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Subject:	Council conclusions on a way forward for crime prevention in Europe – Council conclusions (4 December 2023)
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on a way forward for crime prevention in Europe, approved by the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) at its 3992nd meeting held on 4 December 2023.

Council conclusions on a way forward for crime prevention in Europe

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

AWARE that organised crime is a significant threat to European citizens, business, and state institutions, as well as to the economy as a whole and requires a response on the EU's part;

NOTING that antisocial behaviour can be the onset of criminal behaviour and common crime can have direct link to organised crime;

STRESSING that any response to crime should adopt a holistic approach and crime prevention is an integral part of that;

AWARE that the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) defines crime prevention as “ethically acceptable and evidence-based activities aimed at reducing the risk of crime occurring and its harmful consequences with the ultimate goal of working towards the improvement of the quality of life and safety of individuals, groups and communities”;

NOTING that prevention is already an integral part of EU policy in a number of specific policy areas such as organised crime, cybercrime, anti-radicalisation, environmental crime, drugs, trafficking in human beings, child sexual abuse, domestic violence and firearms;

AWARE that Member States differ as to the preventive models applied at local, regional and national level and that article 84 TFEU allows the European Parliament and the Council to establish measures to promote and support the action of Member States in the field of crime prevention, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States;

REFERRING to the 2004 Communication “Crime Prevention in the European Union”¹, which highlights the key role played by regional and local authorities (ideally supported by national authorities) in the prevention of crime, as well as the importance of cooperation at EU level to facilitate and lend relevant support to this fight notwithstanding the national policies of the Member States;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the 2016 Council Conclusions on the administrative approach to preventing and fighting serious and organised crime², stressing the need to develop and improve the administrative approach to preventing and fighting crime, in particular serious and organised crime, setting out a series of actions to be further developed by Member States, EU agencies and the Commission and highlighting the need for cooperation between the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and the European Network for Administrative Approach (ENAA).

REFERRING to the 2009 Stockholm Programme (2010 European Council), which underlines that the most efficient preventive measures are those targeting behaviours that generate feelings of insecurity, emphasizes that EU citizens “have similar experiences and are affected in similar ways by crime and related insecurity in their daily lives” (4.3.2), and recognises the growing connections between local crime and more serious forms of transnational crime;³

HIGHLIGHTING that the Stockholm Programme sets out the creation of an Observatory for the Prevention of Crime (OPC) that should include or replace the EUCPN, with the task (*inter alia*) of supporting the Member States and the Union institutions in the process of adopting preventive measures and exchanging best practices while taking into account the conclusions from the Commission evaluation in 2012⁴;

¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament “Crime Prevention in the European Union”. (COM (2004) 165 final).

² 9935/16, 9 June 2016

³ 2010/C 115/01

⁴ COM (2012) 717 final.

REFERRING to the UNODC's Kyoto Declaration (2021)⁵ on advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law, which highlights the importance of developing, implementing and evaluating crime prevention strategies, including their effectiveness, that address the causes, including the root causes, and risk factors that make different segments of society more vulnerable to crime, and share best practices to strengthen our capacity; establishing a permanent central authority at the governmental level responsible for implementing crime prevention policies, as well as forming inter-agency partnerships and coordinating activities at a local level by means of an action plan;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on a European Union Security Strategy (2020-2025),⁶ which sets out an approach to security that encompasses society as a whole and that can effectively respond to a rapidly changing threat landscape in a coordinated way, in order to address digital and physical risks in an integrated manner across the entire Security Union ecosystem;

NOTING that, in the Organised Crime Strategy ⁷, the Commission aims to enhance the exchange of knowledge and best practices on crime prevention through the European Crime Prevention Network;

NOTING that, according to the objectives of the EUCPN Multiannual Strategy 2021-2025,⁸ the role of the network is not restricted to the exchange of information but also includes the creation and support of effective actions at local, national and EU level in the field of crime prevention;

⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, May 2021, Kyoto declaration on advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

⁶ COM (2020) 605 final.

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025, COM/2021/170 final.

⁸ EUCPN Multiannual Strategy 2021-2025, adopted on 2 December 2020.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the recommendations and conclusions of the European Commission's 2023 Evaluation report of the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN)⁹, which considers it paramount to invest in crime prevention policies and tools and that the EUCPN provides EU added value since it offers access to knowledge on crime prevention to policy makers and practitioners across the EU and facilitates exchanges of best practices between policymakers and practitioners from different EU Member States;

NOTING that the evaluation demonstrated that there are several factors that prevent the Network from reaching its full potential, notably the lack of outreach of its members to policymakers and practitioners, mainly at local level, sufficiently targeted guidance and support addressing the specific needs of relevant stakeholders and the lack of synergies between the Network's activities and other preventive initiatives at EU level.

TAKING NOTE of the added value that could be provided by the Common Horizontal Strategic Goals on the implementation of the 2022 operational action plan European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT);¹⁰ in particular, the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal (CHSG) 7, "Prevention, awareness raising and harm reduction, early identification of and assistance to victims," coordinated by the EUCPN, and the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal (CHSG). 9, 'Administrative Approach', coordinated by the ENAA as "a complementary way to prevent and tackle the misuse of the legal infrastructure through multi-agency cooperation by sharing information and taking actions in order to set up barriers"¹¹ in order to avoid this legal infrastructure being used by criminals

STRESSING the need to further improve and formalise cooperation between competent EU and national authorities in order to prevent and fight organised crime, besides the law enforcement and judicial cooperation already in place between Member States;

CONCLUDES THAT THERE IS A NEED TO ENHANCE THE INTERNAL FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION NETWORK AND FURTHER IMPROVE CRIME PREVENTION AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL.

