

Crime prevention policy	
EU- priority	Organized Property Crime
Country	Germany
Year	2018

1. Overview of the field

Definition of the crime

We are not aware of a criminological definition of organized property crime. Property crime includes the following offences:

Theft (Section 242 of the German Criminal Code); Unlawful appropriation (Section 246 of the Criminal Code); Robbery (Section 249 of the Criminal Code); Criminal damage (Section 303 of the Criminal Code); Blackmail (Section 253 of the Criminal Code).

In accordance with Section 244 of the Criminal Code, theft with arms, theft committed by a gang and domestic burglary punishable with imprisonment between six months and ten years. In accordance with paragraph 4, breaking into a permanently used private home is punishable with imprisonment between one and ten years. **Organized property crime is defined in Section 244 paragraphs (1) to (3) of the Criminal Code as follows:** "Whosoever 1. commits a theft during which he or another accomplice (a) carries a weapon or another dangerous instrument; (b) otherwise carries an instrument or means in order to prevent or overcome the resistance of another person by force or threat of force; 2. steals as a member of a gang whose purpose is the continued commission of robbery or theft under participation of another member of the gang; or 3. commits a theft for the commission of which he breaks into or enters a dwelling or intrudes by using a false key or other tool not typically used for gaining access or hides in the dwelling shall be liable to imprisonment from six months to ten years.

(2) The attempt shall be punishable.

(3) In less serious cases the penalty shall be imprisonment from three months to five years."

Assessment of trends and developments

Noticeable decline in the number of property offences

- Compared with 2016/2017, there has been a noticeable decline in the number of offences involving theft and robbery (theft in general; theft of vehicles; theft of bicycles; domestic burglary; pickpocketing; robbery). A possible reason for this decline could be the intensification of preventive programmes, cooperation and targeted policing.

Attacks on cash machines (using explosives)

- In 2017, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) registered 268 attacks on cash machines in which offenders used explosives to blow up the ATMs. Compared with 2016 (318 attacks), this is a 16-per-cent decline. In 129 cases (48%), offenders seized cash, in 139 cases (52%) the attempt failed.
- **A preliminary statistics for 2018 shows an increase in the number of successful raids and hence an increase in the amount of cash stolen.**

Recent overview of statistics and research

According to the federal situation report on organized crime, organized property crime caused a damage of 54 million euros in 2016. Organized property crime is mainly

committed by Russian-Eurasian gangs. Most of the suspects come from Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most frequently committed types of property crime are vehicle theft, forgery, breaking into private homes or businesses.

Current research is addressing modes of operation, conduct after commission of the offence and offender characteristics in the field of (organized) domestic burglary. In Germany, research is also looking into travelling offenders / offenders from abroad.

Another major issue of research is prevention: researchers issue recommendations for action for citizens and neighbourhoods.

- **Offender groups in the field of domestic burglary are very heterogeneous. A research project categorized different groups based on their hierarchical structure: loose networks; gangs with flat and strict hierarchies; family clans; forms of exploitation; Mafia-like structures.**
- **Opportunity for crime is the main cause of domestic burglary. A good opportunity for domestic burglary meets the following criteria: the break can be done quickly; there is only a small risk of being observed.**
- **There has been an increase in the number of domestic burglaries in high-rise buildings and multi-family homes. Doors and windows made of synthetic material play an increasingly important role. Another criterion for selecting the target of crime is good transport infrastructure.** In contrast, the expected gain from a crime is often not important. Professional offenders, however, are more interested in targets promising large gains. This type of offender is usually more persistent and carefully observes the target before planning the offence. Internationally operating groups of criminals planning larger break-ins often share tasks.
- **The majority of the offenders operating in the field of domestic burglary are men aged between 20 and 30.** Not all offenders with foreign nationality are travelling criminals; many of them have stayed in Germany for many years. Most offenders with foreign nationality who have committed a crime in Germany were involved in criminal offences already in their home countries.
- **Only few offenders are women. Women often play the role of accomplices and support the activities of the group. This is often the case in criminal family clans operating in the field of domestic burglary. Here, women are also actively involved in committing the crime. Criminal family clans also involve children who after helping in the break-in must hand over the booty to their parents.**
- **Offenders can be deterred by neighbourhood watch and social control. CCTV and alarm systems are less effective against burglars.**

