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

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This report evaluates the work of the European Union Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) over the past two and a half years and provides recommendations as regards the future, including considering the feasibility of establishing a Crime Prevention Observatory. EUCPN was originally set up by the Council Decision 2001/427/JHA, repealed by the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA. The main objective of the EUCPN was to promote crime prevention activities and to provide a means through which valuable good practice in preventing crime could be shared.

According to Article 9 of Council Decision 2009/902/JHA, the Commission was to present, by 30 November 2012, an evaluation report to the Council on the activities of the Network with a special focus on the efficiency of the work of the Network and its Secretariat, taking due account of the interaction between the Network and other relevant stakeholders.

In order to inform the further development of the EUCPN, an independent, external evaluation of the EUCPN was undertaken in the first months of 2012. Overall, this evaluation concluded that the EUCPN is **functioning relatively well and has made good progres**s in relation to the objectives set out in the 2009 Council Decision and its 2010-2015 Multiannual Strategy. Following the adoption of the 2009 Council Decision and follow-up activities, the EUCPN has a much **more clearly defined strategy and target groups.** It has been **strengthened and professionalized**, particularly following the establishment of the new Secretariat which has provided much needed support for the Network's activities.

Compared to the situation in 2008-2009 when the last evaluation was conducted, **many shortcomings have been addressed**, the EUCPN's activities are **more targeted** and the **quality and quantity of outputs have been improved**. Moreover, EUCPN Board meetings have increasingly dealt with **points of substance** as opposed to procedural issues.

However, the external evaluation also identified **a number of weaknesses** : (i) the evaluation could not find evidence that EUCPN activities are always linked to the crime prevention priorities facing the EU and Member States; (ii) the quality of the EUCPN outputs is generally good and these products are useful but there is scope to tailor them even more to target groups; (iii) EUCPN is in general less successful in reaching target groups at local level, than at national or EU level; (iv) a substantial amount of crime prevention projects supported by the ISEC programme are implemented without associating or even informing EUCPN; (v) there is a considerable difference in effectiveness of the rotating presidencies capacity to provide leadership to EUCPN; (vi) the intention to put key documents in different EU languages on the website to attract a wider readership and provide supporting documentation to stakeholders particularly at local level was not fulfilled; (vii) many of the contact points do not appear to provide any added value to the functioning and visibility of the EUCPN and in a number of Member States there are no contact points; (viii) the activities of the EUCPN are supported by relatively modest funding and its activities and outputs are proportionate to the financial inputs; (ix) more needs to be done to raise the EUCPN's profile.

Main conclusions: the EUCPN has proven itself to be an **increasingly useful instrument** to support policymakers at EU and national levels and also with a considerable potential to create added value at local level. Building on its improving track record, the Commission is confident that the EUCPN will continue to adapt to meet new challenges.

The Commission considers that establishing a **Crime Prevention Observatory**, based on or in addition to the EUCPN, for the time being, **neither corresponds to a pressing need, nor is politically or financially desirable in the short term**.

Enhancing the EUCPN, notably by a better resourced Secretariat, would allow the EUCPN to concentrate on consolidating progress made so far and on further improving its functioning. A particular effort is required to **increase the visibility of its activities and communicate them pro-actively to its stakeholders**. The EUCPN has embryonic features of an "observatory" and could, over time, evolve towards reinforcing these features. Preliminary work has already started in this respect under the current grant agreement financed through ISEC.

The costs of an incremental development of the EUCPN are estimated at approximately EUR 1.2 M for a two-year period, starting when the current Action Grant expires (mid 2014). Member States may decide to finance EUCPN themselves, or alternatively, decide to apply for co-funding under the successor to the ISEC Financial Programme (through an Action Grant). Independently of any possible future application for financial support through the ISEC programme, the future development of the EUCPN should be matched with a stronger commitment of all EU Member States to actively support the work of the EUCPN.