

# European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA)

## Annex I

Approved by the EUCPN Management Board in 2018

Please complete the template in English in compliance with the ECPA criteria contained in the Rules and procedures for awarding and presenting the European Crime Prevention Award (Par.2 §3).

### General information

1. Please specify your country.

FRANCE

2. Is this your country's ECPA entry or an additional project?

ECPA entry

3. What is the title of the project?

Social workers in Police Stations

4. Who is responsible for the project? Contact details.

The French secretary general for crime prevention and radicalization

5. Start date of the project (dd/mm/yyyy)? Is the project still running (Yes/No)? If not, please provide the end date of the project.

Experimentations have started in the 80's in France but the program has been developed and managed nation-wide since 2019 by the secretary general.

6. Where can we find more information about the project? Please provide links to the project's website or online reports or publications (preferably in English).

For a testimony (translated into English) of a social worker:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3nvDTq1a0Q>

For more information on the nation-wide consultation that led to the creation of the program: <https://www.gouvernement.fr/actualite/un-grenelle-et-des-mesures-fortes-contre-les-violences-conjugales>

Any question can be asked to: [cipdr-delinquance@interieur.gouv.fr](mailto:cipdr-delinquance@interieur.gouv.fr)

7. Please give a **one page** description of the project (**Max. 600 words**)

In their everyday work, law enforcement forces frequently encounter situations that involve social distress. Indeed, behind a criminal issue frequently lie social needs. The treatment of these situations cannot only be based on the criminal justice system. Plus, law enforcement officers were complaining that they didn't have the time nor the qualification to answer to the social needs of the people encountered. This is why police stations in the 80's and 90's have experimented the presence of social workers within their office.

These experimentations appeared to be effective in many ways:

First, it allows victims and offenders to get the social help they need in order to stabilize their situation and avoid being victimized or offend again.

Secondly, it enables social workers and law enforcement officers to discuss and exchange information. Most of the time, those two worlds don't communicate because they feel that they don't have the same goal / the same philosophy, however placing them in the same place makes it possible for them to discuss and thus understand each other; understand how they function and eventually to trust each other enough to work together.

This practice gained momentum during the "Grenelle on Domestic Violence" in 2019. This was a nation-wide consultation to identify the phenomenon in France, to come up with solutions and good practices to curb this scourge. Among good practices, the presence of social workers inside police station had been identified as particularly useful for victims of domestic violence.

Indeed a victim might be scared to enter a police station and fill a complaint. Social workers can welcome her, take the time to explain the criminal justice process but also help her going through other administrative hardships such as how to apply for social assistance programs or find help to claim the children's custody. The social worker makes sure the victim understand the process, has access to every rights and professionals (victim support associations, psychologists, emergency housing, medical assistance, job offers, legal counsel etc.) that she and her children need. They can accompany offenders to get treatment but also to find a job and housing in order for him not to return home.

It appears to be a win-win situation, police officers are "relieved" from this social assistance task, and social workers have access to a category of persons that usually do not ask for help, because of a lack of knowledge / time or will.

Finally, if this program is particularly useful in situation of domestic violence, it has proven to be very helpful in a wide range of situation that law enforcement can encounter (ex: runaway minors, home eviction of families, victims of harassment, substance abuse issues, victims of human trafficking etc.).

→ Listen to a short testimony:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3nvDTq1a0Q>



**I. The project shall focus on prevention and/or reduction of everyday crime and fear of crime within the theme.**

8. Which **crime prevention/ reduction mechanisms** were used in this project to contribute to crime prevention and/or the reduction of crime or the fear of crime? Multiple answers are possible.

**Establishing and maintaining normative barriers to committing criminal acts**

e.g. 'Offenders, we are watching you' campaigns

**Reducing recruitment** to criminal social environments and activities by eliminating or reducing the social and individual causes and processes that lead to criminality

e.g. social and financial support for disadvantaged families

**Deterring** potential perpetrators from committing crimes through the threat of punishment

e.g. decreasing the time between arrest and punishment

**Disrupting** criminal acts by stopping them before they are carried out

e.g. increasing police patrols in vulnerable areas

**Protecting vulnerable targets** by reducing opportunities and make it more demanding to carry out criminal acts

e.g. placing locks and cameras

**Reducing the harmful consequences** of criminal acts

e.g. initiatives to recover stolen goods

**Reducing the rewards** from criminal acts

e.g. restorative justice programmes

**Incapacitating** (or neutralising) perpetrators by denying them the ability (capacity) to carry out new criminal acts

e.g. imprisonment of key gang members

**Encouraging** desistance from crime and rehabilitating former offenders so they are able to settle back into a normal life

e.g. prison rehabilitation programs

Explain how this/these crime prevention mechanisms were used ((**Max. 300 words**))

