European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

Annex I

Please answer the following questions in English language.

1. Is this your country's ECPA entry or is it an additional project. (Only one ECPA entry per country plus up two other projects)

> The project is Estonian ECPA entry.

2. What is the title of the project?

> Veebikonstaabel – Web-constable

3. Please give a short general description of the project.

> The aim of Estonian police is to be a community-centered police. This means that the police have to be visible and reachable in places where members of the community can be found. In the second half of 2010, the launch of the Safer Internet project brought up the idea to take the police on the Internet in order to support the Safer Internet project and to improve police prevention work. The beginning of the project could be marked as October 2010, when the project idea was put down, and negotiations with the management and planning the budget were started. The main goal of the project is to create so-called virtual police stations in web portals which are most-used and primarily attractive to young people. This allows the police to be closer to the population, do better prevention work, and with that and by being present: reduce crime – especially crimes against youth and by youth with the focus on crimes in the virtual environment. According to the census of 2012, the populations of Estonia is 1 294 236, from which 20,6% are minors. The online research of EU Kids states that 96% of Estonian children and Eurobarometer shows that 73% of the whole Estonian population are daily Internet users. Therefore – our people, especially the minors – are on the Internet. According to the danger evaluations done lately, there is a tendency

that traditional crime is moving more and more to the virtual world and according to EU kids online research about six out of ten children in Estonia have encountered one or more online-risks, which is one of the highest indicators in Europe. It became clear that our population is on the Internet and considering that when technology develops, more and more crimes will be committed in the cyber environment and with the help of it, then the police has to be contemporary and go on the Internet to perform crime-preventing activities there. As a result of the described project, Estonian police has hired officials – so-called web-constables – who have certain more specific tasks which have both general and specific prevention effect.

4. Please describe the objective(s) of the project?

The wider goal was to assure the police being present as a real person in places where our community can be found. It has to be emphasized that the police created accounts and e-mail addresses to web environments our people actively use, instead of e.g. creating an interactive police station on the website of Police and Border Guard Board (the reference to web-constables can still be found on the police website http://www.politsei.ee/et/nouanded/veebikonstaabel/). We would also highlight the fact that we associated the accounts with specific police officials to provide the people knowledge of who they are virtually communicating with.

The project is called upon and therefore one of the main goals is preventing crime on the Internet by prevention campaigns and lectures, but also generally by being present and individual counseling (both for potential victims and the ones committing crimes). The project's implementation was based on the principle that it would be easy for people to communicate with the police. If it is difficult and needs extra activities to go to/call the police station (in noncritical cases), it is necessary to have the option to communicate with the police in the place they are located themselves. By being where our community is and making it easy and natural to ask for advice and communicate with the police, we can prevent and block times more crimes than with one-time lectures and informational materials. In the web environment people can ask for advice or ask for clarifications about interpretations of legal norms before falling victim. It is also easier for people to inform the police when they see something suspicious and police themselves can see suspicious situations and users. In addition, information about new web-based crime trends like cons, viruses etc, can be forwarded more easily as the web-police enables the police to give the prevention

messages to the necessary target group. All this together increases the population's knowledge about safer Internet use and prevents people from falling victims in virtual environments, helps them recognize potentially dangerous situations and react to them correctly and/or immediately ask for advice on how to handle this situations.

One of the goals of the police work is to prevent and respond to crime. Being in the web environment makes this easier with modern methods. The crime statistics analysis of 2011 showed that a remarkable portion of registered pornography crimes were committed on the Internet or by using e-devices. Image- or video files containing child pornography were also shown or shared in social networks, so by being present in these places it is possible to react to these cases and also prevent them.

5. How was the project implemented?

In 2010 Police and Border Guard Board in cooperation with Estonian Union for Child Welfare, Tiger Leap Foundation, Child Help Phone and Ministry of Social Affairs, engages a safe Internet project (EE-SIC) financed in the Safer Internet framework. The goals of the project were raising children's awareness of safer Internet use and creating Hotline and Helpline.

Police and Border Guard Board decided to engage a parallel project in order to support the EE-SIC project: Web-Constable, with the goal to be where the people are.

