European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN). Initiative Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and United Kingdom

2009/0812(CNS) - 07/07/2009 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to repeal the existing European Crime Prevention Network Council Decision and to replace it with another that takes into account the recommendations of the EUCPN Board to outsource and strengthen the Network Secretariat and to make more explicit the tasks of the Network and the various roles and responsibilities.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision (initiative of several Member States).

BACKGROUND: the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) was created in 2001 on the basis of a Council Decision 2001/427/JHA. It was established following a conclusion of the Tampere European Council, that there was a need to develop crime prevention measures, to identify and exchange crime prevention measures, and to strengthen the network of competent national authorities for crime prevention.

An external evaluation of the EUCPN which was conducted in 2008-2009 identified opportunities for strengthening the Network which were accepted by the EUCPN Board and which make it necessary to repeal Decision 2001/427/JHA and to replace it by a new Council Decision concerning the Network. In order to increase the capacity of the organisation and to improve its capability to meet its objectives, it was agreed that amendments to the existing legal base would be required.

This is the purpose of this proposal.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the proposal was subject to an impact assessment to determine whether the EUCPN brought added value at either the Union or national/local level. While some success had been achieved it was clear from the evaluation that the Network had not delivered at anything like its potential. One question being asked was whether the Network should simply be shut down, that the resource problems at both the Commission and national levels were a manifestation of a general lack of belief in the Network and its ability to add value.

However during the evaluation exercise, the importance of crime prevention was universally recognised as was the role for an organisation like the EU Crime Prevention Network.

On the basis that there was seen to be a future for the EUCPN a number of options were considered before submitting this proposal.

- **Option 1**: leave the situation as it is, and to rely on the current Council Decision. This was discarded because of the need to completely review the organisation structure and the transparency of the network;
- **Option 2**: introduce just the basic amendments to the existing Council Decision. This was discarded because it was felt that an important opportunity would be lost, to review and to set out in clearer terms the Network's tasks and the roles and responsibilities of the various actors;
- **Option 3**: introduce a **new Council Decision**, to establish the Network and to repeal the existing legal base.

Conclusion: **Option 3** has been considered the most beneficial option after careful analysis.

CONTENT: the proposed Decision, based on the initiative of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, aims to repeal the existing EUCPN Council Decision 2001/427/JHA and to replace it with a new one which will see the creation of a strengthened, more clearly defined Network.

Modifications to the mandate: the proposal does not extend, or amend significantly, the Network's mandate. The primary objective remains the same that the Network will contribute to developing the various aspects of crime prevention at the Union level, while also supporting crime prevention activity at the national and local level. It shall continue to prevent crime through measures that are intended to reduce or otherwise contribute to reducing crime and citizens' feeling of insecurity, both quantitatively and qualitatively. It includes work of government, competent authorities, criminal justice agencies, local authorities, the specialist associations they have set up in Europe, the private and voluntary sectors, researchers and the public, supported by the media

Clearly defined tasks: the Network shall, in particular:

- facilitate cooperation, contacts and exchanges of information and experience between actors in the field of crime prevention;
- collect, assess and communicate evidence-based information including good practice on existing crime prevention activities;
- organise conferences, in particular an annual Best Practice Conference, and other activities designed to promote consideration of these specific matters, and to disseminate the results thereof;
- provide its expertise to the Council and the Commission as required.

The Network shall also report to the Council on its activities each year, through the Board and develop and implement a work programme based on a clearly defined strategy taking into account relevant crime threats.

To accomplish its tasks, the Network shall strengthen its **information exchange** by: (i) favouring a multidisciplinary approach; (ii) being in close contact, through the national representatives and the contact points, with crime prevention bodies, local authorities, local partnerships and civil society as well as with research institutions and nongovernmental organisations in the Member States; (iii) setting up and maintaining its own website, containing its regular reports and any other useful information, in particular a compendium of best practices; (iv) endeavouring to use and promote the results of projects, relevant for crime prevention, funded through Union programmes.

Revised structure: the Network's structure is more clearly defined being made up of a **Board**, with an **Executive Committee** and a **Secretariat**. The European Commission will designate a representative to be a member of the Executive Committee. This Committee will be responsible for developing the Network's strategic approach – for agreement of the whole Board – and for delivery of the Network's objectives.

The Board Chair will be appointed from among the body of the National Representatives under rules of procedure to be agreed by the Board.

There is more emphasis on the role of the National Representatives who are the EUCPN Board members, and who may be supported by national contact points. As the members of the Board they are responsible for agreeing the Network's strategic approach, for delivery of the work programme and for ensuring that the Network's activities contribute to crime prevention at all levels – Union, national and local.

Strengthened role of the Secretariat: the role of the Secretariat will be extended to incorporate an administrative function, a criminological and analytical function, and a technical function to enable it to

host, develop and maintain the EUCPN website. The Secretariat, which will work to and be managed by the Network, through the Board Chair and the Executive Committee, will be **outsourced** under a public competition administered by the European Commission.

Third countries: lastly, more emphasis is given towards developing relations with entities, competent in the field of crime prevention, in the Member States or in third countries. Furthermore, relations of the Network with third countries will imply only a non-contractual level.

Even though the proposed amendments will formally establish particular bodies within the Network such as the Board and the Secretariat this does **not imply legal personality** of the Network.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: based on the current costs of running separately the three functions which will be incorporated into the strengthened and outsourced Secretariat – administration, analysis of criminological research and hosting and maintaining the website – it is expected that the annual cost of the Secretariat will be no more than **EUR 350 000**. That said there is no basic increase in the running cost of the full Secretariat function, and the Secretariat would be funded from an existing budget line in the funding programme – the prevention of and fight against crime.

Taking into account the three distinct functions of the strengthened Secretariat it is expected that the Secretariat will employ a maximum of three full time equivalent staff.