It takes 8 times in average for a victim to leave its abuser. By accompanying victims, offenders and third-parties affected by domestic violence, these social workers help them to reach a stable situation in terms of job, health and housing, but also to go through their legal procedures (trial, children's custodies, divorce etc.). Once the victim and its children are safe it empowers them to change definitively / to go through procedures. Thanks to a more stable situation, it could help the offender to break from its bad habits (substance abuse for example)

and provide him with the tools he needs in order to change (e.g getting treated, being financially autonomous).

By welcoming victims and providing for their immediate safety, they prevent them from being victimized again by offenders. They also make sure that they have all the help they need to go through the criminal justice process.

Finally, they encourage deterrence by orienting offenders to rehabilitation centres for violence spouse, and helping them access to the social and health services they need to start fresh.

**II. The project shall have been evaluated and have achieved most or all of its objectives.** For more information on evaluation, click [here](#)

9. What were the reasons for setting up the project? Was this context analysed before the project was initiated and in what way (How, and by whom? Which data were used?)? In what way did this analysis inform the set-up of the project? (**Max. 150 words**)

Experimentations became a nation-wide program after the "Grenelle on Domestic Violence". It was a national consultation which gathered victim support associations, scholars, victims of domestic violence and several professionals that worked on this issue. It ended with a list of recommendations to be implemented throughout the French territory.

Since then, the French minister in charge of gender equality has a special budget to implement them. Most of them even became compulsory through a law (voted in 01/29/2020). A monitoring committee follows the implementation of these measures, nowadays the majority are implemented.

One of them was our program. It was recommended to place a minimum of two social workers into police stations per department (the French territory is divided into 101 departments). Today, only 2 departments (rural ones) do not reach the standard, French departments have, as an average, 4 of these special social workers on their territories.

10. What were the objective(s) of the project? Please, if applicable, distinguish between main and secondary objectives. (**Max. 150 words**)

- Provide alongside the criminal justice system's answer, a social answer to situations that law enforcement encounters, in order to stabilize situations, empower victims and deter offenders.
- Improve law enforcement and social services collaboration by fostering mutual understanding and trust.
- Relieve law enforcement officers from social work and better detect situations of social distress.

11. Has there been a process evaluation?<sup>1</sup> Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?) and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the process? Did you make changes accordingly?  
**(max. 300 words)**

Each position is internally evaluated every year. Many data are evaluated: how many people were in contact with the social worker? How did they become in contact / which partnerships are effective? Which category of person are oriented? victims? Offenders? Third-parties? What are their age, gender, needs? How many orientations are done and to whom are they done?

The interministerial committee on crime prevention and against radicalization is currently working on an external evaluation that could be led in 2023.

12. Has there been an outcome<sup>2</sup> or impact<sup>3</sup> evaluation? Who conducted the evaluation (internally or externally?), which data and evaluation method were used and what were the main results? Which indicators were used to measure the impact? **(Max. 300 words)**

The program is not evaluated on a national scale, each position is evaluated every year.

<sup>1</sup> **Process evaluation:** Also called *implementation evaluation*, or *monitoring*, this process documents **how the activities were implemented** in order to determine any deviations from the original planning. It facilitates finding explanations if the results of the intervention are not as expected.

<sup>2</sup> **Outcome evaluation:** Measures the **direct effect** (i.e., extent of the changes) **of the intervention on the target group, population, or geographic area**. The information produced by the outcome evaluation determines at what level the **objectives were achieved**.

<sup>3</sup> **Impact evaluation:** Measures **long-term effects** of the intervention on the target group, as well as **indirect effects** on the broader community. The information produced by the impact evaluation determines at what level the **ultimate goals** of the intervention were achieved.

As an example, here are the 2021 results of the department of Seine et Marne:

7 social workers on the territory-> 4 349 professional actions taken, 109 reports for child in danger, 1 030 new cases treated, 1 256 people had an interview with the social workers.