2010 IV quarter – initiating the project idea, planning the financial resources

2011 I quarter – finding the suitable person, negotiations with potential partners

2011 April – first working day of the web-constable

2011 June 1st – virtual police stations are opened, the web-constable is ready to serve the community.

2012 July 1st – the second web-constable is hired

6. Were partners involved in planning and/or development and/or implementation of the project? If so, who were they, and what were their roles?

Main partners from implementing the project to up to today are:

1) Estonian Union of Child Welfare – advice, Hotline activities, trainings, prevention work

2) Child Help Phone 116111– advising Helpline, sharing messages and information, join prevention work and trainings

3) Tiger Leap Foundation – mostly joint prevention materials and developing training materials for schools (web-constable sees the best where the problems lie and what matters minors are most troubled with)

4) Estonian Midwife Society – the manager of www.perekool.ee forum, created the 'web-constable corner' as a separate topic in the forum

5) AS Rate Solutions – owner and manager of Estonian youth social network www.rate.ee daily communication; created the 'web-constable corner' account

6) Lapsemure forum – manager of www.lapsemure.ee forum, special subtopic 'web-constable' in the forum

7) Ideemus OÜ – manager of the environment www.vastused.ee directed to questions from adults

8) Finnish police – advice and sharing of experiences; daily communication

7. How did you build in plans to measure the performance of the project? Has the project been evaluated? How, and by whom?

Project results are measured with statistic indicators. Mainly the following is considered important:

- The number of times web-constable is addressed: 7 months in 2011 - addressed 3341 times: until October 2012 - addressed 3473 times.
- Number of initiated investigations: 7 months in 2011 - 107 offences, including 35 hints to possible pedophilia cases and hints to pages containing child pornography; 9 months in 2012 – 190 cases, including 32 pedophilia cases.

The project has not been evaluated directly by outside evaluators. We use the opinions and trust of partners and the population as evaluation. Also the number of addresses and initiated investigations. Web-constables forward information to colleagues about different matters every week, which are then used to start several new offence investigations (see statistics in point 8). The types of crimes vary from public order offences to rape of children.
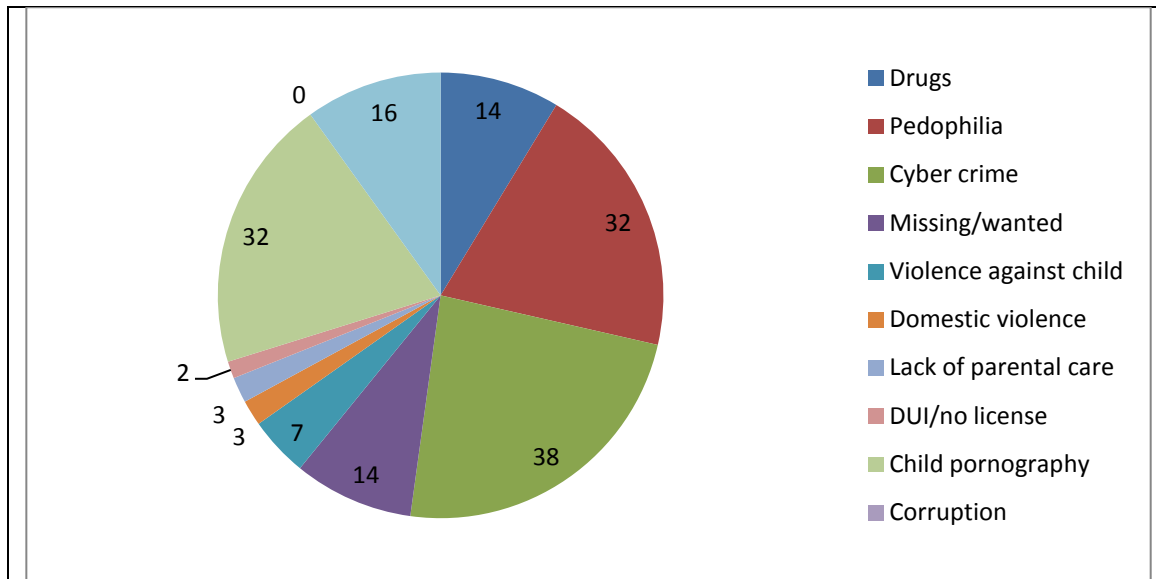
8. What were the results? How far were the objectives of the project achieved?

