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Concluding words

Rather than trying to reach any formal conclusions, the goal of this seminar was to review our current knowledge on the costs of crime and crime prevention. What kind of research has been conducted and on what issues? What are the questions that current research focuses on? We wanted to offer experts a chance to get together and discuss the economic consequences of crime and how to measure them, and to share practical experiences of the costs of crime. I think the seminar succeeded in fulfilling these goals. We had good discussions, plenum speakers were bombarded with questions, the exchange of opinions in working groups was spirited and discussions continued even late at night in the hotel lobby. No doubt has this seminar been of great value.

Many aspects of studying crime and its economic consequences raise questions that were not comprehensively answered even in this seminar. However, in my opinion there is wide acceptance of the basic view stated by Minister Johannes Koskinen in his opening speech: that the same economic thinking that has an influence on social policy, is now forcing its way also into criminal policy. As Minister Koskinen said, we need information on the costs of crime and crime prevention, and how crime can be affected in the most cost-efficient way.

Our current knowledge on the costs of crime and crime prevention is scarce. I admit that the enquiry carried out prior to the seminar proved to be too ambitious and difficult even before we sent it out. Nevertheless, it confirmed that we cannot even begin to estimate many central cost factors in criminal policy in ways that are normally employed in economic planning on other areas. We are even more aloof of the objective of being able to compare information about different costs between the member states of the European Union. Furthermore, I understood that a consensus prevails on the fact that our knowledge is too inadequate. The seminar also demonstrated that a lot of work is needed in order to develop different methods of research.

This seminar has offered examples of different methods of measuring the economic consequences of crime in some countries. For example the rather new results of Australia introduced by Pat Mayhew gave support to the rough estimate that crime would constitute 5 to 7 per cent of the gross domestic product in developed societies, such as e.g. the member states of the European Union. However, the costs of crime will rise if indirect costs or the costs of fear of crime are included in these estimates. It is rather easy to count the cost of crime based on the estimate of 5 to 7 per cent: in the European Union of 25 member states crime would cost about $0,5 \times 10^{12}$ €. This figure should perhaps not be introduced but its magnitude reminds us how important it is to pursue cost-efficient crime prevention, even for financial reasons.

A quote from the title of Daniel Sansfaçon's presentation, "*Handle with care*", forms a kind of conclusion to the seminar. It must also be kept in mind as regards to the above-mentioned monetary figure. The presentations illustrated how estimates of the costs of crime and crime prevention to a large degree depend on the calculation methods. These monetary estimates should be approached with the reservation in mind that the estimates depend on the methods and principles according to which many cost items are converted into monetary terms as well as on what has been included in the expenses. Therefore a warning is necessary: nearly all cost factors are theoretical and it is essential to understand how they are calculated.

This seminar is planned to be the first step within the European Union towards developing the valuation of the costs of crime and crime prevention measures, special attention directed at the contribution of the municipalities. The seminar demonstrated the need to continue work and we

have discussed future activities that are not the responsibility of the organisers of this seminar. In my view the so-called plenum presentations, discussions in working group as well as unofficial discussion in the hallways, all favour two alternative ways of proceeding:

The first way I call short-range low-ambition realism. We try to collect and take advantage of already existing information about crime and crime prevention in the member states of the EU. We confine to some basic facts of costs, or at the very least to information that can be converted into cost estimates, that are available in most member states. The next step down this road is the Dutch project by the Commission and EUCPN introduced by Paul van Soomeren and Jack Wever. When we advance this way we try to calculate the costs of crime in our countries by taking advantage of all the methods of calculation introduced in this seminar. We heard examples of calculations that are based on the costs of different crime prevention measures e.g. by the authorities. It's worthwhile to regard these examples as models. I recommend the method introduced by Mark A. Cohen of studying how much willingness there is to pay in order to prevent crime. The benefit of this method lies in that it converts into monetary terms also the kinds of effects of crime that calculations based on the costs of different measures fail to announce. If there is no information available about the entire country, there still might be information about cities. We were introduced with examples of this in the form of research on violence against women in a Finnish town as well as research on the economic consequences of graffiti in a French town.

Long-range ambitious method requires substantial administrative efforts and brainwork in developing data systems and methodology. Better and more comparable information is needed on crime and measures of criminal policy in the member states of the EU. In a similar fashion also information about the correlation of these figures in monetary terms is needed. The work of developing the comparability of monitoring systems in the EU is only beginning. The message of this seminar could be a wish that also economic factors are kept in mind while developing these monitoring systems. Information on the costs of crime and crime prevention measures are needed as the basis of cost-benefit comparisons of measures of criminal policy. This is a field in which much work is needed as information about the effects of different methods is scarce and as the existing information is largely based on research conducted outside the EU. Applying the results to European conditions might create a problem. Furthermore, lots of work is needed in developing the methods of calculating the costs of crime. Important principal methodological problems still exist. The British project of developing a method of converting the effects of crime as well as the fear of crime to be measurable in monetary terms illustrates how much challenging work still lies ahead of us before we can truly tell what are the costs of crime.