

How *SECURITY EUROPE* – The monthly inside view from Brussels on European civil security policy, technology & business (www.seceur.info) – reported about the CPSI Country Case Studies on citizen security cultures, conducted by the CEUSS | Center for European Security Studies. Reprinted with kind permission from SecEUR sprl.

Security & Crime: National Attitudes

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Results of EU-funded research project reveals huge diversity of attitude toward Union’s development – as both source and solution to crime

EIBSEE, Germany – The EU-funded security research project known as CPSI – “Changing Perceptions of Security and Interventions” – presented the final results of its work during a symposium here on 3-5 March. Concluding its two years of research on 31 March, it had a total budget of €2.7 million for its consortium of six research institutes and three companies.

CPSI covered a wide range of activities focused on a software-based model that correlates perceptions of crime with actual crime statistics to help law enforcement agencies anticipate preventive measures (see related story in this issue for overall results and our analysis).

Among the project’s work was an analysis of citizen attitudes across the EU. For example, respondents were asked to assess whether their region or country’s problems were better addressed by national or EU approaches. Similarly, they were asked whether the effects of an increasingly borderless territory among the 27 member states was



Hmm...intervention or prevention?

a good or bad thing in terms of crime, and whether the EU was a cause or solution to crime. This part of the project’s work was led by consortium member Sigmund Freud Private University, based in Vienna,

As explained by Sigmund Freud University researcher Andrea Jerkovic, CPSI combined analysis of four sources to extract their conclusions about national attitudes: the EU’s recurring Eurobarometer surveys of citizens, national security strategies, country information on official government websites and, finally, risk analysis data from NGOs and other civil society groups.

The resulting “national citizen security cultures” can be summarised as follows:

Austria: marked by a realistic fear of crime and a “less Europeanised feeling” of security on the part of citizens.

Bulgaria: the majority do not trust victimization data and do not believe that any surveys reflect reality; they have a clear preference for the EU – as

opposed to national – decision-making and intervention for fighting crime.

France: security viewed as symbolic of need to preserve values acquired by society as a whole; EU seen as a locus of crime for French citizens. “The French public was the most pessimistic of all we surveyed,” according to CPSI.

Germany: security culture focused on the state as provider. Citizens show preference for EU – as opposed to national – decision-making and action for fighting crime. Germans believe state must involve citizens in discussion and decisions about introduction of new security technologies.

Italy: the only EU country where citizens have a strong preference for European solutions to their national crime problems.

Netherlands: a preference for EU versus national decision-making and action to fight crime but also a perception that EU equates more crime (due to internal market, etc.).

Sweden: security and vulnerability are significant issues for the public, as well as the implications for the economy and democracy. No clear preference for EU or national decision-making and action to fight crime, though balance has recently favoured the EU.

UK: unambiguous citizen preference for national decisions and action to fight crime. Technology seen as part of the solution and not part of the problem itself. Crime statistics have fallen to historic low level, though citizens perceive that crime levels are higher than ever.