The project has achieved its initial goal of being closer to the population – web-constable is very popular and addressed with different problems 100 times per week on average.

As prevention work, it can be highlighted that in Estonian portals where the web-constable has an account, the number of offences committed via Internet has (e.g. bullying, adults approaching minors with sexual innuendo etc). Also the § 177 of Penal code (using minors in pornographic work) has decreased, 10 crimes were registered in 2011, only 4 crimes have been registered in the first 10 months of 2012. Also, for example, the buy-sell topics by frauds have disappeared in Perekool forum.

In social networks evaluation and approval are expressed through 'like' and 'add as friend' devices. According to these evaluation methods, the population's awareness of the web-constable can be considered very good, as in e.g. Facebook web-constable Andero has 4967 friends and we-constable Maarja has 1263 likes (data from 04.10.2012).

As a web-constable is a real person, then in addition to prevention work in virtual environment, the web-constables also perform prevention work in the real work. For example lectures in schools, participation in Safer Internet Day events and the Safer Internet finances EE-SIC and EE-SIC II project activities. In order to approve the joint effect of real and virtual prevention and to increase the capacity of conducted prevention events and be present in the Internet even more, there are 2 web-constables in the police forces since July 1st 2012. So it can be said, that the initial goals set for the project (30 messages per week, 5 potentially prevented cases and minimum 1 more discovered/reported case more in the latent crime type e.g. possessing child pornography) have been achieved and even exceeded. In the following years the project is planned to continue by increasing the web-constable's role in prevention work regarding internet dangers.

Graph 1. 2012 statistics of reports of crimes from January to September (included).

9. Give a concrete description of the implementation of the project and the references.

Preparations for the project started in the IV quarter of 2010, when the management of the institution and partners were informed of the project; the budget was set by 2011 and the search for the suitable person began. By April 2011 that person was found and the web-constable started working on June 1st 2011 – the international Children's Day.

Links to media reports about web-constable:

http://www.reporter.ee/2011/06/01/kutsu-veebikonstaabel-oma-sobraks-tana-alustas-tood-veebipolitsei/;

http://www.postimees.ee/491814/veebikonstaabli-too-viis-esimese-kuul-nelja-kriminaalasjani/;

http://www.targaltinternetis.ee/2012/07/kuhu-mure-korral-poorduda/

http://www.politsei.ee/et/nouanded/veebikonstaabel/

http://www.politsei.ee/ru/nouanded/veebikonstaablid/ (rus)

http://www.politsei.ee/en/nouanded/veebikonstaablid/ (eng)

10. Are there reports or documents available on the project? In print or on the Web?
Please, give references to the most relevant ones.

Web-police work reports are a part of police work and they are for official use, therefore they are not available online. Monthly and annual reports are created of the work of the web-police. The first report gives an overview of the problems that have occurred regarding different areas and crimes, e.g.: traffic laws, traffic accidents, threats/insults/inappropriate content, minors, identity, other account problems, noise/neighbors, domestic issues, theft/fraud/debts, varia, police activities and advising colleagues. Areas where reports of offences have been submitted are separately brought out, e.g. in 2012 there have been reports submitted online about drugs, pedophilia and sexual abuse of children, cyber crime, missing/wanted persons, also violence against minors, domestic abuse, neglected children, drunk/unlicensed drivers, child pornography links, corruption and other crimes.

During 9 months in 2012, 3473 questions have been answered by web-constable. This means that in a month the web-officer answers 386 questions on average. There have been 190 different reports of crimes in 9 months.

