in the beginning of the 1990s, Europol has evolved to become a prominent actor in the fight against organized crime and terrorism through different European law enforcement cultures, legal and political systems. This evolution, however, took place in a complex EU political environment where EU and national politics in conjunction with legal and law enforcement constraints have drastically affected Europol's potential in supporting Member States' cooperation in the fight against organized crime and terrorism; some of these obstacles still exist to date.

## Historical and Political Background

The creation of Europol was the subject of discussions since the mid-1970s at the Trevi Working Group in which the then 12 EU Member States addressed a wide range of law enforcement issues at intergovernmental level (Woodward, 1993, Bunyan, 1993). In the course of discussions, various concerns and reservations were expressed by some Member States, which instead of setting up Europol, preferred to expand and strengthen Interpol's competences in the European domain. However, the sociopolitical developments at the European level along with the spreading of organized criminal activities at that period deeply influenced the progress of consultations in paving the way for the establishment of Europol. In particular, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastern regimes, Germany expressed fears about possible illegal trade in nuclear material. Italy was concerned about the increase of illegal immigration flows to EU countries as well as about the threat posed from the fast internationalization of drugs and the reorganization and spreading of mafia's activities in Europe. Similarly, the British authorities expressed concerns in confronting the fast spreading of money laundering activities due to the complexity of the international financial markets. In short, these were some of the main reasons that boosted the discussions for the creation of Europol (Stergioulis, 2003:23-27).

Officially, the proposal for the establishment of Europol was submitted by the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to the European Council Meeting on 28/29 June 1991, in Luxembourg along with a British proposal for the establishment of a European Information Unit on Drugs (Woodward, 1993). These proposals were adopted in the subsequent Maastricht Summit, on 09/10 December 1991, and were finally integrated into the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty, article K.1.9. As a result, an ad hoc Working Group was set up within the structure of the Trevi Working Group to study the establishment of Europol including the drafting of the Europol Convention. On 2 June 1993, in Copenhagen, the ministers of Justice and Home Affairs decided on the establishment of Europol's forerunner, the Europol Drugs Unit (EDU) (Rauchs & Koenig, 2001:43). The competences of the EDU, based in The Hague, were limited to drugs trafficking and money laundering associated offences.

The ministerial decision defined the mission of the EDU as a non-operational team for the exchange and analysis of intelligence in relation to illicit drug trafficking, the criminal organizations involved and associated to money laundering activities affecting two or more Member States (Ministerial Agreement, 1993).

This very first political initiative for setting up the precursor of Europol soon proved legally inadequate and operationally insufficient as the offence of money laundering was found in many investigations not only associated with drugs trafficking but also with other serious forms of crime which were not included in the EDU's mandate. Consequently, they could not be investigated by the EDU. Therefore, in 1995, the mandate of the newly established EDU was expanded by a joint action (OJEU, 1995) that included crime areas of illicit trafficking of nuclear material, illegal migration, stolen vehicles, and money laundering resulting from these illegal activities. A year later, in 1996, trafficking in human beings and child pornography were also incorporated in the EDU's mandate (OJEU, 1996).

In parallel, Member States continued to streamline their efforts to conclude the Europol Convention, which would have allowed Europol to take up its full activities. The Europol Convention, however, had to be ratified by the parliaments of Member States, a long process that took more than five years due to skepticism and reluctance of Member States to confer some part of their national sovereignty to Europol in dealing with EU internal security issues. Finally, the Europol Convention was ratified by all member states and entered into force on 1 October 1998 (OJEU, 1998).

The establishment of the EDU (1993) was the very first attempt in Europe's history to set up a common European structure for operational law enforcement cooperation. However, one could argue that this first attempt did not address this aspiration with due consideration and attention. The mandate of the initial phase of Europol needed a robust strategy with strong political support which did not exist at the time, as Member States were cautious and reluctant to provide Europol with a broad framework of competences in the fight against organized crime and terrorism (Kaunert et al. 2015:103). Instead, Member States opted for a gradual development of EDU's mandate in the course of time until the Europol Convention was concluded.

Contrary to the idea of creating Europol as a European FBI (Occhipinti, 2003, Bruggeman, 2007, De Moore & Vermeulen, 2010a:63-66), the institutional EU framework has never provided for a European federal law enforcement structure. In fact, the creation of Europol has never been perceived in the context of an European FBI and none of the Member States, the EU Council or the European Commission have ever submitted a proposal in this respect. Thus, the role of Europol in the European law enforcement cooperation including its participation in the Joint Investigation Teams (OJEU, 2002), has been always foreseen in supportive terms by providing information exchange, intelligence analysis

and coordination of Member States' operational activities. In this context, the principle of national sovereignty has constantly prevailed in the EU domain of Justice and Home Affairs by limiting Europol's operational activities to supporting activities.

## Legal Basis

The Europol Convention marked the beginning of a long-term process and efforts for the so-called communitarisation of law enforcement cooperation in the European Union (Fijnaut, 1993). Nevertheless, the Europol Convention often proved to be a rigid legal framework to meet the new challenges in the fight against international crime and terrorism. Since the Europol Convention was ratified, for every amendment of its provisions, a protocol had to be drafted and ratified by all Member States following their national parliamentary procedures, thus creating long delays and enormous difficulties in adapting Europol's tasks to deal with urging criminal and terrorist threats (European Commission, 2008). This complex political procedure also demonstrated a serious lack of planning and development as well as member states' reluctance and confidence towards Europol (Benyon, 1996; Rozée, et al. 2013).

Europol continued to operate in the common area of freedom, security and justice (Fijnaut, 1999) under an inflexible intergovernmental framework until 2009, when the Europol Convention was finally replaced by a Council Decision (OJEU, 2009: Article 3) which came into effect on 1 January 2010. This important legal amendment broadened Europol's mandate so as to cover every form of serious crime, thus, unleashing Europol's potential and dynamism in fighting organized crime without restrictions and limitations. Indeed, the Council Decision was a significant step forward in the EU law enforcement cooperation, as Europol became an EU agency by obtaining a new legal status after having operated as an intergovernmental organization for more than a decade.

Although Europol had finally obtained its appropriate legal basis and became an EU law enforcement agency, three years later in 2013, the EU Commission undertook a new initiative to replace the aforementioned Council Decision of 2009 with an EU Regulation. This aimed at, among others, reinforcing the link between law enforcement cooperation with law enforcement training by merging the European Police College (Cepol) with Europol (EU Commission, 2013). This initiative evoked a strong reaction of Cepol and following the co-decision procedure with the EU Parliament and the Council, it was finally rejected. Nevertheless, the EU Commission proceeded with the second part of its proposal to replace the Europol's legal basis with an EU Regulation which entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017 (OJEU, 2016).

This new and current legal basis enables Europol to tackle EU security threats by officially setting up specialized internal structures such as the European Counterterrorism Centre and the EU Internet Referral Unit (Moor & Vermeulen, 2010b). In fact, the new legal basis strengthened Europol's accountability to the EU and national parliaments and enhanced its data protection regime, as Europol is now accountable to the EU Data Protection Supervisor, thus solving a critical and sensitive issue over Europol's control in processing personal data, which had been pending since its establishment (Boehm, 2012:292, OJEC, 2001). Although it remains to be seen what has been the added value of the new legal basis in the operational work of Europol (Busuioc & Groenleer, 2013), it is certain that the new regulation enhanced Europol's mandate and improved its ability to act as a pan-European platform in the fight against organized crime and terrorism in line with the requirements of the Treaty of Lisbon.

## Core Activities

### Information Exchange

Lacking executive powers, Europol has evolved by focusing on the development of supporting services to the law enforcement authorities of Member States (Anderson, 1989:13). From the very beginning, Europol has invested in the field of information exchange by providing for each Member State a liaison bureau in its headquarters manned with national law enforcement representatives. At that period, the concept of a liaison officers' network within Europol's headquarters was perceived as a revolutionary idea in boosting information exchange between Member States and Europol through direct interpersonal contacts. However, the seconded liaison officers at Europol operate under their national legal framework, the information exchanged is subject to respective national authorities' control and Europol has no authority on liaison officers' work and duties who as national representatives receive orders only by their national authorities. In the course of time, Europol's network of liaison officers has been expanded by also comprising liaison officers from third states with which Europol signed bilateral cooperation agreements (Europol, 2016a:7).

