



PRESS RELEASE

CRIME, SAFETY & SECURITY IN THE EU

- *The levels of common crime¹ in the EU have fallen significantly over the past 10 years*
- *Nevertheless, crime hotspots have been identified as Ireland, the UK, Estonia, the Netherlands and Denmark (30% higher than EU average).*
- *Greece has the highest likelihood of corruption and the greatest concern about burglaries and safety on the streets*
- *Hate crimes² are particularly prevalent in the “immigrant” communities.*
- *30% of EU citizens are afraid of burglary and do not feel safe on the streets.*
- *Citizens in the newer member states, the UK and Ireland are much more likely to favour imprisonment for persistent offenders rather than community service orders.*

Background

The EU International Crime & Safety Survey (EU ICS) compared levels of crime and analysed the EU's citizens' views and concerns about crime. Following on from the International Crime Victim Surveys (ICVSs), conducted from 1989 to 2000, it was the most comprehensive analysis of crime, security and safety ever conducted in the EU³. The EU ICS analysed levels of crime across the EU⁴, independent of actual police records.

For the first time, the analysis also included information concerning “hate crimes” and an appreciation of drug-related problems.

The situation on the ground

- The levels of common crime have fallen significantly over the past 10 years, although Belgium appears to be bucking the trend⁵⁶.
 - 15% of EU citizens surveyed (2004-05) have been a victim of common crime in 2004. This compares with a peak figure of 21% in 1995.
 - No relation has been seen between the rates of common crime identified during the survey and the actual numbers of crime recorded by the various police forces.

¹ This includes property crime (vehicle theft, burglary) and contact crime (robbery, sexual assault and common assault with & without force).

² Not included in previous ICVSs.

³ For the first time, data was included from Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Hungary.

⁴ The survey included the EU-15, Estonia, Poland and Hungary.

⁵ Rates of common crime in Belgium have increased each time in the past three surveys, going from a low crime country in 1988 to a country with crime levels above the EU average.

⁶ The prevalence of robbery, assaults, theft from cars and bicycle theft is rising in Belgium; rates of burglaries, theft of personal property, sexual assaults, pickpocketing, theft of cars/motorcycles are falling.

- The level of self-protection (alarms, special locks, etc.) has risen considerably in the past 10 years, especially in the UK and Ireland.
- Burglary is decreasing everywhere except for the UK and Finland.⁷
- The risk of robbery is comparatively low in all countries⁸.
- Levels of assault (with and without violence) are decreasing everywhere except for Belgium and the Netherlands. However, the EU average is still approaching 3%.
 - There appears to be a correlation between violence and the consumption of alcohol.
- Hate crimes are particularly prevalent in immigrant communities (10% chance of being targeted) and even more so amongst immigrants who feel themselves to be religious (12%)⁹.

The people speak

- There is less concern now about burglaries¹⁰, but 30% of interviewees are still worried about this eventuality.
- Despite less violent crime, 30% of people do not feel safe on the streets
 - The survey has shown a strong correlation between concern about safety on the streets and exposure to drug-related incidents.
- There are wide differences across the participating member states about the opinions of police performance, with particularly poor views being expressed in countries representative of the newer member states.
 - 30% of interviewees across the EU feel the police are not controlling crime, this figure is decreasing everywhere except for Poland and France
 - Overall, all police forces have improved performance ratings except for the UK, the Netherlands and France.
 - Many interviewees¹¹ did not report incidents to the police, with property crime being more likely to be reported than contact crime

What the people want

- Using recidivist burglars as an example, people in the newer member states, the UK and Ireland were much more likely to favour imprisonment rather than community service orders.

From the report: - "The Burden of Crime in the EU, A Comparative Analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety (EU ICS) 2005". Robert Manchin, Gallup Europe, coordinated the Consortium and the project was co-financed by the European Commission under FP6.

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⁷ But Finland has a rate of less than 1%, only Sweden is lower.

⁸ For theft of a car, robbery and sexual assaults, the rates are all below 1.5% as an average EU rate. In certain countries, e.g. sexual offences in Ireland, a figure of 3.5%, is significant.

⁹ "Immigrants" are also more liable to be victims of "common crime", 20% chance of being a victim of crime as opposed to 15% for non-immigrants.

¹⁰ The exceptions are Italy and Austria, although actual burglaries are decreasing in the former.

¹¹ Between 30% and 60%.