⁹ SWD (2023) 202 final.

¹⁰ 14378/22 Brussels, 7 November 2022.

¹¹ Definition agreed by ENAA on 8 November 2019.

INVITES MEMBER STATES TO:

1. Make optimal use of, and improve cooperation with an active participation in the European Network on the Administrative Approach (ENAA) and the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) strengthening the role of National Representatives and contact points to contribute to the overall objective of the EUCPN in accordance with Council Decision 2009/902/JHA¹²;
2. Look into the development or update of national crime prevention strategies or related documents, in order to strengthen and develop crime prevention work throughout society, not merely in the judicial system but also among the other actors involved to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach and multi stakeholder involvement while including relevant aspects of the administrative approach;
3. Carry out specific and specialised work in the field of crime prevention, in order to:
 - a) Oversee the development and implementation of specific strategies to prevent crime and coordinate the implementation of actions of the relevant national, regional and local stakeholders as well as civil society organisations active in this field;
 - b) Support and develop crime prevention activities at the local, regional and national level using an evidence-based approach;
 - c) Encourage the participation and collaboration of universities, public and private entities or institutions and leading academic figures in the development and implementation of preventive activities and functions;

¹² Council Decision 2009/902/JHA of 30 November 2009 setting up a European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and repealing Decision 2001/427/JHA, OJ L 321, 8.12.2009, p. 44–46; see in particular Article 6 (5) stating that “*Each national representative shall promote the Network's activities at the national and local level and facilitate the provision, maintenance and exchange of crime prevention material between his Member State and the Network.*” And Article 6 (6) stating that “*Contact points shall support national representatives in exchanging national crime prevention information and expertise within the Network.*”

- d) Strengthen the functions of the focal points in relation to activities of different networks and forums such as the EUCPN, the ENAA, National Crime Prevention Councils and in other fora,¹³ in order to enhance the coordination of networks of experts in this field;

CALLS ON THE SECRETARIAT OF THE EUROPEAN CRIME PREVENTION NETWORK (EUCPN) TO:

4. Provide the national representatives and contact points designated in accordance with the Council Decision on EUCPN with the necessary support to fulfil their tasks as set out in the Council Decision;
5. Focus and align its actions to Member States' priorities and needs, taking into account relevant threat assessments at national level as well as developments at EU Level;
6. Deepen the evidence base for crime prevention measures, by assessing the effectiveness and impact of relevant prevention measures and supporting Member States in implementing tested and effective crime prevention measures;
7. Deepen working relationships within EMPACT - notably with EMPACT drivers and EU agencies to actively contribute to embedding crime prevention (including as coordinator of the Common Horizontal Strategic Goals (CHSG) 7 and 9);
8. Facilitate the regular coordination and communication of dedicated prevention experts from academia, civil society and local authorities, via the National Representatives to the EUCPN and national representatives in ENAA, in order to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices and expertise between Member States to effectively prevent and fight crime.
9. Implement a training programme that addresses the Member States' needs in the field of crime prevention in order to enhance Member States' capabilities to prevent and tackle crime effectively; the monitoring and evaluation of the measures that are implemented and the importance of developing prevention measures among the public, particularly young people.

¹³ Such as European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS).

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

10. Strengthen the prevention pillar of the EU strategy against organised crime when implementing the existing strategy and when reviewing the strategy in the future so as to develop a comprehensive EU crime prevention strategy.
11. Ensure the necessary funds to support and strengthen the function of the EUCPN and ENAA as a hub for European crime prevention, capable of advising and supporting the EU institutions and bodies and the Member States in the field of crime prevention;
12. Consider and explore a long-term solution for the EUCPN Secretariat to secure its sustainability and stability, including its development as an Observatory for the Prevention of Crime (OPC) and extending its capacities to:
 - a) collecting, analysing and disseminating knowledge on crime (including statistics) and crime prevention regarding specific policy areas in the different Member States providing an overall picture of crime prevention measures in the EU including on emerging trends;
 - b) developing a common set of key indicators of crime prevention at EU level, supported by the network of contact points in each country for the purpose of data collection.
 - c) advising and supporting Member States and EU institutions in the adoption and implementation of preventive measures and the exchange of good practices.
13. Facilitate closer cooperation between the EUCPN and ENAA as well as other relevant organisations, such as European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS) and EU initiatives, projects and networks, in order to combine insights and create synergies when developing and disseminating knowledge and best practices;

**CALLS UPON MEMBER STATES AND THE JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS
AGENCIES TO:**

14. Consider expanding training activities with the knowledge gathered by the EUCPN and the ENAA in order to adapt trainings and case studies for multidisciplinary groups of professionals working in crime prevention, using the capacities of CEPOL;
15. Consider intensifying training activities in the field of crime prevention in support of the implementation of the Common Horizontal Strategic Goal 7 ‘prevention and harm reduction, assistance to victims, awareness raising’ and Common Horizontal Strategic Goal 9 ‘administrative approach’, of crime prevention strategies and action plans, relying inter alia on CEPOL and the EUCPN, ENAA as well as on EMPACT.
16. Look into the possibility of extending the scope of partners outside the Law Enforcement community in order to increase the multidisciplinary aspect of EMPACT, thereby strengthening the possibilities to implement various types of crime prevention measures.

INSTRUCTS COSI, within its mandate, to coordinate, support, supervise, monitor and assess the implementation of the actions under these Council Conclusions

INVITES THE PRESIDENCY to report to the Council, or an appropriate Council preparatory body, on the progress of the implementation of the actions under these Council Conclusions while also highlighting the remaining gaps.