The continuously expanding liaison officers' structure has been deeply connected to national law enforcement politics by ensuring and promoting their law enforcement services' representation (police, gendarmerie, customs, port police, etc.) at the Europol headquarters. Undoubtedly, when the Europol liaison officers' network was set up back in 1993, its contribution to the law enforcement information exchange as well as its added value were highly appreciated and also symbolized the willingness of Member States' joint efforts to foster law enforcement cooperation through Europol. In the course of time, the Europol National Units (ENUs) have become fully operative and an advanced

information exchange platform has been created connecting Europol with ENUs and every national competent authority.

In view of the advanced technology used today by Europol and the fully-fledged ENUs' function, the Europol's liaison officers network could be re-evaluated with regard to its added value in the law enforcement information exchange. Despite the apparent differences in various law enforcement information exchange systems such as Interpol, Frontex, the Schengen Information System, etc., a similar network of Europol's liaison officers does not exist anywhere. What is the benefit of such an extensive liaison officers network operating in parallel with the ENUs' network? Could the ENUs' network which nowadays work effectively and efficiently via advanced communication technology, replace the liaison officers' network, thus avoiding bureaucracy and the increased cost of officials' secondments to Europol's headquarters? In fact, it could have been implemented since 2009 when Europol's information exchange platform SIENA (Secure Information Exchange Network Application) became operative based on cutting edge technology enabling not only ENUs to use the platform, but also Europol's experts and analysts, national competent authorities as well as third parties that signed cooperation agreements with Europol (Europol, 2018). In this context, should Europol continue to invest such considerable resources in maintaining its current liaison officers network or it is high time to provide these resources on expanding its headquarters by establishing regional offices in crucial European areas such as the area of western Balkans and others?

### **Intelligence Analysis & Databases**

The establishment of Europol was largely based on the concept of criminal intelligence analysis. By developing such an innovative tool, Europol would have made a great point of difference compared to Interpol's function and would have been able to offer Member States a highly beneficial product and service. Indeed, Europol introduced in its very first structure a crime analysis department by recruiting the first analysts from member states whose law enforcement authorities has a certain level of knowledge and experience in crime analysis. In parallel, Europol disseminated its expertise on crime analysis by training law enforcement staff of member states and encouraging the national law enforcement authorities to create a crime analysis unit. To this end, Europol edited the very first guidelines and rules in the European law enforcement community on crime analysis (Europol, 2000a), which won an award by the International Association of Law Enforcement Analysts (Europol, 2000b:10). Since then, Europol has never ceased to systematically invest on intelligence analysis considering it as the most valuable tool in combating organized crime and terrorism, despite some Member States' skepticism to feed Europol's analysis projects with their own intelligence (Fägersten, 2010). Nowadays, Europol operates a state-of-the-art central analysis system covering all forms of serious organised crime and terrorism and is widely acknowledged as the European hub of intelligence analysis (Brady, 2008; Bureš, 2016).



Contrary to the Interpol's network of stand-alone criminal databases, Europol has planned the establishment of one multilingual criminal information database as it was initially foreseen by the Europol Convention in 1998 (Articles 7, 8 & 9). The progress of setting up the Europol Information System (EIS) has been extremely slow due to Member States' political and bureaucratic procedures but also because of the rigid EU legal framework on data protection including the complexity of the technical aspects of the system. The EIS was finally launched in 2005 (Europol, 2013) and since then it has significantly evolved comprising all types of criminal information pertaining to persons, objects, means and even structures of criminal organizations. The added value of the EIS lies in providing a unique functionality of interlinking related criminal data when a search is conducted. It is accessible by all national law enforcement authorities via SIENA (police, gendarmerie, customs, border police, port police, immigration and security services) including anti-terrorist units, liaison officers and Europol experts. All data inserted into the system are automatically cross-checked against data of the analysis files, thus supporting a broader spectrum of law enforcement cooperation in running investigations against organized crime and terrorism across Europe.

## Concluding Remarks

The creation of the EDU in 1993 and the ratification of the Europol Convention in 1998 were the first steps in the European history to set up an institutionalized common law enforcement structure. However, the function of the first phase of Europol, the EDU, has proved not particularly successful. Since 1993 when the EDU was established until the conclusion and the entry into force of the Europol Convention - which took almost five years - the mandate and the competences of EDU were extremely limited, thus it drastically restricted the potential of the EDU in supporting Member States' law enforcement cooperation.

Although it was anticipated that the ratification of the Europol Convention (1998) would have had abolished restrictions and unleashed Europol's full capabilities in combating organized crime and terrorism, for a period of more than ten years Europol was operating under a limited framework posed by the provisions of the Europol Convention. In fact, the philosophy of the Europol Convention was based on the principle of intergovernmental cooperation that fully protected the concept of national sovereignty in handling internal security issues (Boer & Walker, 1993). This was actually the core legal obstacle accompanied with lack of trust and confidence from member states towards Europol that caused serious delays in Member States' consultations about the strategic and operational evolution of Europol (Rozée, et al., 2013).

The first signs of a positive change in the evolution of Europol became evident when the Europol Convention was replaced by the EU Council Decision of 2009. From that moment on, Europol, as an EU agency, exited an inflexible framework of intergovernmental cooperation and entered into a new era of the European law enforcement cooperation by expanding its mandate and covering all forms of organized crime, thus facilitating the EU law enforcement cooperation without the restrictions posed by the Europol Convention (Paterson & Pollock, 2011:137). Finally, the EU Regulation of 2017, which constitutes the current legal basis of Europol, has consolidated Europol's mission and mandate, enhanced its operational and strategic role in a multifaceted European law enforcement cooperation and increased transparency in the fields of accountability and personal data protection.

The exchange of criminal information has been always considered as the cornerstone in the international law enforcement cooperation. Europol has invested from the outset on the establishment of a liaison officers' network which was proved exceptionally useful in the beginning of Europol's operation as an intergovernmental organization. In the course of time, this network has been excessively enhanced especially after the enlargement of the EU and Europol's cooperation agreements with third countries. Despite the fact that Europol has become a full EU agency since 2009, it still maintains the Member States' liaison officers network within its headquarters while at the same time the Europol National Units are fully operative via SIENA, which enables a direct and safe communication between them and with Europol on a 24-hours basis.

Taking into account the new legal basis of Europol and the state-of-the-art information exchange platform, it might be considered appropriate if the current liaison officers' network could be replaced with Europol regional offices that could be set up at key European regions such as in the western Balkan and other geographical regions of particular importance in the fight against organised crime and terrorism. Europol could use the resources available on Member States' liaison officers network for extending and reinforcing its own liaisons officers' network with third countries along with the establishment of some key Europol regional bureaux which would highly contribute to the implementation of the EU internal security strategy (Council of the EU, 2015).

Over the last decade, Europol has significantly evolved by proving its added value in the EU law enforcement cooperation with tangible results presenting through Serious Organized Crime Assessment (SOCTA) and Terrorism Situation & Trend (TE-SAT) reports. Having concluded the development of SIENA platform in the information exchange domain along with the EIS as a pan-European criminal database and a state-of-art intelligence analysis system, Europol has successfully built up an operational structure that allows the agency to increase its effectiveness and efficiency in supporting Member States' law enforcement investigations. Nowadays, the leading role of Europol in combating organized crime and terrorism is acknowledged through its comprehensive strategy as part of the

EU security architecture and the implementation of the EU Policy Cycle, which focuses on operational projects in crime areas agreed by Member States as priorities (Council of the EU, 2014, Europol, 2016b:19).

Europol's future is certainly bound by the principle of national sovereignty, which has been affecting the efficiency of Europol's operational activities and limits its role exclusively in supporting services. A very strong indication of the impact of national sovereignty in the field of EU Justice and Home Affairs, was the recent departure of Denmark from Europol's membership (May 2017) following a country's referendum. Similarly, the forthcoming Brexit will end up the membership of one of its strongest partners of Europol. Although bilateral forms of strategic and operational cooperation agreements are duly foreseen to fill the gaps created by such an alarming loss of two powerful member states of Europol, the question of what would be the impact on Europol's future evolution remains to be seen.

