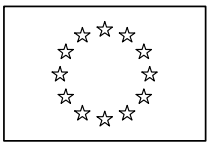

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18.1.2012
COM(2011) 713 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

Measuring Crime in the EU: Statistics Action Plan 2011- 2015

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

Measuring Crime in the EU: Statistics Action Plan 2011- 2015

INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE

Statistics on crime and criminal justice are indispensable tools for developing evidence-based policy at EU level. Impact assessments, evaluations of the implementation of EU legislation from the Member States and assessment of the effectiveness of new laws are only some examples of the use of statistical information. While the need for factual statistics has long been recognised by the Member States and the European Commission, there is still a lack of reliable and comparable statistical information.

The purpose of this Communication is to inform stakeholders of the progress made in measuring crime and criminal justice over the last five years and to set out the main actions for the next five years in the form of an Action Plan 2011-2015.

2. STATE OF PLAY

2.1. Action Plan 2006-2010 - Background

In August 2006, the Commission adopted a 5-year EU Action Plan for the development of a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice. DG Justice Freedom and Security (JLS) and, as of 2010, DG Home Affairs (HOME) in close collaboration with Eurostat, were responsible for its implementation.

At the same time, an Expert Group on the Policy Needs for Data on Crime and Criminal Justice was established[1] to assist the Commission, in order to identify the policy needs for data at EU level and to advise on the effective development and use of indicators in the area of crime and criminal justice. This Expert Group consists of Police, Justice or Interior officials from each EU Member State, and Candidate and EFTA[2] countries, as well as the relevant EU, European, and international organisations and agencies[3]. Academia and the private sector are also represented. The group has met five times since 2006.

In parallel, a Eurostat Working Group was established to implement the findings and recommendations of the Expert Group. All Member States are represented on the Working Group by government experts from the National Statistical Institutes. Other participants

---

1 By Commission decision (2006/581/EC)

2 European Free Trade Association: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

3 EUCPN, EMCDDA, EUROJUST, EUROPOL, FRA, Council of Europe, European Sourcebook, UNODC, UNECE and UNICEF

represent EFTA and candidates countries, as well as numerous international bodies active in the area. Further experts are invited on an ad-hoc basis to discuss topics which are related to their specific areas of expertise. The Expert Group on Policy Needs sets the priorities, and the Eurostat Working Group discusses their feasibility and implementation, assesses the quality of collected data and, when necessary, defines the methodologies and procedures to be used. Additionally, a number of Expert sub-groups and Task Forces were established to examine particular Action Plan tasks. DG HOME established five sub-groups[4] and Eurostat two Task Forces[5].

2.2. Action Plan 2006-2010 – Achievements

Significant efforts have been made by both the Commission and the Member States to implement a far-reaching Action Plan . The main achievements can be summarised as follows:

International cooperation - Data collection mechanism: Particular focus was placed on setting up the basis for cooperation with Member States authorities, European agencies and international institutions by establishing networks of experts and identifying contact points. The outcome of this cooperation was the development of a functional mechanism for the collection of data which covers all stages of the process, from the identification of the common indicators to the actual publication of the collected data.

Better understanding of the needs: Equally important was the improvement of the knowledge with regard to the needs, the gaps and the limitations in collecting and analysing crime data at EU level. The exchange of information at expert meetings, the experience gained from collecting data throughout this period and the outcomes of research projects have made a significant contribution to this effort.

Development of indicators and data collections: Since 2007 Eurostat has produced, on an annual basis, a Statistics in Focus[6] publication on crime statistics containing data on the following: total crime, homicides, violent crime, robberies, domestic burglary, theft of a motor vehicle, drug trafficking, prison population and the number of police officers. In November 2010, the first working paper on Money Laundering was issued[7]. Statistics were based on the indicators identified by the Commission's expert sub-group on Money Laundering. Other lists of indicators produced so far concern Trafficking in Human Beings and Cybercrime.

