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# **ISEC-project “administrative approach to organized crime ; Support European local authorities in combating local outcomes of organized crime”.**

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**Brief executive summary**

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*“Administrative approach to organized crime ; Support European local authorities in combating local outcomes of organized crime”.*

Final Report of ISEC-project (HOME/2012/ISEC/FP/C1/4000003839)

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### **Introduction**

The central principle of the project is that local administrative authorities must play a major role, preliminary or complementary to the criminal law approach; thus, they can help to dismantle the link between legal and illegal society. This link exists where organized crime makes use of local infrastructure and facilities, e.g. in housing criminal activities (drug laboratories, human trafficking victims, ...) or in the laundering of criminal earnings (buying and selling of real estate, exploiting front companies, ...). The administrative approach also aims to prevent (unintentional) governmental facilitation of criminal activities, and to undermine acquired criminal positions of economic power.

### **Strategy**

Local authorities have specific administrative instruments to tackle local outcomes of organized crime, eg suspend, withdraw or refuse permits, close down premises, etc. Municipal employees are often the first party to perceive signals indicating organized crime: suspicious applications, commercial monopolies, real estate exchanges, ... To make local officials aware of suspicious patterns, training and education are an important step in the administrative approach-process.

For the project in Genk, 2 part-time staff members were explicitly engaged for a period of 24 months : a 50% coordinator and a 50% administrative assistant/data-analyst. Their actions were supervised by a high-level committee, safeguarding the project's evolution and it's compliance with the overall city security management. In addition to the ISEC-staff, the RIEC Limburg provided a 50% consultant, and city personnel such as the city judicial expert, the Head of the Social Affairs Department and the Prevention Manager delivered significant support to the project.

### **Partnerships**

To launch the administrative approach within the Genk ISEC-project, partnerships were established between local partners : municipal administrations as well as local police and social welfare. In a later stage, partnerships were set up with external partners: provincial authorities, public prosecution, tax authorities, Fiscal Inspection, Social Inspection etc.

To make this integrated approach work, agencies share their information (to the extent possible) and cooperate in searching for the most effective way to deal with

the threats that are discovered. The operational partners are united in the local operational meetings ; the strategic partners form a steering committee. To take the project to the European level, cooperation was set up with a.o. the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities, the Belgian Federal Home Office, the University of Leuven, the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice and the Danish Crime Prevention Council.

### **Exchange of information**

Sharing the necessary information is, currently in Belgium, not evident. Therefore we aimed to translate the Dutch experience in this field, as it was built up in recent years, to the Belgian legislative context. The main partner in this process was the Dutch Regional Information and Expertise Center Limburg. Together with this RIEC the city of Genk studied how and to what extent the Dutch instruments could and can also be used in Belgium. To establish whether the applicable tools also maintain their use in a third member state context, a partnership with Denmark was set up.

### **Methodology**

Appointed officials build an information matrix regarding a specific case. Open and half-open resources are consulted, which leads to a risk-assessment and a more global picture of protagonists and networks. To store and process the collected data, a Belgian version of the applicable Dutch database system (RIECIS-database) was set up. Based on the information gathered, regular local information-exchange meetings are held to determine the approach of the information found. An inventory of applicable and useful instruments is drawn up. It is determined which partners have the best tools to frustrate the phenomena involved. The outcome can either be an integrated approach, or a mono disciplinary approach (judicial, tax, administrative). The final goal is to use all applicable instruments to the full extent.

To make the whole organization compliant with the administrative approach, procedures for reporting (eg on trafficking in human beings) and enforcement (eg procedure on integrated control actions) were drawn up. Relevant buildings/real estates were marked in the city's geographic information system, making sure that no permits or grants are delivered on these premises without consulting the administrative approach team.

Phenomena that were dealt with are eg night-shops, betting shops, slum landlords, trafficking in human beings, exploitation.

### **Lessons learned**

Awareness-raising and support within the organization are important conditions for the administrative approach. This can be done by means of informing and sensitizing. Training sessions and awareness-raising presentations were an important part of the process.

During the project, it also became apparent that an efficient urban regulatory system is important, both in terms of information position as with regard to the enforcement of regulations. Support of and engagement by local authority and management are a condition sine qua non to make the approach work in an effective and powerful way.

### **Outcome of the ISEC-project**

The outcome of the 2-year ISEC-project is a procedures manual (annex toolbox) translating the experiences into a universal guide that can be used in other European Member States. It lists a.o. best practices, lists of necessary partners, FAQ's, literature, a basic presentation, case-studies, as well as local instruments that were developed to operationalize the approach in Genk. The manual will be made available online. Through EUCPN and through the Informal Network Administrative Approach tools and expertise will be disseminated to all 27 Member States.

To make the methodology internationally available, a 3-day conference (19-21/1/2015) was held at which potentially interested parties from all EU Member States were invited.