Last but not least, the Treaty on European Union in article 4.2 makes it crystal clear that maintaining law and order and safeguarding national security is the sole responsibility of Member States, while article 88 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union defines that no operational action can be carried out by Europol unless the Member State or States whose territory is concerned provide their agreement. In this context, a question is raised if Europol has exhausted its strategic and operational capacities so far and no further development shall be anticipated in the long-term future. (Guyomarch, 1994, European Commission, 2017). If so, is national sovereignty the major deterrent for the future evolution of Europol in confronting the rapid and global developments of organized crime and terrorism effectively and efficiently?

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# PROJECT REPORTS



# Policing of domestic violence: Strategy, competence, training

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## **Abstract**

*An effective implementation of domestic violence strategy and policy requires well-trained and competent employees. The article describes domestic violence training provisions offered for the basic degree police students in the partner countries (Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Scotland, and Slovenia) of an EU funded IMPRODOVA project<sup>2</sup>. Contents of available training courses are assessed in relation to policy recommendations, especially the Istanbul Convention. Competencies that are relevant in identifying, intervening and preventing domestic violence are usually presented to students in the context of more general courses. Consequently, although many important subject materials, such as the rights and needs of the victims, are covered well in most courses, domestic violence related items tend to be scattered throughout the curriculum without forming a coherent unity. Competencies are rarely studied in a separate and comprehensive course focusing specifically on domestic violence related materials. Generic competencies form the foundation of policing skills and knowledge and have a wide applicability in many situations, including domestic violence. If domestic violence related items and learning materials are dispersed around the curriculum, which seems mostly the case currently, the students would need more support to join the dots in order to acquire adequate competencies and comprehensive understanding of domestic violence.*

**Keywords:** domestic violence, police, training, competence, strategy

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<sup>2</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 787054. This article reflects only the author's view and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

## Introduction

Human resources, including the competencies of staff, should be analysed and defined in close association with broader strategic planning. There is an expectation that competent and well-trained staff is necessary in order for any organization, including the police, to achieve strategic and policy goals (Balogun et al., 2015; Dosi et al., 2008). Consequently, now that the prevention and detection of domestic violence and violence against women has been highlighted by several European Union Member States as one of the major policy goals, there is an expectation that the police is also ready to accomplish this goal.

One particularly important international policy document on domestic violence is the Istanbul Convention<sup>3</sup>, which strongly suggests, among other things, the parties to strengthen the education and training of all pertinent professions (Article 15, paragraph 1), highlighting multi-agency co-operation. The transformation of formal policy goals and legislation into effective action requires competent professionals, who are able to identify domestic violence, intervene at the right time and with appropriate measures, provide services to victims and bring perpetrators to justice.

Competences are inculcated in professional education and training in different formal, informal and non-formal learning situations. The concept of competence is not limited to professional skills and knowledge, but covers also employee's attitudes and motivation (Crick, 2008; Hoskins & Crick, 2010). Even competent professionals cannot produce tangible results in the real world of professional practice if their organisations do not provide necessary psychological support and material resources (Niklander et al., 2019). Moreover, professional competence is becoming a key ingredient for planning the content of education in a curriculum. Indeed, many training organizations have adopted so called competence based curriculum, which does not only describe the content of individual courses, but it also defines what the students should be able perform at work after completing the course. Therefore, performance criteria for effective and ethical police conduct described in the curriculum should respond to the requirements of actual working life.

A recent study (Awan et al., 2019) in one UK constabulary shows, for example, that citizens' experiences of the police conduct during the first encounter predicts citizens' future perception of the police. One of the most important areas of public's assessment gears towards the competence<sup>4</sup> of police officers. Consequently, citizens are very attentive to how police officers carry their tasks. Likewise, people expect the police to do their work

3 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, 12 April 2011.

4 Other areas of assessment found in the research were Police Duty, Police Conduct, Experiencing Prejudice and Expectations of the Police (see Awan et al., 2019).

well and produce concrete results, not abstract statistics and numbers that describe police organizational performance (see Mastrofski et al., 1996). Thus, the translation of competencies into practices should be one of the main priorities when defining a strategy for establishing professional competencies. Citizens' perceived fairness and effectiveness of police conduct is associated with police legitimacy (Taylor et al. 2015).

An effective implementation of a new organisational strategy usually requires previously untried competencies that may seem at first sight strange or even opposite from the perspective of prevailing professional practices, attitudes and cultures. In such conditions, the implementation of strategy is likely to encounter resistance. Consequently, it may take a relatively long time to overcome such resistance, for instance, by learning new competencies, or by recruiting new staff. Given the typical characteristics of police occupational culture (Paoline & Gau, 2018; Loftus, 2010), we expect that new strategies for improving the detection and prevention of domestic violence will be resisted at least by conservative fractions within police forces. For instance, a more effective intervention to domestic violence would require that the police officers have competencies to identify and uncover the subtle and hidden forms of the "wicked problem"<sup>5</sup> (Rittel & Webber, 1973) of domestic violence. Furthermore, police needs to be more open to cooperation with social work, health care and various non-governmental organizations in order to be able to meet the various needs of the victims. How well police forces are prepared to respond to the demands of domestic violence strategies. In particular, how does training prepare police officers to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to implement these strategies? In order to have an overview of the current situation, the IMPRODOVA project<sup>6</sup> gathered data on domestic violence training provisions for frontline responders in each IMPRODOVA partner country.

## Methods and Procedures

The purpose of the study was not to produce an exhaustive list of all available training options in partner countries, but to focus on reasonably available illustrative material. The inventory of domestic violence related training covered three levels of education: basic, specialist and managerial training. The basic training provides an entry-level degree to a profession. Specialist training involves various courses, units, or programs to improve skills and knowledge often formally required to work as a frontline responder in the area of domestic violence. Finally, we wanted to explore whether managerial training contains any domestic violence related content. We mainly focus in this paper on basic degree lev-

5 Particularly when violence and abuse does not leave manifest physical marks, but consist of psychological violence and coercive control, it is more difficult to detect (e.g. Robinson et al., 2018).

6 Improving frontline responses to high impact domestic violence ([www.improdova.eu](http://www.improdova.eu)).

el of police training, but highlight some noteworthy aspects of specialist and managerial training too.

We checked to what extent policy recommendations regarding training, particularly in the topics presented in the Istanbul Convention, were integrated in sampled courses. The topics in the training content that we used as a baseline for assessing each identified course are presented in Table 1. We built the inventory at a rather general level and did not go to the details of the course content, and thus asked the IMPRODOVA partners to check whether the most salient subject materials were covered in courses that the partners identified as potentially relevant for domestic violence training. We wanted to determine, for instance, whether training materials covered basic skills to identify, detect and prevent domestic violence. Furthermore, was domestic violence discussed more broadly as a societal, economic and psychological problem? Were the multiple types and forms of domestic violence, including the seriousness of violence and risk assessment covered too? Istanbul Convention highlights the rights, services and vulnerability of victims. Were these topics also presented in the course? The effective prevention and intervention rests on cooperation among multiple agencies. Was this aspect also considered? Finally, we also asked about whether role-playing, simulations or scenario were used as pedagogic methods.

**Table 1:** Most Salient Topics of domestic violence Related Training

Identification, detection and prevention of domestic violence
domestic violence as a societal, economic, and psychological problem
Types and forms of violence and abuse
Seriousness of violence
Fundamental human rights
Rights of victims
Services to meet the needs of victims
Protection of victims
Means to prevent secondary victimization
Services to perpetrators
Cooperation between different agencies
Risk assessment tools
Case documentation
Special groups, such as children, elderly, ethnic minorities, disabled
Mediation
Simulations, scenarios, and role-playing as a didactic method

We searched for police training in courses and programs that could potentially contain references to domestic violence, domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, violence against women, family violence, violence in close relationships or violence against children presented. However, a course title is not always a clear indication of the content. We soon realized that quite many relevant topics related to domestic violence are covered in courses that touch rather generic policing skills and knowledge. These courses do not have a specific focus on domestic violence, although the learning of these more general policing skills and knowledge have also relevance and applicability in domestic violence situations. Domestic violence cases and related competencies can arise in these more general courses for instance as exceptional cases or typical examples, but this often depends on an individual teacher responsible for planning and organizing the course.