EU Safety (victimisation) Survey: Police and court statistics should be complemented by statistics on victims, particularly in crime areas where the incidents are not always reported. Moreover, victimisation surveys are a valid source of fully comparable data, as long as a common methodology is applied. The development of a common methodology and a survey module on victimisation was therefore another important outcome of this Action Plan . The implementation of the survey has been scheduled for the period 2013-2014 and it will

---

4 Sub-groups on Planning, Money Laundering, Criminal Justice, Trafficking in Human Beings, Police Cooperation and Cybercrime

5 Task Forces on Victimisation and on Crime Data Availability

6 http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/crime/publications

7 http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-RA-10-003

provide, for the first time in EU27, comparable information on the prevalence rates (victimisation rates) of specific types of crime and on aspects related to citizens' feelings about their safety. The active involvement of the National Statistical Institutes at every stage (from the design of the module to the field work and the estimations of the prevalence rates) guarantees full responsibility for the data quality, and this is particularly important for countries that do not conduct national surveys on victims, as they can use this opportunity to build up their own capacities.

Support for relevant research: Research activities in the field of Justice and Home Affairs were strongly supported through the programme "Prevention of and Fight against Crime" which provided the opportunity to a large number of research groups from all 27 Member States to carry out studies in areas of particular interest for the Commission. A characteristic example of the use of research results is the list of indicators on Trafficking in Human Beings, which is based on the suggestions and recommendations of relevant studies.

2.3. Action Plan 2006-2010 – Lessons learned

While significant work has been achieved in research, coordination and networking, only a few results are actually visible. This is particularly true regarding the objectives which require not only the development of common indicators, but also the actual collection of data. The latter issue has been the slowest and most problematic aspect of the implementation of the Action Plan.

The main reasons for the limited progress in the collection of comparable and harmonised data at EU level were summarised in the study on "The development of an EU-level classification system" initiated by the Commission in 2007[8]. They are as follows:

Differences in the offence definitions and the classification systems: Across the EU, at least 128 national authorities are involved in the collection and production of crime statistics, whereas at least 52 distinct offence classification systems have been identified.

Cumbersome data flow: Coordination at national level has proved difficult, especially in the case of multiple data sources. Even when national contact points exist, they do not always have access to data covering every stage of the criminal justice system. As a result, all data collections encounter significant delays before achieving an integrated dataset.

Differences in the reporting systems: Different Member States apply different counting rules[9] to measure crime, which limits the comparability and often leads to double counting. Differences in the point in time at which offence data are recorded and the wide range of reporting practices across the EU create additional obstacles.

Proliferation of data collections by EU and international organisations: The collection of crime data at international level largely depends on the scope and the mandate of the organisation involved. As a result, Member State authorities frequently face similar but

---

8 Tender JLS/D2/2007/03. Study on the development of an EU- level offence classification system and an assessment of its feasibility to supporting the implementation of the Action Plan to develop an EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice.

9 Based either on offenders or on offences.

slightly different requests for data, which adds to confusion and increases their administrative burdens.

Other sources of delay in implementing the actions described in the Action Plan were the lack of interest or different prioritisation for some activities at national level, budgetary and staff constraints and, finally, the increase in the administrative burdens due to new requests for data. As a result, only 50% of the objectives have been met[10].

It remains true that information on traditional forms of crime – considered to lie outside EU competency – is more robust, more comparable and generally of better quality than in the area of cross-border organised crime which relates more closely to EU policy needs. However, progress can be seen in complex new areas such as Money-Laundering, Trafficking in Human Beings and Cybercrime. Yet the fact remains that data on both traditional and cross-border organised crime depend on the quality and efficiency of the domestic structures underpinning the collection and provision of data.

3. POLITICAL COMMITMENTS

In the Stockholm Programme[11], the European Council invites the Commission to

"continue developing statistical tools to measure crime and criminal activities and reflect on how to further develop, after 2010, the actions outlined and partly implemented in the EU Action plan 2006-2010 on developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice, in view of the increased need for such statistics in a number of areas within the field of freedom, security and justice."

Fighting and preventing Serious and Organised Crime as well as Cybercrime are within the five strategic objectives of the Internal Security Strategy[12] which sets the basis for a more effective cooperation between the Member States and the EU Institutions aiming at a more secure Europe. The exchange of information and the collection of statistics in particular areas like Trafficking in Human Beings, Money Laundering, Cybercrime and Corruption are in line with the proposed actions of the Internal Security Strategy.