Media coverage is wide-spread: the work of web-constable has been reported in television and media. An illustrative list:

Web-police has been launched and can be reached through several online channels:
Home page: www.politsei.ee/veebikonstaabel
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/veebikonstaabel.andero and
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Veebikonstaabel-Maarja/291776857585370
Rate: http://www.rate.ee/users/andero-
Forum of the child help website Lapsemure:
http://www.lapsemure.ee/forum_est/viewforum.php?f=195
Forum of the family information website
Perekool: http://www.perekool.ee/index.php?id=151892
E-mail: andero.sepp@politsei.ee and maarja.punak@politsei.ee
MSN: andero.sepp@politsei.ee

This means that the users of these social networking sites can ask the web-police constable all kinds of questions related to police work and also see questions-answers of others if they are not posed anonymously.

11. How is the project funded? Has a cost-benefit analysis been carried out? If so, how?
What were the findings? Please provide supporting information.

The project was funded from the budget of Police and Border Guard Board. As a result of the project, the number of people addressing the police has increased and it is easier to answer the people fast, operatively and without too much bureaucracy, which

enables to save the work time of other police officers. It also enables reports from people with crime characteristics to reach the right officials operatively. For example: if it took 20% which is 40 hours of a working week for mid-level criminal police leaders to answer citizens, then it is today possible to save that resource and the officials have more time for their primary work. In addition the opportunity to address the web-constable helps to save the resources in the control centre, which can then react to urgent cases more and faster.

12. Please, write a *one page* description of the project:

The project was originally started by Finnish police sergeant Marko Fors in year 2008. He started in the Finnish website IRC-Galleria. In Estonia the project was started in the late 2010 and on 18'th of April 2011 the first police officer was assigned.

The Idea was born in 2010 for the Police and Border Guard Board. It is a well-known fact that the police of many countries have e.g. a Facebook profile, but it is usually an anonymous person from the institution. The idea of the web-constable was to have the profile personalized, so the population could add them as friends and communicate with a specific person they could feel they can trust. The Finnish police had reached a similar idea through the problems they faced in their everyday work. During the project there were study visits to get acquainted with what the Finnish colleagues had already achieved. The main difference between the initiation of the Finnish and the initiation of the Estonian police is that the Finnish web-police began their work in small capacity in MSN environment to improve the investigation of sexual crimes against children, which then grew out to a larger unit servicing a wider population. The virtual police station created by Estonian police was from the beginning meant to service the wider population and to conduct criminal prevention. In addition, the time was right to initiate the project as it fell on the same time with the beginning of the Safer Internet financed safer Internet project, so as Tiger Leap Foundation created training packages for teachers and Helpline and Hotline were also created, all this together creates one whole national unit to protect the population – primarily minors – on the Internet.

We use a statement "The police must be where our people are," to describe this project. The idea is that when you are walking down a street and see a police unit doing their daily job, patrolling, you feel more secure, you know that help is nearby if needed and you can also turn to officers for help. But on the Internet there is only the

official website of the Police where you can turn to and there you can find only general e-mail addresses. To be honest, you do not want to send a delicate problem to a general e-mail, where you don't know what is going to happen next and if anyone will even react to it.

Daily work and controversies

The institution of web-constable has been asked a lot about these two things. Basically what internet police officers do is answering to questions that people have asked and trying to find solutions to problems that have been raised. Although this has also made people think about stalking. The web-constable has been asked a lot if they surf around on profiles trying to find something illegal. This has never been the objective of this project and this will never be the objective. Web-constable does not stalk, never! Web-constable does not surf on Facebook to find something illegal and then punish people for that. Web-constable is strictly in Internet to answer the questions. Now yes, if a complaint is received that someone is acting illegally then his/her profile will be checked. And if an illegal content is found, then web-constable reports Facebook via the reporting system, like all the users can.

What does the virtual community gain from the police profile?

As police profiles are present in virtual community, people using it can turn to them with their questions, which raises the sense of security. We can use our profile to make "verbal warnings" to users harassing or bullying someone. People also see virtual community as a way to turn to their local police, without actually going to the police department and by that it makes it easier for them to talk to police.

So our goals are the following:

Bring the police closer to people on the Internet;

Make it easier to communicate with the police and

Conduct prevention work against cyber bullying, harassing etc.