The structure of our paper is straightforward. We first describe the types of courses in which domestic violence related material is introduced. After that, we offer some examples of training provisions in each IMPRODOVA partner country. Finally, we draw some conclusions of the relations between police competences, training and strategy implementation in the area of domestic violence.

## Results: Generic and Specific Courses

In comparative policing research, European countries are commonly regarded as constituting distinctive policing regimes or systems (Devroe et al., 2017). For instance, Devroe and Ponsaers (2017) distinguish Nordic countries having a 'unified police system', setting it apart from 'territorially divided systems' of UK and Wales, the 'federal systems' of Germany, Switzerland and Belgium, and 'historically diverse police systems' of France, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The diversity of policing regimes is also reflected in how police training is organized in different countries, which force of police unit is responsible for training, whether training is delivered at the regional (territorial), federal or national level. The police education and training commonly consists of a combination of theoretical studies with practical training and traineeship. The common structure varies in terms of the length of training, the time devoted to "theoretical" subjects and the timing of apprenticeship period.

Our findings suggest that skills, knowledge and attitudes that are relevant to identifying, intervening and investigating domestic violence are usually presented to the students in the context of more general courses. Policing of domestic violence is rarely offered explicitly as a distinctive course or a clearly defined section in a larger module, although the cases of domestic violence can be presented as examples in which policing skills could be simulated, learned and tested.

Numerous courses provide police students with generic skills that have a wide applicability in multiple areas of policing, in both patrolling and investigation. The relevance and value of these generic policing competencies in specific circumstances of domestic violence is not necessarily made explicit to students during training. Therefore, it is often left to the students themselves to take that intellectual and practical leap from generic to specific forms of intervention. The reasoning from generic to specific occurs, if at all, occurs in a practical state of awareness, however, without much conscious effort or reflective thinking. If the information of domestic violence is scattered in the curriculum and appears in general courses without a systematic planning, students may not be able to form linkages between different items and reach a comprehensive understanding of the domestic violence issues. Consequently, this mode of learning is vulnerable to non-optimal outcomes if the generic skills and knowledge deviate from the specific competencies required in identifying, intervening and investigating domestic violence. Students should be helped find linkages between separate items presented in different courses. This could be accomplished for instance through a simulation exercise in which students are given an opportunity to observe and experience how a domestic violence case is processed in the policing system and how and when the other services agencies come in on the process. Such exercise would integrate separately learned items into an understandable totality showing how a case moves on e.g. from a house call to an investigation and cooperation with other frontline responders such as health care, social work and non-governmental organizations.

Another possibility is to produce a specific course that is entirely focused on domestic violence. Given that the entry level degree training for police officers seem to be filled up with vast amount of details and subjects, and training in some countries is currently rather short, it is not likely that specific courses on domestic violence can be organized during the basic degree training, say, as an elective or optional course. However, if training is modelled based on work life requirements, then it would be rational to focus on those areas of policing, which consume much of police officers' working time (e.g. driving), in which a right outcome is critical (e.g. the use of force), or which both consume much time and require a successful outcome (house calls).

## **Examples of Domestic Violence Training in IMPRODOVA Partner Countries**

In this section, we describe some examples of domestic violence training provisions in IMPRODOVA partner countries, focusing mostly on the entry-level training. These examples do not cover all material we have collected during research, but it serves an illustrative purposes.

## Austria

In *Austria*, domestic violence is presented during the two-year basic training in the context of so called “specific police competencies”. domestic violence is referred to as “violence in private sphere.” The length of the course is 24 lessons covering the fundamentals of relevant legislation and a seminar on violence in private sphere. The seminar is a joint effort with an expert from a violence protection center or a women’s shelter. Later in the competence trainings, there is one additional module of 16 teaching units about violence in private sphere. Overall, 40 units out of 2612 units is explicitly devoted to domestic violence, which is only 1.5 % of total units. However, teachers often bring out domestic violence relevant topics in other learning modules too.

The training at the basic level in the Austria did not include the following topics: domestic violence as a social, economic and psychological problem, risk assessment tools, case documentation and mediation. It is unclear if the seriousness of violence is discussed explicitly although different forms and types of violence are covered. In addition, even though simulations and role-playing are an intrinsic part of teaching methods, it is not evident that they are used in the context of domestic violence. Overall, it seems that even though not much time is devoted to domestic violence, numerous relevant topics are covered including the victim services, support and protection, in addition to the cooperation between different agencies.

## France

In *France*, the national police do not offer training courses at the basic degree level that are solely focussed on domestic violence. However, relevant materials are presented during other, more general classes and practical exercises. Various generic policing competencies learned in training provide the basic skills to police domestic violence incidents too. French national gendarmerie has one three-hour training devoted to domestic violence, which is a part of the basic training module on how to receive a report of an offence at the police station.

We want to highlight a specific training that is offered since 2016 for investigators in French national police. The training is aimed at those who are appointed to special units investigating crimes and misdemeanours against the person within the family context. These police officers have a possibility to complete 4 days (36 hours) of specialized training. Officers in national gendarmerie who are appointed to a special unit investigating domestic violence can undergo this training too. The training is provided by the regional training offices of the French national police. The coverage of domestic violence topics is broad. The course is remarkable in stressing women’s rights in society, including the history of women’s movement and the development of gender equality.

The training covers also cooperation with medical doctors, the prosecutor's office and the family court. Indeed, police services are presented as one element of a larger system and the purpose of victim support and protection. Risk assessment and case documentation belong also to the content of this specialized training course. Finally, the course applies various less conventional methods, such as case studies, videos and round-table discussions.

## **Finland**

Since 2014, the basic police training in *Finland* is a 180 credit-points qualification of bachelor's degree. The studies take approximately three years leading to Bachelor of Police Services and qualifies a person to the position of police officer, such as a Senior Constable. The curriculum is modelled on the policing competencies required in working life. There is a strong emphasis of human rights and equality throughout the course. Students are also supported to become critical and self-reflective on their own practices and attitudes in different situations.

The main aspects of domestic violence are dealt with in the context of public order and security operations, criminal law, criminal process, and private law. These courses pertain for instance to the essential elements of an offence and how to consider the presence of children in field operations, different processual aspects from the perspective of a plaintiff (victim), securing and presenting evidence in domestic violence, claims for damages and the needs of victims.

The pre-trial investigation studies contain several domestic violence related topics too, such as the investigation of crimes against children, confidentiality, protection of victims, and the possibility of mediation in domestic violence cases. There is also a mock trial seminar, where cases of domestic violence are presented. Finally, a lecture on the psychology of interrogation covers also the hearing of children and the questioning of persons who have traumatized and suffering from violence.

Overall, the materials that explicitly relate to domestic violence are given approximately 45 hours of lectures and seminars. The training applies several types of pedagogies from traditional lectures to role-playing and simulations based on real cases. Apart from services to perpetrators, all subject materials listed in Table 1 are seemingly covered at the basic degree level.

During the field-training period in different police departments students work in a position of Junior Constables both as patrol officers and detectives. Consequently, students respond to house calls, encounter the victims and suspects of domestic violence incidents and obtain practical experience. It is worth mentioning that during the past



years or so, a dozen BA theses have dealt with violence in close relationships, or violence against children.

We want to offer an example managerial level police training in Finland. Managerial and leadership training is focused on how to lead field operations and pre-trial investigation in a legal, fair and effective manner, and how to fulfill various kinds of managerial roles. Therefore, there is an emphasis on the legal and administrative questions, but also the planning and allocation of resources, assessment of results, and staff management.