4. FUTURE WORK

4.1. Action Plan 2011 – 2015 - Objectives

Given that its main focus was on setting up the necessary mechanisms, the Action Plan 2006-2010 must be seen as the first step in a long-term process. It has set the basis for an EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice by developing and testing a functional mechanism for the smooth flow of information from and to the Member States. Building on lessons learned, it is now possible to apply this mechanism more effectively.

---

10 Another 30% were partially achieved or they are still in process.

11 OJ C 115/1, 4.5.2010, pp.21

12 The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe. COM(2010) 673 final

The aim of the new Action Plan 2011-2015 is to continue and take forward the work started in 2006 and to focus on delivering results. The objectives presented in this Action Plan are based on the priorities set by the Internal Security Strategy with regard to specific crime areas and on the recommendations from the Expert Group on Policy Needs, as received in a written consultation during summer 2010. The main message of this consultation, which reflects the priorities of a wide range of stakeholders, was the need for a focused and feasible Action Plan with the emphasis on the quality of the collected data, the analysis and dissemination of the results, and a better coordination and collaboration of all the actors involved (Member States, EU Institutions, EU Agencies, International Organisations, Academia). In response to this request, the objectives of the Action Plan 2011-2015 are divided into the following four areas:

(1) Cooperation and Coordination at EU and International level

(2) Data quality

(3) Data analysis and dissemination of results

(4) Development of indicators and specific data collections

Cooperation at EU and International level

The objectives under this category respond to the experts' recommendations for better mapping of the needs of the policy makers, better communication of the stakeholders, promotion of the work on crime and criminal justice statistics among the EU institutions and better collaboration at EU and international level, in order to avoid duplication of the collection exercises. Some of the actions proposed to achieve these objectives are as follows:

- establishment of a new and wider expert group
- regular updates of the relevant Council working groups on the implementation of the Action Plan
- promotion and dissemination of best practices applied by Member States and international organisations, for collecting and reporting data
- data collections organised jointly with international organisations and/or EU agencies.

Data quality

The objectives of this category are set in order to improve the comparability of the data that are already being produced in a regular basis. Since the main reasons for not having comparable data are the differences in the criminal codes and the reporting systems, the emphasis is on the development of an International Crime Classification System for statistical purposes, taking account of multilingual needs. According to the experts consulted on the content of this Action Plan, improvement of the quality of the statistics published annually by Eurostat in Statistics in Focus should be the first priority. The suggested actions include the following:

- continue and promote the work of the UNODC-UNECE Task Force on Crime Classification by providing funding to those Member States that wish to test the proposed classification,

- decrease the level of aggregation and increase the list of crimes (in the Statistics in Focus on Crime and Criminal Justice) so as to achieve more homogeneous categories,

- introduce demographic variables (such as gender, nationality, age group) where appropriate,

- draft guidelines and common definitions, in particular for the new data collections on non-traditional types of crimes.

Data analysis and dissemination of results

The need to invest more in the analysis of the collected data was mentioned by the majority of the experts during their consultation. Because of the differences in recording, reporting and classifying crime across the Member State, comparisons of crime levels can be misleading, especially if absolute figures are not accompanied by additional information on their quality (metadata) - for example, if there are deviations from the instructions and guidelines received at the beginning of the process.

At the same time, the need for an EU Crime Report, which would pull together data and reports on Crime and Criminal Statistics, has long been recognised. The development of a framework for producing such a report was already among the objectives of the Action Plan 2006-2010 and also the subject of a study which was concluded in December 2010. However, there is still a need for further reflection on the feasibility of the proposed options.

Dissemination and open access to data, studies, reports and good practices were also requested by several stakeholders. To accommodate the above requests, the following actions have been planned:

- Systematic compilation and publication of metadata and contextual information, following the example of Statistics in Focus

- Development of an EU Crime Report based on the recommendations of the preliminary study and the assessment of the feasibility of the proposed options

- Production of working papers and explanatory notes for every new data collection.

Development of indicators and specific data collections

The objectives of this category reflect the general consensus on a concise and feasible action plan and they comply with the request of the Member States regarding additional workload. At the same time, they are based on the priorities set through the Internal Security Strategy with regard to specific crime areas.

Two types of activities have been planned:

- Ongoing activities, which started under the previous Action Plan , such as the implementation of the EU Safety Survey, the Business Victimisation Survey and the third Money Laundering data collection.

