Call for Projects 2026
European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

Dear National Representatives, dear colleagues,

The Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union is delighted to organise the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) 2026. Since its establishment, the ECPA has played a crucial role within the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN), encouraging the sharing of best practice and recognising accomplishments in the crime prevention sphere across Europe.

In 2026, the Irish Presidency of the EUCPN will focus on the prevention of Retail Crime (RC) and Organised Retail Crime (ORC), concentrating on measures within the physical retail environment.

Theme and scope of the 2026 ECPA

RC such as shoplifting, antisocial behaviour and abuse of retail staff can undermine public confidence in community settings, discourage economic activity and negatively affect the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. ORC involves groups conducting sophisticated operations to seize large amounts of retail goods that benefit the group directly and/or are funnelled to criminal groups around the globe. Unless RC and ORC are actively prevented and tackled, public confidence in the safety and security of shared community spaces can be significantly weakened.

RC and ORC have emerged as increasingly complex challenges across the EU. These types of crime are on the rise, with their negative impacts being felt right across the wider economic and social system of Europe. RC and ORC are not merely a criminal justice issue; they have a profound and far-reaching impact on all our communities, extending beyond immediate financial losses suffered by businesses. These forms of criminality can also contribute significantly to a diminished sense of community safety within local areas, both for customers and staff working in retail environments.

This year's ECPA will highlight innovative and effective crime prevention projects designed at preventing RC and ORC in retail environments including initiatives aimed at countering shoplifting, organised retail crime and encouraging respectful behaviours towards retail workers. Projects may focus on practical or technological interventions, public awareness campaigns, public-private partnerships as well as transnational collaboration, law enforcement training or tools and community-based strategies aimed at improving community safety and reducing retail crime.

Key requirements include that the initiative must be:

- related to physical crimes, rather than online crimes,

- focused on practical projects and interventions being implemented to protect retail environments or detect offending, including prolific or organised offending.

This emphasis ensures that initiatives are grounded in the day-to-day realities faced by retailers, staff, customers and local communities. By concentrating on real-world retail settings, the award aims to identify tangible and measurable learnings to issues such as theft, organised activities, related antisocial behaviour and staff safety.

Each EU Member State is invited to submit one national project that addresses this theme to compete in the ECPA 2026.

We kindly request that all submissions be completed in English and sent to the EUCPN Secretariat at eucpn@ibz.be and the Irish Presidency at EUCPN-IE@justice.ie by the EUCPN National Representative of the respective Member State. Each country may submit one official ECPA entry. The submission deadline is the **30 September 2026**. Please note that late entries will not be accepted.

The Best Practice Conference, where all the national entries will be presented and the winner announced, will take place on 8-9 December 2026 in Dublin, Ireland. The award ceremony will be held on 9 December 2026. Please find enclosed the following documents:

- Annex I: ECPA Good Practice Template
- Annex II: ECPA Evaluation Form
- Annex III: Rules and Procedures for Awarding and Presenting the ECPA
- Annex IV: Guidelines for Presenters

All projects will be assessed by a jury in line with the information provided in the template form (Annex I). Please note that any additional information provided outside the official template will not be considered during the evaluation process.

Member States are welcome to bring illustrative and creative materials to the Best Practice Conference (e.g. videos, flyers, posters, apps, websites) and are encouraged to share and showcase these resources with other participants during the event.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the EUCPN Secretariat.