In the studies towards the Master of Police Services, violence in close relationships and domestic violence is explicitly dealt with in various courses and contexts. The program does not contain a course that is focussed only on domestic violence, but most of the relevant topics covered in other courses. For instance, the protection needs of the victim is highlighted during the course on pre-trial investigation process. The students also learn about the services provided by other agencies such as the Victim Support Finland, special aspects of pre-trial investigation involving children, questions related to coercive measures, restraining order and risk/threat assessment. There is also a separate discussion session about the challenges in identifying, detecting and effectively intervening at occurrences of violence in close relationships.

The focus is on learning competencies for leading a pre-trial investigation as an inspector or chief inspector. Therefore, the broader societal, economic and psychological questions are not covered very broadly. However, the importance of fundamental human rights is stressed throughout the degree program. There is also a seminar on criminal procedure where these subject materials are learned through cases. Based on a conservative assessment, time devoted to domestic violence related aspects is approximately 32 hours. Within this short time most subject materials are covered, save services available to perpetrators is often rather condensed.

Finally, we want to introduce multi-professional training produced in an EU funded project, EPRAS (Enhancing Professional Skills and Raising Awareness on domestic violence, Violence against Women and Shelter Services<sup>7</sup>). The project launched an online training<sup>8</sup> for all frontline response professionals in May 2019. The target group for this continuing education consists of those police officers, social workers, and health care professionals in Finland who need to improve their competencies to detect, intervene and prevent violence in close relationships. The training takes about a day. A recommendation is to go through material in a study group, preferable in a multi-professional group consisting representatives of all frontline responder agencies.

7 Information about the project at Police University College of Finland's web page [https://www.polamk.fi/en/rdi/projects/epras\\_eng](https://www.polamk.fi/en/rdi/projects/epras_eng).

8 Online training is available in Finnish <https://verkkokoulut.thl.fi/web/puutu-vakivaltaan>.

## Germany

*Germany* is divided into 16 federal states, and consequently the German police, police laws, and basic trainings differ on a federal level. For instance, Berlin police - a partner in IMPRODOVA consortium – offers basic level and middle management level training.

The basic education of police in Germany usually grants a bachelor's level degree. It is common that issues related to domestic violence are covered during courses focusing on general policing skills and knowledge. Consequently, basic police training offers several learning opportunities that have relevance to the detection of and intervention in domestic violence. For instance, a police education institute of one federal state offers a module on prevention of crime consisting of 328 lectures or 8 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) that has also relevant material to domestic violence. In addition to "theoretical" studies, German police students must complete five ECTS of training, during which they encounter domestic violence cases.

We observed many different ways to deliver domestic violence related training in federal states. In some federal states and police education institutions, it may also be possible to obtain more in-depth training on how to intervene in an extremely difficult and stressful police operation of domestic violence. Interestingly, police training in one federal state has a special focus on equality of persons with LGBTI-background and on stalking. Furthermore, a certain federal state has introduced a module on domestic violence with a total of 86 hours training, while in another, issues related to domestic violence are covered in communication training, even also in English.

Overall, most important topics of domestic violence listed in Table 1 are covered in the trainings provision we observed in Germany, apart from risk assessment tools and mediation. Services available to victims and perpetrators, and the cooperation with other service agencies are covered briefly. Police training in all federal states uses scenarios and simulations for learning.

Berlin police offers several in-service specialist courses relevant to domestic violence. Most of these courses deal with some important aspects of domestic violence, but no individual course covers all topics listed in Table 1. The content of courses range from victim protection to restraining order and stalking. These courses can also cover some aspects of victim services. There is also a four-day-course entitled as "domestic violence". The course is for individual police officers who are then able to pass specialist knowledge forward. This course covers a wide area of subject materials on domestic violence except services to perpetrators and mediation.

German Federal Criminal Investigation Office offers a national three-day specialist course on crime prevention. The course covers rights, services and protection of victims and the

prevention of secondary victimization, but not services to perpetrators. The cooperation between different agencies is also on the training agenda. This course does not cover services to perpetrators.

The German police officers at the top management level receive a 2-year master's level education under the supervision of the German Police University in Münster. The program does not contain a course that focuses exclusively on domestic violence. Nonetheless, domestic violence related materials are presented in various courses ranging from subjects such as Law, Sociology, Psychology and Criminology to Criminalistics, Interrogation, Victim protection and Management of police action. The totality of domestic violence related subject materials in various courses could be more than 150 hours. Moreover, fundamental human rights and other legal issues that are important in leading police operations and investigation are naturally covered.

### Hungary

In *Hungary*, the entry-level police training is offered at four police secondary schools. After that, the Faculty of Law Enforcement at the National University of Public Service (NUPS) offers three-year full-time and part-time BA programs, and two-year part-time MA programs. The Faculty also offers specialization and further training courses and a doctoral program.

The four secondary police schools can have somewhat different emphasis in the content and methods of domestic violence relevant training. For instance, in one police secondary school, a course emphasizes the importance of empathy and supportive attitude in situations of sexual, physical and psychological violence, verbal abuse, and economic violence. Simulations are used as a pedagogical tool and learning is demonstrated in practice tests. In another school, domestic violence related materials are taught in several courses ranging from Law, Law Enforcement Administration, Criminology and Forensics, to Public Order Policing and Communication Studies. Overall, these topics consist of 58 lectures, and they address all significant domestic violence related materials, except measures of prevention, risk assessment tools and mediation. Children and disabled people are discussed as special groups. In a third police secondary school, domestic violence is highlighted in courses on Public Order, Criminal Studies, District Police Officer Course, and Social and Communications Studies. Again, much of the subject materials mentioned Table 1 are covered. However, services to victims, secondary victimization, risk assessment tools, seriousness of violence, fundamental human rights, and mediation seem not to be on agenda. Simulation is often used as a pedagogical method.

A fourth police secondary school offers an optional course entitled as "Violence between family members and restraining orders", which consists of 10 lessons of 45 minutes. Six lessons are organized as simulation training. This course also touches upon the services

available to the perpetrator, restraining order, forms of violence and the tools to detect and identify domestic violence, services to the victims, and cooperation between agencies.

National University of Public Services offers several courses in different subjects and disciplines that are relevant in detecting, preventing and intervening domestic violence, but we are not describing the details here due to space restrictions.

## Portugal

Domestic violence related training content is presented at different levels of police training in *Portugal*. The basic training for police officers provides students with preliminary competencies to manage all types of policing situation and therefore it must cover at least some aspects of domestic violence too. Senior police officers who work in supervisory or management roles receive training for leading domestic violence detection and investigation operationally and strategically. Furthermore, proximity policing model offers specialisation training for domestic violence teams. There is also training of domestic violence risk assessment, and criminal investigation focusing on the securing evidence of domestic violence.

Since 2012, domestic violence training has been comprehensive covering all the above-mentioned layers and aspects of policing. Training is delivered by police training institutes and police forces. domestic violence training provisions of the Portuguese Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR) should be in principle comparable to Portuguese Police.

The basic degree training lasts 36 weeks and offers police officers general competencies to solve various policing incidents, gather evidence and support the victims. A specific module of 12 hours deals with domestic violence incidents. The course covers the main phases of policing of domestic violence incidents from initial response to criminal investigation. The course emphasizes that the police must support and ensure safety of domestic violence victims, properly investigate domestic violence incidents, and prevent any future situations to emerge. The course covers the subject materials presented in Table 1 other than mediation.

In Portugal, there are four short courses on domestic violence for specialists: Proximity Policing Integrated Model Course (6 hours), Train the Trainers' Proximity Teams and domestic violence (9 hours), Training on domestic violence Risk Assessment (7 hours), and domestic violence Policing and Criminal Investigation Course (5 hours). These courses are mandatory for a police officer entering a domestic violence specialist role. The content of the training courses covers all significant topics of domestic violence except for mediation. Moreover, Portuguese police have a domestic violence Policing Manual that

helps police officers to detect domestic violence cases. In addition, a risk factor list supports police officers to identify and prevent domestic violence. Case studies, scenarios and role-playing are regularly used in training.

## Scotland

The Scottish Police College provides Initial Training Course in *Scotland*, which lasts 11 weeks. Basic training courses for police officers consist of teaching units that introduce students to legislation, police procedures and techniques. One unit of six hours is dedicated to domestic abuse, which is the preferred term instead of domestic violence in Scotland. The content of the unit covers most of the significant subject materials listed in Table 1, except for services to perpetrators and mediation. Matters related to children are given a special emphasis. After graduation, police officers undertake a probationary period of two-years during which they deal with various policing tasks including domestic abuse.

