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Data overview related to criminal offences in the European countries and Canada

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Contents

1. RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	6
1.1 Criminal offences data per country.....	6
1.2 Number of police officers per 100.000 inhabitants.....	11
1.3 Finland.....	12
1.4 France.....	14
1.5 Ireland.....	15
1.6 Norway.....	15
1.7 Romania.....	18
1.8 Slovenia.....	18
1.9 Sweden.....	20
Appendix 1: Total number of registered criminal offences in EU member states and countries in the region in 2012	22
Appendix 2 : Registered crime rate per 100.000 inhabitants in EU member states and countries in the region in 2012	23
Bibliography.....	24

FOREWORD

Credibility of statistical information involving criminal offences is crucial when assessing the level of crime in the country and at the international level. These data are important in order to understand criminal offences in various contexts, observe trends and compare policies, and overview the position of countries on crime issues. Comparison of data per countries and time intervals are useful to decision-makers and are an issue dealt with by relevant international organisations.

However, considering that methods of record keeping and presentation of the data varies among countries, their combining and organisation into an adequate statistic form was made more difficult. The issue of comparability of statistical data involving criminal offences has been globally recognised due to the complexity of the issue and diversity of systems. It primarily refers to the manner of record keeping and qualification of criminal offences. Efforts in the area of managing international statistics are moving towards the establishment of an international classification of criminal offences and improvement of coordination and cooperation among countries regarding this issue, which should ultimately lead to a higher quality of data, and thus adequate analyses. Data analysis should, by all means, be focused on observing of trends over the years, at the international level or by country, and not just making simple number comparisons between countries in a given year.

Noting that during the collection and presentation of the data, due to the complexity of the issue, there is always certain delay, it was impossible to obtain a credible international overview of data involving the year 2013 and even data concerning each individual country, which would subsequently be joined and compared. The Research Centre, in line with the request, and in the attempt to collect the required data involving 2013, prepared a questionnaire which was posted on the Network of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), on the basis of the UN classification of criminal offences, as follows¹:

Assault – physical attack against the body of another person resulting in serious bodily injury; excluding indecent/sexual assault; threats and slapping/punching. 'Assault' leading to death should also be excluded.

“Sexual violence”- rape and sexual assault, including sexual offences against children.

“Robbery”- the theft of property from a person, overcoming resistance by force or threat of force. Where possible, the category “Robbery” should include muggings (bag-snatching) and theft with violence, but should exclude pick pocketing and extortion.

“Kidnapping”- unlawfully detaining a person or persons against their will (including through the use of force, threat, fraud or enticement) for the purpose of demanding for their liberation an illicit gain or any other economic gain or other material benefit, or in order to oblige someone to do or not to do something. “Kidnapping” excludes disputes over child custody.

“Theft” – depriving a person or organisation of property without force with the intent to keep it. “Theft” excludes burglary, housebreaking, robbery, and theft of a motor Vehicle

“Motor vehicle theft” – the removal of a motor vehicle without the consent of the owner of the vehicle. “Motor Vehicles” includes all land vehicles with an

¹ *United Nations on Drugs and Crime*: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime.html>; Accessed on 29 December 2014

engine that run on the road, including cars, motorcycles, buses, lorries, construction and agricultural vehicles.

“Private cars” include motor vehicles, excluding motorcycles, commercial vehicles, buses, lorries, construction and agricultural vehicles.

“Burglary” - gaining unauthorised access to a part of a building/dwelling or other premises, including by use of force, with the intent to steal goods (breaking and entering). “Burglary” should include, where possible, theft from a house, apartment or other dwelling place, factory, shop or office, from a military establishment, or by using false keys. It should exclude theft from a car, from a container, from a vending machine, from a parking meter and from fenced meadow/compound.

“Drug Possession/Use” means drug offences related to drug use or possession for use.

“Drug trafficking” means drug offences; which are not in connection with personal use.

The questionnaire also requested the data on criminal offences involving organised crime, economic crime and acts with elements of corruption. In addition, the questionnaire requested the statistical data on crime rate (number of registered criminal offences per 100 000 inhabitants) and the number of police officers in relation to the number of inhabitants (number of police officers per 100 000 inhabitants). The data concerning the total percentage of solved criminal offences in 2013 was also requested, as well as for each category individually. According to the UN classification, a solved criminal offence involves an offence which was criminally prosecuted in a given year.

Based the replies obtained through the ECPRD Network, the data which were with certainty determined to be in compliance with the choices offered by the questionnaire, were presented in tabular form. When it comes to other countries the data were presented by country. In both cases, however, the data must be used and compared with extreme caution, due to different legal qualifications of criminal offences in different countries, as well as methods of record keeping and evidence, which may be concluded from the obtained responses.

The document also contains two appendices with additional information. The first appendix provides data involving the number of registered criminal offences in the EU member states and countries in the region in 2012, while the second appendix contains the data on the number of registered criminal offences per country for the 2012, on the basis of the UN report, which also states the limitations and suggests caution during the comparison of the data.

Complete document in Montenegrin language is available at: <http://www.skupstina.me/images/dokumenti/biblioteka-i-istrazivanje/2015/6.pdf>