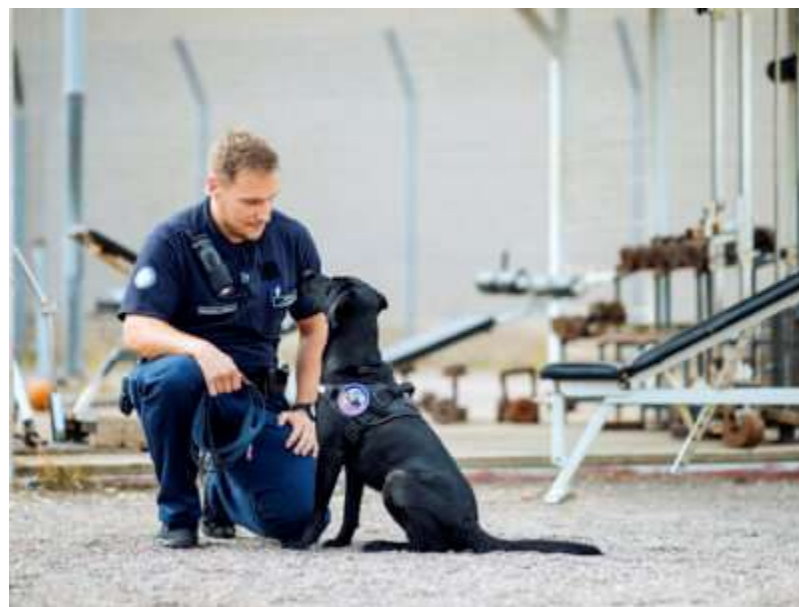# Roundtable Summary

**Prison Intelligence in Relation to Organised Crime,
22 -23 May 2024, Brussels**

EuroPris Prison Security Expert Group

PROMOTING
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PRACTICE

Key Takeaways for European Prison Services on Organised Crime

If time is limited, we recommend reviewing the 10 key takeaways outlined below. These summarise the most critical points from the roundtable, offering essential information for European prison services in addressing the challenges posed by organised crime within correctional facilities.

1. **Organised Crime's Persistence in Prisons**: Organised crime groups (OCGs) continue to operate from within prisons, often through recruitment, corruption, and maintaining communication with the outside world. Detention does not stop their activities, and many OCGs thrive in prison environments.

2. **Prison Intelligence as a Key Tool**: Prison intelligence is crucial in identifying and neutralising threats posed by OCGs. This includes monitoring communications, behaviour, and gathering data from various sources like phone calls, visitors, and financial transfers to detect criminal activity.

3. **Cross-border Cooperation is Essential**: There is a gap between Europol's intelligence and prison systems. More collaboration and information exchange between prison systems and law enforcement agencies across countries can strengthen efforts to counter OCGs and their influence within detention.

4. **Tailored Approaches for Different Countries**: The nature of organised crime in prisons differs by country. For instance, some countries face challenges with outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs), while others deal with more fluid drug trafficking networks. This requires country-specific strategies and interventions.

5. **Staff Corruption and Infiltration**: Corruption of prison staff is a significant issue, with OCGs using bribery, threats, and coercion to smuggle contraband or pass information. Identifying and preventing staff corruption is a key challenge that needs to be addressed through improved vetting, training, and monitoring.

6. **Lack of Structured Intelligence Gathering**: Many European countries still lack structured systems for identifying and monitoring members of OCGs in prisons. Establishing formal intelligence units and better integration between police, intelligence agencies, and prison services is necessary for effective management.

7. **Enhanced Security Measures for OCG Inmates**: Some countries have implemented high-security regimes for OCG members, such as enhanced surveillance, segregation, and strict controls on communications and visits. However, few have dedicated units for OCG prisoners, making it harder to manage this growing issue.

8. **Challenges in Desistance Programmes**: There is a need for specific exit programmes targeting desistance from organised crime. However, there is little scientific evidence on the effectiveness of these programmes, especially in dealing with high-profit criminals motivated by financial gain.

9. **Mental Health and Personality Profiles of OCG Members**: Many OCG members exhibit dominant personalities with low emotional stability. Understanding their psychological profiles is essential in managing them within the prison system, as these individuals are often highly manipulative and have complex social and behavioural needs.