- Activities included in the previous Action Plan which have not advanced sufficiently, such as the data collection on Cybercrime, or have never started, such as the development of indicators on Corruption.

The collection of crime statistics should as from 2012 be further facilitated through the timely implementation by Member States of the (third pillar) decision establishing a European Criminal Record System (ECRIS)[13].

4.2. Action Plan 2011 – 2015 – Challenges

The successful implementation of the Action Plan requires intensive and continuous work at all levels (national, EU and international).

At national level there is a need to improve domestic coordination amongst the various governmental and non-governmental users and providers of data on crime. Experience has shown that this lack of coordination is a major source of delays in the collection exercises.

The financial crisis has forced some Member States to reduce their administrative costs and hence their ability to participate in expert groups and committees. The Commission being aware of the situation will seek to minimise the number of meetings and will also look into other means of communication, such as video and teleconferences.

At EU level the main challenge remains the comparability of the collected data. This is why a consistent approach to the classification of crime data is required. The need for a common classification system applies not only to the Member States, but also to EU agencies. Effort must be put into ensuring against the risk of replicating the current situation within some of the Member States, where multiple and often divergent crime classifications add an extra layer of complexity to the collection of comparable data.

At European and international level the focus is on coordination and exchange of good practices. Common data collections (i.e. Commission, UN bodies, the Council of Europe, etc.) would clearly lessen the burden on the statistical institutes of the Member States and thereby reduce the time needed for the collection, checking and transmission of the statistical information.

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

DG HOME will be responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan 2011-2015. Eurostat will continue the activities started under the previous Action Plan and will provide technical advice on the new tasks when needed.

The re-establishment of an expert group to support the Commission in identifying the policy needs for data on crime will help avoid the duplication of work on organised and volume[14] crime across the Commission, EU bodies and agencies and international organisations active in the field.

Subgroups and Tasks Forces will be set up to carry out particular tasks subject to the agreement of the expert group at its annual meeting.

The Action Plan will be updated as this work develops, and the activities identified will be included in the relevant Commission work programmes, as well as in the Community

---

[13] OJ L 93, 7.4. 2009, p.33

[14] Volume crime includes : Burglary, Robbery, Vehicle Theft, Assault, Vandalism etc.

Statistical Programme and its annual work programmes. The Action Plan may also need to cover measuring data related to the effective implementation of EU policies through criminal measures, as well as possible new instruments relating to crime and criminal justice. The new financial perspectives will reflect the need for support to Member States in implementing the action plan.

The Commission will inform the relevant Council working groups annually of the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan. In 2013 the Commission will prepare a mid-term review, and at the end of 2015 a final report will be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council on the achievements and the limitations in the implementation of the Action Plan.

TABLE OF ACTIONS FOR THE EU ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2015 ON MEASURING CRIME IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION AT EU AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

	Objectives	Responsible Party	Timeframe	Specific Actions
1.1	Set up a communication channel between policy makers (Commission included), data providers and end users	COM (HOME)	Commission Decision in 2011 Annual meetings, starting from 2012	a. Re establishment and enlargement[15] of an expert group to consult the Commission on the implementation of this Action Plan. b. Definition and regular update of the policy need through discussions and written consultations. c. Feedback from the users of the collected crime statistics for better understanding of the type of data required for policy and decision making.
1.2	Raise awareness and improve the visibility of the work on crime statistics among the EU institutions	COM (HOME)	Continuous	a. Annual updates of the relevant Council working group on the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan. b. Promotion and dissemination of best practices from the Member States and international organisations
1.3	Improve	COM	Continuous	Common access to meeting reports, presentations and supporting documents.

[15] So as to cover the 27 MSs, Acceding and Candidate countries, the Council secretariat, EU agencies, the Council of Europe, UN bodies, the European Sourcebook and representatives from the Academia

	cooperation between the new expert group and the Eurostat Working Group	(HOME, ESTAT)		
1.4	Avoid proliferation of statistical data and duplication of information by organising data collections in common with other International Institutions and/or EU agencies.	COM (ESTAT, HOME. JUST)	2011 the first common data collection	UNODC – EUROSTAT common data collection. Explore other possibilities. Commission – Council of Europe on prison population (SPACE I and II)
1.5	Work in close collaboration with the academic community and promote research activities with policy relevance in the priority crime areas of DG HOME.	COM (HOME, ESTAT, JUST, RTD, ENTR)	Continuous	a. Substantial representation of the Academia in the relevant Commission's expert group and sub-groups. b. Dissemination of information regarding research opportunities under the 7th and the 8th Framework Research Programme. c. Wide communication of final results and deliverables of the projects funded through ISEC Programme.