59% of the cases were victim related, 10% toward offenders and 30% for third-parties. 75% of the beneficiaries were women. 952 cases were related to domestic violence, 68 because of a general vulnerability, 74 related to a problem in schooling (e.g bullying), 34 with housing.

**III. The project shall, as far as possible, be innovative, involving new methods or new approaches.**

13. How is the project innovative in its methods and/or approaches? (**Max. 150 words**)

The project is innovative in the way partnerships in crime prevention are organized. It is based on the idea that if people know each other better, work alongside each other, they will tend to understand better the functioning of each and every one, trust each other and exchange more information.

**IV. The project shall be based on cooperation between partners, where possible.**

14. Which partners or stakeholders were involved in the project and what was their involvement? (**Max. 200 words**)

Stakeholders: Since a police station can be in charge of several communities, a position can be funded by plenty of them. The only rule is that the social worker shall not limit its actions to a specific geographical area, any person who is in contact with law enforcement forces can be helped.

Employers: Social workers can be employed by the private sector (associations) or the public sector (local communities). They are placed under the responsibility of both the employer and the head of the police station whom shall make sure they are welcomed properly by his services.

Partners who work with social workers to answer the need of the person being cared for: social services, centres for drug addiction, victim support association, legal counsellors, health professionals, social landlords, centre for violence spouse, psychologists etc.

**V. The project shall be capable of replication in other Member States.**

15. How and by whom is the project funded? (**Max. 150 words**)



The project is funded both by the national and the local level.

When the need for the program is identified at the local level, local actors look for stakeholders (most of the time they are local communities and cities). They can also apply for a government financial assistance. Indeed to encourage the creation of these positions, the ministry of interior pays back, for 3 years, part of the employment fees (80% the 1<sup>st</sup> year then 50% and 30%).

The main goal was to encourage local communities to hire these special social workers. Once social workers have proven their efficiency, local communities are more likely to keep up with the program and undertake its funding.

16. What were the costs of the project in terms of finances, material and human resources? (**Max. 150 words**)

One position of social worker is estimated between 50 000 to 55 000 euros a year. This covers administrative fees, travel expenses, training and the social worker's wage.

The law enforcement forces have to provide for the office and desk supplies.

Because of the particularity of the position, the social worker hired must be experienced and must have been sensitized to the criminal justice system process.

17. Has a cost-benefit analysis<sup>4</sup> been carried out? If so, describe the analysis, including how and by whom it was carried out and list the main findings of the analysis. (**Max. 150 words**)

Not yet but we are aiming to do so next year.

18. Are there adjustments to be made to the project to ensure a successful replication in another Member State?

The system can be implemented in every member state, the country only has to make sure that the two parties (law enforcement and social workers) are allowed to exchange private data / have a legal framework to do so.

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<sup>4</sup> **Cost-benefit analysis:** A type of economic evaluation that compares the direct and indirect cost of the resources employed in the intervention, with the equivalent economic value of the benefits.

19. How is the project relevant for other Member States? Please explain the European dimension of your project.

The answer to crime shouldn't be limited to repression, in many situations, the improvement of someone's social condition can avoid her being victimized or offend again.

Plus, the loss of information because of a lack of collaboration and understanding between social workers and law enforcement agencies isn't a French specificity, we are convinced that other European countries are experiencing the same hardship.

To conclude, this program allows the institutional answer to criminal offenses to be more comprehensive and useful especially for vulnerable victims.

Please provide a short general description of the project (abstract for inclusion in the conference booklet – **max. 150 words**).

Social workers in police stations are a nation-wide program that consist in hiring social workers to be placed inside police stations to welcome, evaluate and orientate any person, in contact with law enforcement, that is suffering from social distress.

This closeness of social and law enforcement workers enables them to work more efficiently together by fostering trust and exchange of information. Law enforcement are "relieved" from this social work and social services are able to better detect people in need.

In the end, the institutional answer is more effective because the situation is treated on a criminal but also on a social level, curbing social distress that is most of the time, one of the cause of criminal behaviour.

It is particularly helpful in situation of domestic violence, helping victims and offenders to be less dependent from each other and to get the help they need to go through the criminal justice process.

They are currently more than 400 social workers placed in police stations throughout the French territory.