10. **Improved Data Exchange and Legal Frameworks**: The lack of a solid legal basis for exchanging intelligence across European prison systems hinders the effectiveness of collaborative efforts. There is a need to establish clearer legal frameworks for the exchange of information to better monitor and manage OCG members in detention.

Introduction

Those involved in Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) often try to maintain their criminal networks while in custody in order to continue to run their illegitimate businesses within the community. This effects the safety, security and working climate inside prisons. What happens on the outside has an impact on the inside.

EuroPris Prison Security Expert Group organised a roundtable in Brussels hosted by the Belgian Prison Service with European experts to discuss prison intelligence amidst the context of organised crime in prisons. Prison Intelligence is pivotal for maintaining order, safety, and security within correctional facilities by identifying and neutralising threats posed by organised crime groups. It involves systematic gathering, analysis, and utilisation of information to counter criminal activities within prisons, focusing on disrupting networks engaged in drug trafficking, extortion, gang activity, and other illicit operations. This intelligence also safeguards the well-being of staff, detainees, and society, upholding democratic legal values.

Some of the key methods used by Serious and Organised Crime Groups (SOCG's) include:

- (Leading) members maintain their ties to the criminal organisation;
- Recruiting new members in prisons;
- Using their position/knowledge to direct further criminal offences;
- Bribing lawyers, witnesses, officials, staff, visitors;
- Threats (intimidation and coercion), violence/use of force and similar crimes against staff, visitors, other inmates or inmates' families;
- Smuggling (by drones, perimeter throw overs or physical external drug mules: visitors, staff, families) and distribution of illegal substances/drugs and illegal articles (mobile phones, weapons etc.);
- Staff corruption and infiltration;
- Escapes/hostage-taking;
- Illicit communication;
- Indirect security vulnerabilities (social media, demotivation of staff, trade union pressures);
- Information security data leak.

However, these types of security problems cannot always be linked to SOC. The main group of inmates who generate security challenges are people with violent profiles, with mental health problems, addiction problems, cultural problems, etc. but not associated to an organised crime group. In some cases, there is also an overlap between organised crime and terrorism. This is why we will make a distinction in our table between the general measures that are taken in relation to the risk involved and the specific measures linked to organised crime.

It is important to note that those that work within prisons cannot tackle this problem alone. In order to truly make an impact on the ongoing organised crime that is orchestrated from within our prisons, a multi-agency approach is required.

It has been argued that organised crime groups differ from other crime groups in that they specialise in enterprise as opposed to predatory crimes, have a durable hierarchical structure, employ systemic violence and corruption, and obtain abnormally high rates of return relative to other criminal organisations, and extend their activities into the legal economy.[1]

Whilst there is extensive literature on organised crime within the community and across national and international borders, very little research considers the emergence or continuation of organised crime within prisons. The purpose of the Prison Security Expert Group Roundtable on Prison Intelligence in Relation to Organised Crime was to assist the group in identifying areas of good practice across Europe whilst also identifying key challenges that require further exploration/research in order to continually improve policy and practice within our prisons.

Ten EuroPris security experts collaborated with fifteen European practitioners to explore managing organised crime involvement through intelligence operations. This summary report addresses surveillance, informants, data analysis, collaborations with law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and various countermeasures.

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[1] R.T. Naylor, 'Mafias, Myths and Markets: On the Theory and Practice of Enterprise Crime', *Transnational Organized Crime*, Vol 3, No 3, 1997, p. 6.

Prison Intelligence in Relation to Organised Crime

From investigation to detention (Eleonora Forte. Europol Intelligence Service and Threat Assessment)

Terrorism and organised crime are currently two top priorities within Europol. Europol depends on the willingness of countries to share information. They mainly provide analytical support, but also logistic and financial support. For example: Europol investigates a certain form of crime that occurs in multiple European countries. Forms of operational support are: setting up mobile offices, organising and deploying joint action days (JAD) and operational task forces (OTF) and joint research teams (JIT). This can be organised in ongoing investigations by countries, but also if countries still want to set up an operation and need the deployment of Europol. The focus is on investigative authorities, but they also work with private parties and institutes. Their Operations and Analysis Center is operational 24/7. The bundling of intelligence from the different countries allows them to draw up intelligence reports. Both operationally and for mapping trends and phenomena.