2. DATA QUALITY

2.1	Follow up and continue the work on the	COM (HOME,	Continuous	a. Contribute to the development of such

	development of an International Crime Classification System for statistical purposes in collaboration with UNODC and UNECE	ESTAT), UNODC, UNECE		classification and promote the final outcome to the relevant groups. b. Provide funding, through the ISEC programme, to the Member States that wish to test the proposed classification.
2.2	Continue and advance the annual publication of data on Crime and Criminal Justice (Statistics in Focus) so as to provide more information	COM (ESTAT, HOME, JUST,)	Continuous	a. Introduction of demographic variables (e.g. sex and age groups). b. Inclusion of information on nationality and residence for prison populations. c. Extend the publication to other types of crime.
2.3	Improve the comparability of the data collected and published so far.	COM (ESTAT and HOME)	Continuous	a. Disaggregation of the general classes of crimes into more homogeneous crime categories when possible.[16] b. Development of common definitions and guidelines particularly for the data collections concerning Eurocrimes where there is no previous experience.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

3.1	Develop a coherent framework for reporting EU 27 data on crime avoiding misleading comparisons.	COM (HOME) with contributions from other DGs and international stakeholders	First print edition in 2013-2014	Development of a European Crime Report based on the recommendations of the preliminary study performed under the Action Plan 2006-2010 and the assessment of the feasibility of the proposed options.

[16] Very much depended on the outcome of objective 2.1:development of an International Crime Classification System for statistical purposes

3.2	Compile and publish metadata and contextual information on a systematic basis.	COM (ESTAT, HOME)	Continuous	Each data collection will be accompanied by a set of metadata and comments as provided by the Member States.
3.3	Publish working papers and explanatory notes	COM (HOME) and/or external experts depending on the case	Continuous	For each of the specific data collections (objectives 4.1- 4.6) results will be presented and, if possible, analysed in a working paper that will be publicly accessible.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS AND SPECIFIC DATA COLLECTIONS

4.1	Measuring Money Laundering	COM (HOME, ESTAT)	Data Collection in 2011. Publication of results first half of 2012	a. Third collection of Money Laundering Statistics based on the indicators developed under the Action Plan 2006-2010. b. Assessment of the need for a regular collection every two years.
4.2	Measuring Trafficking in Human Beings	COM (HOME, ESTAT for the collection)	First data collection in 2011-2012	a. First data collection on a small number of indicators in collaboration with the Network of National Rapporteurs. b. Assessment of the feasibility and the

				need for regular collection.
4.3	Measuring Cybercrime	COM (HOME, with technical advice from ESTAT)	First data collection in 2012	a. First data collection on the offences of the proposed EU directive on attacks against information systems[17]. b. The gradual expansion of the list to cover other computer-facilitated crimes, such as high-volume online fraud, will be assessed and discussed.
4.4	Measuring Corruption	COM (HOME with technical advice from ESTAT, OLAF)	First data collection in 2013	Development of indicators followed by a pilot data collection.
4.5	Measuring victimisation rates and safety feelings in a common EU survey (EU SASU)	COM (ESTAT, HOME. JUST), Member States	Implementation of the survey in 2013. Publication of results 2014-2015	a. Implementation of a household/personal survey in the European Union; the model was developed in close cooperation with the Member States and it covers the prevalence of specific types of crime (victimisation rates) and other aspects relating to citizens' feelings about their safety. b. Analysis and publication of the results
4.6	Measuring the extent and the type of victimisation in the Business Sector	COM (HOME)	Survey in 2011 – 2012 Results in 2013	Implementation of a Business Victimisation survey based on the feasibility study performed under the Action Plan 2006-2010.
4.7	Measuring the impact of EU legislation	COM (JUST)	Results in 2013	First collection of data based on study on legislation and practice regarding

[17] As adopted by the Commission on 30 September 2010 (COM(2010)517 final).

	on criminal sanctions on national practice			criminal sanctions.