Police officers promoted to the rank of Police Sergeant complete Operational Command Training, which prepares them into a supervisory role. The training includes one hour of domestic abuse training. Again, most subject topics are recapitulated, except for mediation and services to perpetrators. Children are again highlighted as a special group.

Detective specialists must pass the Initial Investigators Program that covers multiple subject materials relevant to domestic abuse and the National Investigation Exam. Detective Officers who want to specialise in the investigation of domestic abuse must pass a week-long Domestic Abuse Investigating Officers Course. The course consists of 40 hours of work in total and covers all relevant aspects related to prevention, detection and intervention of domestic violence, with the exception mediation.

Police Scotland has developed a new program entitled as Domestic Abuse Materials (Scotland), which will be delivered by the UK Charity SafeLives. The training aims to change attitudes and behaviour of police officers to better understand and meet the needs of the victims. All police officers and staff up to the rank of Chief Inspector must complete the one-hour online training<sup>9</sup>. In addition, those police officers who serve in frontline roles must pass a-day-long face-to-face training. This training aims to support the impact of domestic abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 by improving police practice and services to victims of domestic abuse.

## Slovenia

*Slovenian* police offer eight hours of training at the basic degree level providing skills and knowledge for prevention, detection and intervention of domestic violence. The training

<sup>9</sup> More information about the training, including content and costs can be found at <http://www.safelives.org.uk/training/police>.

covers most topics that are relevant for policing domestic violence, apart from services to perpetrators and risk assessment tools. In addition, simulations or scenarios seemed not to be used, but there is also an online e-learning and distant learning option. For specialist police officers, Slovenian police provides a mandatory domestic violence training of six days, which covers all other topics in Table 1, save services to perpetrators and risk assessment tools.

At the managerial level, Slovenian police is utilizing various training options offered by many organizations and agencies. We do not have detailed information concerning the content these courses. However, we know that risk assessment tools are not covered in these training courses, because based on the Slovenian law on the prevention of domestic violence NGOs are responsible for risk assessment.

Training provisions for specialist are also produced by the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security of a Slovenian University. The length of the course is five ECTS, and it is available for the programs in Critical Victimology (MA), Organization of Police Work and Police Powers (BA), and Criminology and Victimology (BA). The course has a wide coverage of domestic violence related materials, but does not cover risk assessment and case documentation tools. The course focuses on the use of coercive means, but it also highlights hidden victimizations too.

## Conclusion

In IMPRODOVA partner countries<sup>10</sup>, domestic violence related training during the basic degree, or entry-level, police education is most commonly presented in general courses that convey competencies that can be applied in many policing situations. Courses specifically focussing on domestic violence are rare, but we observed some interesting examples. It seems that important topics of domestic violence are covered rather broadly in all countries. Yet, some particular items, most often mediation and risk assessment, are usually not discussed at the basic degree level. Risk assessment is likely regarded a specialist's skill and therefore left out. Knowledge about mediation is not regarded being relevant for the police in many countries.

The possible weakness of the current situation in training provision is that subject materials that are important in policing domestic violence are scattered and isolated in different parts of the curriculum. Curricula of basic policing degrees tend to be organized in terms of general competencies and areas of police operation rather than specific phenomena. This organisation usually means that specific phenomena such as domestic violence

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10 i.e. Austria, France, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Scotland, and Slovenia.

pop up here and there in the curriculum. domestic violence could emerge through an interesting example or a typical case in which more generic skills and knowledge could be applied. Then the presentation of domestic violence can depend on the interests of an individual instructor. Consequently, there is a risk that entry-level police officers do not have an opportunity form a comprehensive picture of domestic violence and the training may leave gaps in their competencies to identify, intervene and investigate domestic violence. The current situation is understandable as the curricula are packed full of content, and there is little room for special courses. In the long term, it may be beneficial to learn well the general principles and procedures of policing, which form a solid basis for further and continuing training. Then, it is also easier to participate in the specialist training, such as domestic violence specialist, if the principles are learned well. However, it is also important to ensure that basic degree students are exposed systematically to different aspects of domestic violence during their studies. Students also need help so that they can form comprehensive understanding of domestic violence regardless of whether the relevant materials is scattered in different parts in the syllabus.

We emphasized in the introduction of this article that competencies are more than simply skills and knowledge. A competent professional has also incorporated appropriate values and strong motivation, so that they achieve tangible results by ethical means in the real world (Crick, 2008; Hoskins & Crick, 2010). Moreover, skills and knowledge should not be seen separate from the personal development of a learner in his or her social and cultural context. New strategies, policies and legislation require changes in organizational practices and processes. Thus, the success of legislative and policy reforms depends also on professional dispositions, which contain certain inertia resisting change (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, the implementation of new legislation and policy depends on professional bodies and minds. In particular, if new legislation and policy requires practices that do not align with the existing professional culture, the change is harder to achieve.

In many IMPRODOVA partner countries, police officers who want to become specialist in domestic violence have a possibility to participate in courses that focus solely on domestic violence related issues. Specialist courses also aim at influencing students' dispositions, so that specialists develop right attitudes and behaviours towards victims and broaden the understanding of the complexity and seriousness of domestic violence as a psychological, social and cultural phenomenon. These courses also instruct how to use various tools and procedures that are created specifically for domestic violence, such as risk assessment, case documentation and collaboration with other frontline responders. Indeed, in some IMPRODOVA partner countries specialist courses are organized in collaboration with social and health services and non-governmental organisations. The multi-professional aspect is important, since the prevention, detections and investigation of domestic violence requires joint effort. Collaboration requires creating trusting relations between many organizations and agencies that have quite different professional,

organizational and cultural constellations. This is not necessarily an easy task. In addition, important strategic goals cannot be achieved even with competent frontline responders, if they are not supported and valued by their organizational managers.

To understand what professional competencies should be covered in the curriculum and courses, one needs to understand what constitutes effective and ethical work practices and processes in working life. However, one needs also to be aware that the actual work practices and processes may not be desired or ideal from the perspective of new policy and legislation. Indeed, in some cases they could be quite far away from the ideal situation or desirable goals. There are forces of inertia in organizational structures and professional practices. Professionals may adhere to inappropriate routines and make virtue out of necessity. Individuals may argue: "This is the right way, because it is the most effective way." In reality, the argument should be read as follows: "This is the right way, because this is how I do it, and I am too tired (disinterested, old, etc.) to change my routines." As human minds and bodies contain inertia, it may be hard to achieve change merely by enacting new legislation, or formulating official policies and strategic goals. Professional groups are known to protect their jurisdictions (Abbott, 1988) and tend to resist change, particularly if it is dictated from the outside. This type of inertia and resistance is partly related to professional interests, but it can also be explained by professional cultures and dispositions of individual professionals. As professional inertia in the long-run gives leeway to more killings of victims of domestic violence, already basic police education should train students to acquire a growth-oriented and open mindset, as there is far more to learn about domestic violence than can be taught within the boundaries of few lectures.

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# Interagency Cooperation – Building capacity to manage domestic abuse (IMPRODOVA Project)

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## Abstract

*The cooperation of agencies as first responders to domestic abuse has attracted increased interests among researchers. Recent international guidelines, particularly the Istanbul Convention, prescribe such networking between law enforcement, local support agencies, social services, health care and other relevant professionals as a precondition for improved response towards crimes committed in families and intimate relationships. The article describes the urgency to combat domestic abuse by means of interagency cooperation, and continues with a description of the Istanbul Convention, and explains the basic dimensions of such cooperation, e.g., concerning referrals between responder agencies. The article concludes with a brief overview of present research activities in the field by a project carried out by 16 partners. The project 'IMPRODOVA'<sup>1</sup> runs from 2018 to 2021 and is funded by the European Union Horizon 2020 programme.*

**Keywords:** Domestic abuse, high impact domestic violence, Istanbul Convention, cooperation, IMPRODOVA project

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<sup>1</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 787054. This article reflects only the author's view and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

## The necessity to fight domestic abuse

Within the last three decades, society and policing have become aware to the severe consequences of domestic abuse. Now, the impact on victim-survivors, family and community members has been recognised as a serious criminological problem. In some countries, domestic abuse even constitutes an individual criminal offence, for example in Portugal, Scotland, and Slovenia. Meanwhile, various national crime statistics refer to crimes committed in a family or a context of otherwise close relationship.