- **EMPACT**: multidisciplinary EU platform against criminal threats. Every four years, EMPACT draws up a report in which they submit to, for example, the European Commission, so that investigation can be combined with the recommendations. 'High-risk criminal networks' is one of the top priorities. Based on this analysis, an attempt is made to link criminal groups and networks. the threats and impact of this type of crime are specifically examined. Operational intelligence feeds strategic intelligence and vice versa. Quantitative analysis is difficult because it can vary from country to country which crime occurs were.
- **SOCTA**: threat analysis of serious organised crime. Both public and more private versions are published with more information about how organised crime now operates. There are many different types of crime. For each type of crime, a risk analysis has been made, which produces a list of indicators.
- **EIS:** Europol Information System. This is a database for all Member States. It works through a hit/no hit search function. This is the central criminal information and intelligence database.

Findings on European organised crime:

There are 821 identified active criminal networks in the EU. With a total of more than 25,000 members. About 40% of these are involved in drug crime. Next comes fraud (15%). The most threatening networks are 'ABCD': agile, borderless, controlling and destructive. 86% of networks are successful in infiltrating the legal world (e.g. setting up legal businesses to launder money). They see an increasing connection with people in prison in the Europol data. Organised crime is linked to detention. They are agile: they do not let detention stop them. They can still coordinate/plot things. The most dangerous networks can continue to exist despite key members ending up in detention. During detention, they have multiple means of communication to stay in touch with the outside world, allowing them to continue to conduct their affairs (confirmed in their data). Another method of operation is to play on corruption and bend other officials to their will so that they can facilitate smuggling or transmission of information outside the prison (e.g. through lawyers). Detention is also a great place to recruit new members. This often concerns errand boys and not the leaders. New networks are emerging within detention.

During the roundtable it was concluded that the knowledge and expertise gained from Europol is not substantively connected to the prison system in the various European countries and vice versa. This is an area in which gains can be made because organised crime is not always stopped by detention. Not much data/information is yet known to Europol regarding the time in detention. Collaboration and the exchange of information can contribute to Europol's knowledge and expertise. Conversely, Europol's knowledge and expertise can be very valuable in ensuring order and safety within detention.

Currency of Crime (Dr. Jelle Janssens. Gent University)

There are many blind spots in the intelligence position of the investigative authorities: for example, the time being spend in prison. With regard to human trafficking, the motivation lies mainly in money and expanding social capital. Drug trafficking is mainly just about money. Here there is mainly a mixture of the underworld and the upper world. These are social systems with flexible exchange networks that expand and contract. Here they have different patterns and systems that they use. You can earn an enormous amount of money from cocaine trafficking. At outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) there is a clear hierarchy and organisation. There you can more easily identify the different roles and members of a network.

Are organised crime and terrorism cut from the same cloth?
- Intelligence is very much focused on police and information exchange between prisons and police, but intelligence agencies largely remain absent.
- Major challenges in identifying members of OCGs: if someone is a member before imprisonment, that's fine, but their role can change, or they can be recruited once in prison.
- Little structure in the approach to organised crime in prisons, except concerning terrorism. Strange, because this isn't really a new story.
- Terrorism also comes up in research on the profiles of detainees, and similarities and differences are sought. Just as terrorism and radicalisation have many dimensions, so does organised crime – and it might be even more challenging given the different criminal markets and forms we are talking about in organised crime.

Challenges in Organised Crime (Dr. Esther van Ginneken. University of Leiden)
A bottleneck for prison directors is that there is no space for detainees to discuss issues that arise within the Prison Intelligence (HUMINT) system. Intelligence is important to take measures: who should you sanction, who should you put together in the cell, etc. For good interventions it is essential to look at the exact problem per country. In Sweden, the issue is primarily associated with young people, whereas in Denmark, it is mainly related to OMGs (Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs). This requires tailored approaches for each context. Carefully consider the purpose of risk assessment tools, as they can introduce new problems and are often inaccurate, making them less reliable. Access to financial resources is also crucial, as it can contribute to fear and escalate threats

- Organised crime in relation to prison is a shared problem across countries. Yet, the nature of organised crime varies between countries, for example in terms of the involvement of gangs, and young people.
- The nature of the problem varies, for example in terms of violence in prisons. Staff corruption is identified as a problem in different countries, and research is needed to identify strategies to deal with this.
- Most countries do not have a clear strategy of identifying people in criminal networks and monitoring them. In some countries membership of a criminal network is itself a criminal offence.
- Only a few countries currently separate incarcerated people who are involved in serious organised crime from the regular population.
- Intelligence gathering plays a role, often in the form of national unit and regional officers/small offices. Extent of professionalisation and inter-agency cooperation varies greatly. It's important to keep in mind for what purpose intelligence is gathered and how all this is protected and can still be subject to protective mechanisms.
- Information exchange is still quite adhoc and limited.
- There is a need for exit-programmes to support desistance from organised crime, but it is questionable if desistance from gangs works similar to desistance from high-profit organised crime. It's also important to distinguish between different roles within organised crime groups.

