

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (87) 19

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON THE ORGANISATION OF CRIME PREVENTION

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 September 1987
at the 410th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering the growing public concern about the increases in the number of reported offences, the limited effect of repressive penal measures, the resulting additional workload for the criminal justice systems;

Aware of the need to make the optimum use of available resources, as emphasised by the conclusions of the 14th Conference of European Ministers of Justice, by devoting a particular effort to crime-prevention strategies aimed at reducing victimisation and lightening the burden of the criminal justice system;

Considering the variety of possible approaches in this field, including measures to influence social factors associated with criminal behaviour (social prevention) and measures to reduce opportunities for the commission of offences and to increase the risk of being detected (situational prevention);

Recognising the importance of social prevention and the need to develop homogeneous and co-ordinated policies in this field but on this occasion giving particular attention to the situational approach to crime prevention, the value of which has recently been stressed by research;

Considering that crime prevention usually requires action at several levels and that preventive measures are more likely to be successful if they are geared to local circumstances and focus on certain specific types of offence;

Aware that, to be effective, prevention policy requires active participation by the community and co-ordination between the efforts of the police and other public or private agencies, which can be facilitated by the creation of specialised bodies for crime prevention;

Considering that, although surveillance and security companies perform a crime-prevention role, measures should be taken in order to ensure that their activities do not encroach upon the functions of the police and do not jeopardise individual freedom and public order;

Considering that crime-prevention measures have a better chance of succeeding if based on thorough knowledge of the problem they are intended to resolve, acquired through research in the relevant field;

Taking into account the proceedings and conclusions of the 14th Conference of European Ministers of Justice and the work of the European Committee on Crime Problems on the relationship between the public and criminal policy and on co-operation between the public and the police for crime-prevention purposes,

- I. Recommends that the governments of member states include prevention as a permanent feature of governmental programmes for controlling crime so that concrete obligations for action are established and the necessary credits provided ; in this context, ensure that there exist clear responsibilities within government for the organisation of crime prevention and its development ;
- II. Recommends that the governments of member states establish, encourage and support crime-prevention agencies at national and/or regional and local level, with functions such as :
- a.* collecting information on crime and crime trends, on high-risk victimisation groups and on prevention experiments and their results ;
 - b.* planning and implementing prevention programmes and evaluating them ;
 - c.* co-ordinating preventive activities by the police and other crime-prevention agencies ;
 - d.* securing the public's active participation in crime prevention by informing it of the need for, and means of, action ;
 - e.* seeking the support and co-operation of the mass media for crime-prevention activities ;
 - f.* initiating or encouraging research into the incidence of certain types of crime and other questions of importance for crime prevention ;
 - g.* co-operating with decision-makers in evolving a rational and effective crime policy ;
 - h.* implementing training programmes in the prevention field ;
- III. Recommends that the governments of member states establish and, when appropriate, promote prevention programmes concerning specific crime problems, aimed at reducing opportunities for committing crime and increasing the risk perceived by the offender of being detected, taking the necessary steps to :
- a.* identify the characteristics of crime and victimisation within local areas ;
 - b.* focus studies on specific crimes (for example, residential burglary) in preference to broad, poorly defined areas of criminal activity ;
 - c.* identify crimes that are susceptible to preventive measures ;
 - d.* identify the opportunities that exist in the community which allow the commission of crime ;
 - e.* identify obstacles to preventive action (for example, lack of funds, public apathy, inter-agency rivalry) and seek ways in which these obstacles can be overcome ;
 - f.* secure the support of relevant agencies for preventive initiatives and close co-operation between them ;
 - g.* secure co-ordination in the implementation of programmes ;
 - h.* inform the public of the implementation of the programmes and encourage them to co-operate ;
- IV. Recommends that the governments of member states promote and encourage research in the field of prevention, taking into account the needs mentioned in Parts I to III. In this context, particular attention should be attached to the evaluation of prevention programmes which might require :
- a.* the specification of performance criteria ;
 - b.* provision for comparison between experimental and control areas, or situations before and after the introduction of preventive measures ;
 - c.* provision for the assessment of displacement effects or the evolution of criminality following intervention ;
 - d.* provision for an assessment of the costs and benefits of preventive action ;
- V. Recommends that the governments of member states :
- a.* enact, revise and, if necessary, complete regulations governing initial authorisation, periodical licensing and regular inspection, by public authorities at the appropriate level, of security or surveillance companies, or encourage the profession to adopt its own regulations ;
 - b.* in cases where such companies supply staff, lay down minimum standards, providing in particular that this staff shall wear a uniform different from that of the police, carry identification

documents and have adequate training, including a basic understanding of criminal law, knowledge of surveillance and security techniques and of the rights, obligations and responsibilities of such staff, as well as of the norms of appropriate behaviour, in particular *vis-à-vis* the public ;

c. encourage positive relations between the police and surveillance and security companies in order that, within the limits of their activities, the latter may assist the former in preventing crime ;

VI. Recommends that the governments of member states take all necessary measures with a view to the international co-operation in the field of prevention as defined by the present recommendation.