2. Crime strategy and coordination

Objectives of the crime strategy

Fighting criminals or groups of criminals by

- operational measures, nationwide counter strategies, special investigation teams, counter-strategies to fight prolific offenders based on offender types;
- reinforced police presence and intensified (border) controls;
- feeding available information into police databases;
- drawing up operational situation reports;
- improved possibilities for analysis, e.g. to analyse travelling routes of offenders;
- identifying serial crimes and central prosecution by police and judiciary;
- using special software for situation reports and forecasts;

Role of prevention in the crime strategy on state/regional/local level

Prevention is one element in the strategy to fight property crime. It is particularly important to raise awareness among the population for domestic burglary and how to avoid creating “favourable conditions” for offenders. To this end, awareness-raising campaigns will be intensified. Given the fact that the number of domestic burglaries has increased over many years, burglary prevention plays an important role in police work at federal and state level. The *Deutsches Forum Kriminalprävention* (German crime prevention council) is also a key actor. Specific measures at regional and local level depend on the workload and available resources. It is therefore not possible to provide an exhaustive overview.

Implementation of the policy (which level is responsible for the implementation and how is the implementation coordinated?)

The federal states or the regional and local police authorities are responsible for actually implementing the measures.

Stakeholders (working groups, specialised agencies, partners, etc)

- 2012-2014: A joint federal-state project group on “Criminal offences committed by itinerant criminal groups” was set up (definition, improving the database for operational and strategic analysis).
- 2013: A joint federal-state project group led by the Federal Criminal Police Office drew up a counter-strategy to fight domestic burglary and recommendations for action.
- 2014: Redesign of the coordination offices on “domestic burglary committed by itinerant criminal groups” at the criminal police offices of the federal states, the Federal Police Headquarters and the Federal Criminal Police Office to facilitate cooperation across federal states.
- 2015: A joint federal-state project group led by the BKA drew up a nationally agreed concept on fighting domestic burglary, taking particular account of cross-border and international aspects.
- 2015: A project group on “travelling burglars” was set up, led by the BKA and involving all federal states; close cooperation with Europol (cooperation and communication platform with national and international counter-initiatives).
- 2016: Evaluation of the implementation of recommended measures to fight domestic burglary.
- More and more federal states have established the post of coordinator for domestic burglary countermeasures.
- Crime prevention by police forces at federal and state level.

Participation in European/ international networks, working groups, etc.

- EMPACT Organised Property Crime (OPC)

3. Good practices

Overview of recent good practices, prevention programs, etc.

- For more than 40 years, the federal and state police crime prevention programme ProPK has intended to inform the public, multipliers, the media and other stakeholders about different types of crimes and ways to prevent them. The programme involves press and public relations as well as developing and publishing

media, measures and plans to support local police units in the federal states in their crime prevention efforts. **Website of the federal and state police forces on crime prevention** (www.polizei-beratung.de).

- **national K-EINBRUCH** (www.k-einbruch.de) anti-burglary campaign. With its anti-burglary campaign www.k-einbruch.de, the police authorities offer a wide range of product-independent information and call upon citizens to keep a close watch. The aim is to reduce the number of break-ins and to raise awareness among the population and encourage them to install safeguards in their private homes. 2015: Within the framework of the campaign, a “security package” was published. It encompasses recommendations for effective anti-burglary safeguards which can be tailored to individual needs by installing special protection technology. **In order to expand the scope of the awareness-raising campaign and to change the behaviour of the population, another campaign was launched in the autumn of 2016 (“Die Elster. Ein Profi-Einbrecher packt aus.” - Confessions of a professional burglar).** Another element of the K-EINBRUCH campaign is the annual “Day of anti-burglary protection”, which has been organized since 2012 at the end of the summer time with the motto “One hour more for security”. On that day, various events are organized at state level.
- **Financial incentives to install security technology:** Within the framework of funding programmes of the Development Loan Corporation (KfW) aimed at encouraging building renovation to improve energy efficiency and accessibility of buildings, the KfW also provides funds for installing the necessary technical equipment for burglary protection.
- **Intensified national and international cooperation, especially at European level** (Kost RTE-network, anti-burglary coordinators, cooperation with countries of origin of offenders, cooperation with Europol, use of the liaison officers’ network).
- **In connection with the theft of medical devices (endoscopes), the BKA published information on its website, on the police intranet and through social media.**