Psychological aspects and personality profile of high-risk-prisoners involved in organised crime (Prof. Dr. Ángel Gómez Jiménez. UNED, Madrid)
The profile of members of organised crime: very dominant personalities but often low in emotional stability and self-confidence. No research has been conducted with results on assessment risk tools. It is difficult to study members of violent groups. There are too few theories available. You need behavioural experts to understand the mechanisms of the different roles and functions in a grouping. Why are people willing to kill or die for a group? Basically: they identify with the group, and it feels like a family bond, so they no longer have boundaries. They share 'sacred values'. The 3N model: needs, narrative and network.

Much research has been done in Spain on detainees incarcerated for Jihadism. For members of organised crime, they do not attach much value to group interests, unlike, for example, jihadist groups. They have different interests/motives. Detainees linked to groups/networks believe it is unfair that they are in detention and see this as unreasonable; that also binds them together. This may explain the fact that members of different networks get along well with each other during detention.

With regard to organised crime, they are often proud of the criminal offenses they have committed because they sincerely believe so based on their values. They believe they have done nothing wrong. With organized crime you have to look carefully at whether they are really loyal to the organization or not. This must then play a role in your approach in the prison. Organised crime is really a different type of group than, for example, the terroristic groups.

Behavioural science: Terrorism and Radicalisation process (Dr. Samuel Leistedt. The Belgian Federal Public Service of Justice)
Decision to resort to violence. Many factors contribute to extreme violence. Major factors: target population and brainwashing/ radicalisations (if one is not here, not considered terrorism):
- Brainwashing (also used in other fields, how to modify behaviours of consumers)
    o Keep the person unaware of what is going on
    o Milieu control (spend more time with "us" less with your family, hobbies)
    o Loading the language
    o Us vs. Them
    o Confession
    o Mystical manipulation (role of religion) – tool for recruitment but not the main factor of terrorist structure
    o Doctrine over person
    o Physiological Persuasion Techniques
- Psychology of Concealment – "you say nothing"

Other factors to contribute to the decision to resort to extreme violence:
- Parental inattention or neglect (no stable family structure, often no authority or no father present)
- Moral Disengagement (psychological training)
- Third Culture Kids (TCKs, between cultures), problems with identity → important to have stable one - football match example
- Multiple identities and code switching (in school for example, different codes between school and home)
- Substance use disorder → most use at least marijuana (also other drugs)
- Psychological factors/ Microscopic behaviours: Narcistic traits, big ego, Paranoid Traits, Antisocial ASPD, Opinions/belief ideology problems
(No specific profile for terrorist): Terrorists is not a psychologic problem, most are not mentally ill. Warning Signs are isolation, new sources / kinds of interests, new attitudes / identity, new "Milieu", Physical Modification, Doctrine over person, specific language, criminal backgrounds. Known risk assessment are: VERA – 2R, ERG 22 + (U-K), TRAP – 18, PCL – R

Which prisoners are related to organised crime? (Experts)
In the early stages of the detention, the prison system is dependent on partners such as the police to provide relevant information. Receiving this information at the beginning is essential to determine whom should receive additional monitoring. There is also a lot of information to gather from court reports, judicial decisions and other documents from partners. However, it is also important to collect information during detention and make an own assessment, such as information about visitors, phone calls, money transfers and reports about the behaviour. In most of the countries, this is a periodic assessment. In most countries, it is the Police or the National Security and Intelligence Services who identify and decide if someone is regarded as being involved in SOC. In others, it is the Prison Service who decide, however, this is normally based on information received from other organisations such as the Police and Public Prosecution Services. To strengthen cooperation between the police and the prison system and facilitate the exchange of relevant information, some countries have designated individuals or units that act as liaisons between the two agencies.