In Europe, one key factor for this change is the integration and implementation of the Istanbul Convention in 2011. The Istanbul Convention defines domestic violence<sup>2</sup> as “a violation of human rights..., a form of discrimination against women..., physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women...” (Council of Europe, 2011, Article 1 Sec. 3). The aim of the Convention is to provide protection and assistance to victim-survivors and to strengthen international cooperation. Likewise, the aim to actively fight domestic abuse has been emphasised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, which made statistical data on fatal incidents of abuse (year 2017; UNODC 2019a) available.

Altogether, 464,000 persons were intentionally killed worldwide, among them 89,000 because of organised crimes (19 percent) (UNODC, 2019b). The approximately 78,000 persons, who died of intentional homicide within a domestic context, were mainly females. When family members were perpetrators, 64 percent of victim-survivors were women. When intimate partners were perpetrators, 82 percent of victim-survivors were women. These findings underline the threat that girls and women are exposed to in specific family settings (UNODC, 2019a). The data indicate that the highest risk to be killed within a family context applies to women in Africa (19,000); yet in Europe, on average, daily more than eight women are killed by (ex-)partners or family members (UNODC, 2019b). Accordingly, experts consider domestic abuse as having features of an “epidemic” (e.g., Hegarty, 2011). Significant research has addressed the adverse effects of domestic abuse on victim-survivors (e.g., Ferrari et al. 2016, Sternberg et al., 1993), the psychology of the perpetrator (e.g., Kernsmith, 2005), the role of the police and the justice system (e.g., Burman & Brooks-Hay, 2018; Sun, 2007) as well as social work (e.g., Danis, 2003).

Consequently, it became clear that a cooperative response by various frontline responders is necessary to better contain or manage domestic abuse (e.g., Chatzifotiou, Fotou & Moisides, 2014; Webb & Scheicher, 2015). Below, I will outline what is considered as best

2 Although the term „domestic violence” is used in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011) and the text focusses at some points on high impact domestic violence with potentially lethal outcomes, the term “domestic abuse” is preferably used in the text as it includes all forms of domestic abuse (stalking, coercive control, etc.) in line with the definition by Walby and colleagues (2017).

practice regarding interagency co-operation by the Istanbul Convention, what mechanisms contribute to the success of such cooperation, and how the European Union funded research project IMPRODOVA<sup>3</sup> will be investigating this topic.

## Interagency cooperation as requested by the Istanbul Convention

Tjosvold (1988) characterizes cooperation in the sense of a cooperative goal relationship by four features: (1) exchanging and combining information, ideas, and other resources; (2) giving assistance; (3) discussing problems and conflicts constructively; and (4) supporting and encouraging each other. According to the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011), cooperation between various frontline responders of domestic abuse is a promising approach to manage and understand domestic abuse implying that much more and better cooperation is possible compared to current efforts. Reasons for this gap between current national efforts to control domestic abuse and the standards set by the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011) are manifold: Legal constraints, institutional egoism, lack of capacity, experience and training, et cetera. Nonetheless, analyses of existing models of cooperation confirm that the advantages outweigh the costs as long as the victim-survivor's needs determine the focus of the cooperation (Jaffré, 2019).

Furthermore, the Istanbul Convention stresses the prevention of secondary victimisation and an inter- or multi-agency approach of fighting domestic abuse. It is claimed, for example, that a "holistic response to violence against women" should be offered in a "way of effective co-operation among all relevant agencies, institutions and organisations" (Council of Europe, 2011, Art. 7 Sec. 2). In Article 18 Section 2, these stakeholders are explicated as

"all relevant state agencies, including the judiciary, public prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, local and regional authorities as well as non-governmental organisations and other relevant organisations and entities, in protecting and supporting victims and witnesses of all forms of violence...,including by referring to general and specialist support services....".

The coordinated approach should target victim-survivors and perpetrators, children and the wider social environment (Council of Europe, 2011, Art. 18 Sec. 3). Ideally, protection and support services would be "located on the same premises" (Council of Europe, 2011, Art. 18 Sec. 3). Additionally, all involved parties should receive professional training on how to cooperate within a coordinated multi-agency approach (Council of Europe, 2011, Art. 15 Sec. 2).

<sup>3</sup> [www.improdova.eu](http://www.improdova.eu)

Necessarily, the wording of such conventions need to be in a normative mode, and partly appellative. Therefore, national or cultural impediments to its practical execution have to be neglected in the formal text. This could encourage activists and practitioners to welcome the Convention's urge to alter traditional behavioural patterns and stereotypical roles for women and men, and eradicate the idea of women's inferiority (see Council of Europe, 2011, Art. 12 Sec. 1). In the field, both frontline professionals and domestic abuse researchers encounter a very different reality of gender relations. Traditional ideas and attitudes seem to be narrow, if not entrenched. The likelihood of Istanbul Convention requirements to be actually implemented constitutes the contradictory nature of, "law in the books" and "law in action". Istanbul Convention's postulations may come true when we apply a wider horizon, because they are justified and indispensable in terms of human rights, civil society, and the protection of females.

## Interagency cooperation as an approach to control domestic abuse

The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011) presents the ideal situation of how cooperation between various frontline responders in cases of domestic abuse should be presented; the advantages of such cooperation depend on the communication between the parties.

Firstly with respect to Tjosvold's (1988) definition mentioned above, the parties to the cooperation need to base their cooperation on a shared objective. When they have a shared understanding of the goal and act accordingly, similar attitudes toward a subject will be more likely to occur. On a general level, this could be the condemnation of abuse in any form. As fewer conflicts about the overall mission in fighting domestic abuse will less likely divert their energies, divergent parties will be more motivated to work with each other (cf. Kravets & Zimmermann, 2012; Mohr & Spekman, 1996). This unity also has a positive effect to the external, for example, to clients: If all parties agree, that belittling, bashing or controlling of the spouse is unacceptable behaviour, then, in a given situation, victim-survivors and perpetrators have increased chances to accept this view and learn what appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is.

Secondly, on the part of each involved institution, to agree on a shared goal and to work towards achieving this goal requires a common understanding of each other's approaches, including options and constraints that determine the partner's frontline response. If this understanding is achieved, the parties can better assist victim-survivors of domestic abuse by referring them to other agencies whose expertise is suitable for addressing the victim-survivors' needs. Victim-survivors regard this as good service and often as tremendously helpful (Allen, Byebbee & Sullivan, 2004; Westbrook, 2009).

Thirdly, referrals to other stakeholders (i.e. those who are engaged in controlling domestic abuse and its effects) are only done in a convincing way when the parties to the cooperation trust each other. Thus, referring a victim-survivor to another agency signals to the victim-survivor that an agency x trusts an agency y. Therefore, the victim-survivor should also trust agency y (Ferrin, Dirks & Shah, 2006). This is evident, for example, when a victim-survivor first goes to a shelter and the shelter-staff encourage the victim-survivor to report the case to the police.

Fourthly, referrals to agencies of cooperation is even more effective to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse, when all partners are prepared to serve as the starting point of an intervention and are open to assist each victim-survivor of domestic abuse. Accordingly, Hagemann-White (HAIP, 2017) states:

“The chain of intervention is perhaps best imagined as a ring with many doors, which can be entered or left at any point, and which is also internally connected by many crossroads. It is crucial that the chain (as an offer) is not interrupted, but has connection possibilities at every point, which are mediated by the facilities. The principles of maintaining confidentiality and strengthening the self-determination of those affected remain intact despite all cooperation”.

Evidently, not every agency managing a case is the most suitable in meeting the needs of a victim-survivor or his/her family and friends. However, as long as these persons are not rejected, but welcomed openly and referred to the most suitable agency, the idea of the intervention chain is actualized.

