

Belgian local prevention partnerships

EUCPN
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Originally

Store burglaries at night near the border using ram cars in the early 1990s



Reaction of citizens for a better protection



They want to organise patrols

Consequences

Political reaction



- Avoid the excesses
- Compliance with the Belgian 1934 law prohibiting private militias
- Respect the will of the citizen to take responsibility for part of their security
- Ensure that sovereign prerogatives remain entirely in the hands of the government



- Create a legal frame

Creation of neighborhood information networks

- Inspired by what already existed in the UK (« neighborhoodswatch ») and the Netherlands
 - The base is a citizen initiative
- Tripartite agreement : citizen, police, local administration

30 years old



Legal frame

Ministerial circular by the Minister of the Interior



- Quick to set up
- More flexible



- Several developments from 1998 till now

Denomination

- In French : *Partenariat local de Prévention (PLP)*
 - In Dutch : *Buurt Informatie Netwerk (BIN)*

3 kinds of partnerships

- *Residential : with residents*
- *Commercial : with the entrepreneurs*
- *Sectoral : with the members of a defined profession (jewelers, pharmacists, banks,...)*

Logo



Key words

- Participation – Citizens participated in safety within their own environment
- Communication – Based on a two-way communication between citizens and police
- Prevention – Maximum focus on an integrated approach of prevention

The targets

- *Citizens have a participating role in the safety of their own living or work environment*
 - *Increase the feeling of security*
- *Improve relationship and communication between the citizens and the police*
- *Provide practical prevention advice to help citizens better protect themselves*
 - *Develop social cohesion in neighborhoods*

In practice

- *Define a coherent geographical perimeter*
 - *Survey of the residents*
- *Public meeting and choice of a coordinator*
- *Signing of a charter : coordinator, police, local administration*
 - *Creation of a communication plan*

Role of each of the three partners

- *Police* :
 - *Appoint a mandated police officer*
 - *Monitoring the working*
 - *Inform members about criminal acts (with respect for professional secrecy and data protection)*
 - *Following up on the information provided by the members and/or the coordinator*
 - *Provide prevention advice and carries out safety audits*

Role of each of the three partners

- *Local administration* :

Mainly provides logistical support

(print documents and handouts, provide meeting rooms,...)

Role of each of the three partners

- *Coordinator:*
 - *Represent the members*
- *Broadcast the messages communicated by the police (never subjective opinions or informations not previously objectified by the police)*
 - *Intermediary between members and police*
- *Organizes, preferably annually, a meeting with the members*
- *Carries out a regular operational assessment with the police*
 - *Manages the daily update of members list*

How to choose a good coordinator ?

- *Must be balanced (not paranoid or panicky, not vindictive)*
 - *Honorably known (screening by the police)*
- *Must feel concerned by the safety of his neighbours*
- *Must have the time necessary to effectively manage (a few hours per month)*
- *Must be supported by the majority of the residents*

Important points

- *Urgent messages are always sent directly to the police by the citizen (phone 112)*
 - *The local prevention partnership does not aim :*
 - *Carry out patrols in the neighborhood*
 - *Systematically spy on the behavior of neighbors*
 - *To create a feeling of insecurity (the implementation of prevention advice against acute operating procedures is rather reassuring !)*
 - *No political, philosophical or commercial purpose*

Some numbers

Number of Neighborhood Information Networks

- *Region of Flanders: 1100*
- *Region of Wallonia: 317*
- *Region of Brussels: 12*
- *Approximately 180.000 families and entrepreneurs*

Thank you for listening

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