Some countries are particularly affected by members of outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG's). These members are easier to identify because of their physical characteristics such as tattoos and clothing. Most countries are faced with members of organised drug crime. These members are more difficult to identify because they operate more under the radar. The networks are very fluid and there is often no fixed hierarchy. Members are quickly recruited during detention but also quickly released. This is a major challenge for the prison system because these types of criminals have a high risk of continued criminal activity while in detention. A good practice in this area is structured scoring methodologies like Organised Crime Group Mapping.

There is often a lack of a good legal basis for sharing information with government partners. There is also no legal basis for exchanging information between the various European prison systems. The countries present indicate that these are elements to further explore and improve.

What is the detention plan for organised crime prisoners? (Experts)
There was a real balance between those countries who do not provide a specific regime but that have a range of additional security measures that can be implemented depending on the level of risk the individual presents and countries who have particular prison and/or regimes for those involved in OC. For those that do not have specific regimes, additional security measures that can be applied include:

- Enhanced surveillance (covert and overt);
- Control of communications including monitoring of phone calls and letters;
- Enhanced searching regime;
- Segregation;
- Restrictions on number of visits and also who is approved to visit – one country did not permit visits with anyone from the same OCG.

In most cases there is a distinction between regimes and security levels. However, there are only a few countries that have separate units for members of organised crime. This is mainly because this is a recently emerging phenomenon, and most countries have yet to come up with a specific strategy on these types of prisoners. There were examples of intensified supervision or high security wards/maximum security prisons/areas for those involved in OC including allocating the individual a high security category to prevent those involved in OC from mixing with other inmates. One country has submitted a legal proposal for a regime that provides more isolation, more control and less privacy for those involved in OC, however, this has yet to be approved by Parliament.

Two countries delivered a special Exit programme aimed at inmates who want to leave organised crime. Most countries do not provide any specific intervention programmes that specifically target the vulnerabilities and ideologies associated with being involved in organised crime but rather provide a range of general offending behaviour interventions aimed at addressing the underlying factors, which contribute to offending behaviour such as aggressions, substance misuse and cognitive behaviour.

Key challenges in this are that those involved in OC are normally superficially compliant and progress into lower security regimes or prisons over time. It's also a big challenge how we can effectively challenge OC-members when they are motivated by financial rewards. In terms of programmed interventions, there is limited scientific evidence on the effectiveness.

What is the role of prison intelligence and how is it structured? (Experts)
Some countries have years of experience with prison intelligence and other countries have just started or are in the start-up phase. An essential part of prison intelligence is working together with other government partners. It is also essential to realize that detention is not a final step in the criminal justice chain with regard to continued criminal conduct arising from detention. With the help of prison intelligence, you can make a concrete contribution to the safety of prisons, for both detainees and staff, but also social safety. In some countries, the focus of intelligence is on prisoners in relation to terrorism and other countries are confronted more with organized crime.

Most countries are trying to have both a local intelligence position and a national position. From a national information position, it is possible to focus more on phenomena, trends and national networks.

Separate education and training of personnel who work with prison intelligence is important. Detention is a special environment for collecting and processing intelligence. This includes information from systems and objective information: who is visiting and who is being called? "HUMINT" can also make an important contribution to your information position. It is very important to also use the information in the detention process, for example to incorporate it into the detention plan.

Acronyms and Definitions

- **3N**: Needs, Narrative and Network
- **ABCD**: Agile, Borderless, Controlling and Destructive
- **EIS**: Europol Information System
- **EMPACT**: Multidisciplinary EU Platform Against Criminal Threats
- **ERG 22+**: Extremism Risk Guidelines 22+
- **EU**: European Union
- **EUROPOL**: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
- **EUROPRIS**: The European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services
- **HUMINT**: Human Intelligence
- **JAD**: Joint Action Days
- **JIT**: Joint Research Teams
- **OC**: Organised Crime
- **OCG**: Organised Crime Gang
- **OMG**: Outlaw Motorcycle Gang
- **OTF**: Operational Task Forces
- **PCL-R**: Psychopathy Checklist – Revised
- **SOC**: Serious and Organised Crime
- **SOCG's**: Serious and Organised Crime Groups
- **SOCTA**: Threat Analysis of Serious Organised Crime
- **TCK**: Third Culture Kids
- **TRAP-18**: Terrorist Radicalization Assessment Protocol
- **UNED**: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (National University of Distance Education)
- **VERA -2R**: Violent Extremism Risk Assessment—Version 2 Revised