Fifthly, team research shows that the best approach for solving complex tasks is realized when all partners share all knowledge they have of a certain case (e.g., Wittenbaum, Hollingshead & Botero, 2004). Accordingly, when several stakeholders with complementary expertise and knowledge cooperate on such a basis in supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse, such inter-agency cooperation will be effective. Consequently, better decisions and faster responses regarding the support of a victim-survivor of domestic abuse are achieved via open communication (Tjosvold, 1988). However, finding the best possible solution is often difficult, if any party withholds communication due to mistrust or suspected intimidation by another party. Nonetheless, in numerous cases the need to withhold information is caused by a victim-survivor who chooses to continue to being anonymous and not to press charges. In such circumstances, the parties are only able to discuss the case in an impersonal way.

Finally, finding a positive solution for safeguarding and supporting a victim-survivor requires a rapid response, which becomes more easily achievable when interagency communication is built on cooperation. The sooner victim-survivors are comprehensively as-

sisted by frontline responders, the better are chances to avoid family and partner conflict escalation to high impact domestic violence (Feld & Straus, 1989).

Although not explicitly mentioned above, perpetrators of domestic abuse are expected to benefit from a network of cooperating agencies in similar ways.

## Research plan for the IMPRODOVA Project

### Scope of IMPRODOVA

Overall, it becomes clear, that a significant cooperation between different agencies working on the frontline of domestic abuse relies specifically on established lines of communication and trustful relationships. This rationale is also the starting point of the IMPRODOVA project (May 2018 – April 2021) funded by the European Union under the Horizon 2020 call. As the acronym IMPRODOVA stands for “Improving Frontline Responses to High Impact Domestic Violence”, the main goal is to investigate human factors shaping institutional responses to domestic abuse. Among the various frontline responders, police organizations should be one of the major sources of support for victim-survivors of high impact domestic violence (HIDV). Yet, according to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005), between 55 and 95 per cent of victim-survivors of domestic abuse never seek assistance from formal services including the police since there is a perceived or actual inadequacy of police response (e.g., Butterworth & Westmarland, 2015). Consequently we encounter the subjective public perception that police officers are accused of being insensitive to victim-survivors’ concerns. However, the low overall number reported by WHO conceals the wide variety of response rates in different circumstances, where police response and victim-survivor support agencies *have* managed to provide adequate and easily accessible support to victim-survivors of HIDV. Also across Europe, there are positive examples of good practices.

IMPRODOVA thus focusses on improving and integrating responses of police, social work, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders who are frontline responders in domestic abuse cases to increase reporting of domestic abuse. In this sense, IMPRODOVA is designed to provide solutions for an integrated response to high impact domestic violence (HIDV), based on comprehensive empirical research of how police and other frontline responders (e.g. medical and social work professionals) respond to domestic



abuse in eight European countries<sup>4</sup>. The project priorities are to deliver recommendations for policy, data collection, risk assessment and training for European police organizations, medical and social work professionals to improve and integrate institutional response to HIDV. The aim is to create a positive feedback loop, which will increase reporting rates of HIDV to police, and the medical profession, community and social work practitioners who act as the frontline responders.

IMPRODOVA has two main components, which are, firstly, the analysis of current institutional responses to HIDV, and secondly, the development of effective solutions for improving those responses.

### General work plan and methodology of IMPRODOVA

The project consists of five non-management related work packages: (1) Contextualising the frontline response; (2) Exploring the frontline response; (3) Integrating the frontline response: Development of IMPRODOVA toolkits; (4) Assessing the IMPRODOVA toolkits; (5) Dissemination, communication and exploitation. Work pages (1) to (4) constitute a progressive totality, whereas work package (5) is running through the whole project.

Due to the complex nature of such a large-scale, multi-faceted research project, a detailed description of the methodology can only be presented in a reduced way. The general research approach of IMPRODOVA is to combine different methodologies to move between macro policy analysis, micro field-studies and the development and validation of practical tools and guidelines integrated in a synthesizing approach towards better-harmonized European approaches to HIDV. Throughout the various work packages, four themes will be investigated: National and organizational level policies regarding domestic abuse, statistical data on domestic abuse, HIDV risk assessment, and frontline responder trainings on the handling of domestic abuse cases.

The rationale and methodology behind the work packages is, first, examine the nominal situation regarding these four themes (work package 1). Within the first work package, IMPRODOVA researchers will conduct a complex and multi-dimensional *comparative analysis*, reviewing statistical data, national and organizational level policies, strategies,

4 The IMPRODOVA consortium represents eight European countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Scotland/UK, and Slovenia. The project is coordinated by the German Police University in Münster (DHPOL). The project consortium includes police organizations, research institutes, universities, NGOs and police education institutions: Bundesministerium für Inneres (BMI, Austria); Vienna Centre for Societal Security (VICESSE, Austria); National Institute of Health and Welfare (THL, Finland); Poliisiämättöörkeakoulu (POLAMK, Finland); Centre de Recherche de l'Ecole des Officiers de la Gendarmerie Nationale (CREOGN, France); Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, France); European Research Services GmbH (ERS, Germany); Police Berlin (PB, Germany); FORESEE Research Group (FORESEE, Hungary); Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (WWU, Germany); Ministry of Internal Administration (ISCPSP, Portugal); University of Maribor (UM, Slovenia); Ministry of Interior, General Police Directorate (MPS, Slovenia); Scotland Police (PS); and University of Glasgow (UoG, Scotland).

and the implementation of international guidelines at national levels across the IMPRODOVA partner states.

Then, the real situation is examined via field research (work package 2) searching for good practices. Whereas all four themes are investigated in work package 1 by means of document analysis, their practical meaning will be investigated in work package 2 by means of fieldwork collecting data via semi-structured interviews. Through *in-depth fieldwork* following an ethnographic research approach, the research team will investigate to what extent and how recommendations are currently met. As main result of the fieldwork, actual practices on national regional, local and organizational level will be compared against the baseline of international guidelines.

Based on the outcome of our analyses a comprehensive range of implementable strategies for advancing and improving frontline responder collaboration with regard to the before mentioned four themes will be *developed* (with work package 3), *tested and evaluated in pilots* (within work package 4).

### **Intended output of the IMPRODOVA project**

IMPRODOVA proposes the following outputs as key solutions to critical issues in domestic abuse policing:

- Policy-making recommendations for HIDV. Recommendations will be realistically applicable / implementable by European law enforcement agencies and other frontline responders to ensure on-going development of responsive and realistic domestic abuse policy.
- Recommendations for comparable survey research that would extend and complement existing Eurobarometer and other domestic abuse data. Such surveys should include citizens' and practitioners' experiences and perceptions of domestic abuse, and how these affect citizens' feelings of insecurity and practitioners' welfare at work in order to build a responsive evidence base for ongoing practice improvements.
- Recommendations for police responding to domestic abuse cases. These recommendations will be sensitive to multicultural and gender issues, and to the ethical challenges, psychological stress, and specific safety risk exposure of law enforcement agencies entering the private sphere in which domestic abuse occurs.
- Recommendations and models for the efficient ways to organize inter-agency cooperation between the police, medical and health care services, social work and NGOs.
- Training material designed to improve competencies for frontline responders to better deal with DV cases, support victim-survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and enhance the cooperation across multiple agencies.

- Shared European approaches and an integrated risk assessment module for HIDV. The risk assessment toolkits will be based on and validated against the needs and requirements expressed by European practitioners.
- Awareness raising among teachers, social workers, health care workers and citizens about the destructive consequences of domestic abuse, and about the importance of consolidated efforts against abuse. This will foster a shared identity and goal in defining and addressing domestic abuse, and improve the sense of European citizens that Europe is an area of freedom, justice and security.

Through these outputs, IMPRODOVA will contribute to medium and long-term professional and societal impacts to curtail domestic abuse, improving the security of citizens while protecting their fundamental rights. The composition of IMPRODOVA consortium, combined with its two-phased approach can produce a sustainable and long-term impact in research, training, operations and policy in relation to domestic abuse.

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**ISSUE 19**

WINTER/SPRING 2020

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