

# **CRIMINAL VICTIMISATION IN URBAN EUROPE**

## **Key Findings of the 2000 International Crime Victim Surveys**

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## INTRODUCTION

The International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS) is among the most interesting developments in international comparative criminology over the past fifteen years. Since 1989, through the four “sweeps” of the ICVS, standardised victimisation surveys have been carried out in more than 70 countries across the world, thus greatly contributing to the international knowledge of crime trends independently from administrative/police statistics.

Since its launching the ICVS has been surrounded by a growing interest, not only from the researchers community but also from the policy making environments. Apart from providing an alternative source of data on crime trends, the ICVS offers internationally standardised indicators for the perception and fear of crime across different socio-economic contexts and over time. It includes the study of corruption, both an objective count of “street level corruption” and of the perception of corruption by the general population, as an important - and unique - feature.

As regards its European component, the growth of the ICVS occurred at the same time as some major historical events and criminological developments. First of all, the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the same year the ICVS was born, brought new perspectives to a large part of Europe. The transition period also meant identifying tools for the collection of standardised information on citizens’ safety, fears and expectations. Furthermore, crime prevention initiatives put in place at that time required regular monitoring, based on reliable information, analysis and public discussion with all parties involved. The ICVS played a very important role in this direction. Not only the surveys facilitated exploring crime levels across Europe, but also provided insights into the delicate relationship between citizens and the police, often indicating wide gaps between theory and practice especially as regards crime reporting patterns.

Crime situations surveyed by the ICVS are quite general, but indicate an array of possible victimisation experiences that are more likely to occur in urban contexts rather than in rural areas. Such events are often described as “urban crime”, a concept that has attracted much attention over the past two decades. Urban crime is likely to have roots in the overall problems of fast urbanisation, resulting in large portions of population residing in urban areas, with its accompanying correlates such as social maladjustment, exclusion, break in social ties and unemployment. This has in particular an impact on youth who in turn may easily get in illegal activities.

The concept of “urban safety”, developed in the late ‘80s, reflects the need to address such situations with comprehensive strategies and identifies specific roles in crime prevention for other actors beyond law enforcement and the criminal justice system. In particular, city mayors and ad hoc partnerships among various actors in the civil society may have a great impact in crime prevention. It was felt that the prevention of violence may be very effective if a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach is adopted. The Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the field of Urban Crime Prevention adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 1995<sup>1</sup> indicate a number of steps that may be undertaken in this direction. However, a necessary basis for successful crime prevention is an extensive knowledge of the crime situation, especially through victim surveys.

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<sup>1</sup> ECOSOC res. 1995/9, Guidelines for Cooperation and Technical Assistance in the field of Urban Crime Prevention.

In 2002, further attention to the prevention of crime in general and of urban crime in particular was devoted by the Economic and Social Council through a resolution adopting the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime.<sup>2</sup> The “Guidelines” recommend “establishing data systems to help manage crime prevention more cost-effectively, including by conducting regular surveys of victimization and offending”. In 2003, a wider use of the “Guidelines” was promoted by a new resolution that focussed on the prevention of urban crime.<sup>3</sup> Further work on these issues is currently ongoing in preparation for the workshop on “Strategies and best practices for crime prevention, in particular in relation to urban crime and youth at risk”, within the framework of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.<sup>4</sup>

The participation in the ICVS has been facilitated by the interest and support of the international community and donors in the reform process towards a market economy and a democratic political system.<sup>5</sup> Since the beginning of the project a wide support was obtained from several governmental and intergovernmental bodies, with the prominent involvement of the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) as the promoter of victim surveys especially in those countries/regions in which they were hardly known. So far, the ICVS has been conducted in seventy-two different countries across the world. The project is now co-ordinated by an International Board composed by representatives of the Ministry of Justice of The Netherlands, the Home Office of the United Kingdom, the Department of Justice of Canada, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the participation of the European Commission. UNODC acts as the secretariat.

The Fourth ICVS was conducted in 2000 in sixteen cities and nine countries/regions among Council of Europe members, thus providing with the opportunity to analyse results from twenty-five different urban contexts across Europe. Of course, comparisons among current and new members of the European Union and others should take into account a number of socio-economic, political and cultural issues. At the same time, the common characteristics of urban environments and crimes to which urbanites are exposed provide an opportunity for comparison. A presentation of the results is offered here for the first time.

The advantage of the ICVS as a comparative tool lies mostly in its strict standardisation of definitions, methodology and reference periods. It is therefore essential repeating the collection of data at regular intervals. The next (fifth) “sweep” of the ICVS is planned for 2004. Many European countries will participate again and more will join for the first time.

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<sup>2</sup> ECOSOC resolution 2002/13, Action to promote effective crime prevention, including the Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime as an annex.

<sup>3</sup> ECOSOC resolution 2003/26, Prevention of urban crime.

<sup>4</sup> To be held from 18 to 25 April 2005 in Thailand. The main theme of the Eleventh Congress is “Synergies and responses: strategic alliances in crime prevention and criminal justice”.

<sup>5</sup> As regards participation of countries included in this report, in addition to the governments of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom that funded their own participation mostly through their Justice Ministries or National Statistical Offices, contributions should be acknowledged from the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, the MATRA Programme of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands, the Ministry of Justice of The Netherlands and the Home Office of the United Kingdom.

## Objectives

The main objectives of the ICVS include:

- providing comparative indicators of crime and victimisation risks, indicators of perception of crime and fear of crime, performance of law enforcement, victim assistance and crime prevention;
- promoting crime surveys as an important research and policy tool at the international, national and local levels;
- enhancing adequate research and policy analysis methodology;
- creating an opportunity for transparency in public debate about crime and reactions to crime;
- strengthening public and criminal justice concerns about citizens' participation in the evaluation of criminal policy and particularly in partnership in crime prevention; and
- promoting international co-operation by providing an opportunity for a large number of countries to share methodology and experience through their participation in a well co-ordinated international research project.

## Methodology

The ICVS targets samples of households in which only one respondent is selected aged 16 or above. National samples include at least 2,000 respondents who are generally interviewed with the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) technique. In the countries where this method is not applicable because of the insufficient distribution of telephones, face-to-face interviews are conducted in the main cities, generally with samples of 1,000-1,500 respondents.

The questionnaire includes sections on eleven types of "conventional" crime, of which each question provides a standard definition. Furthermore, questions on consumer fraud and corruption are included, also accompanied by standard definitions. The questionnaire also explores whether crimes were reported to the police, reasons for not reporting, attitudes toward the police, fear of crime and crime prevention measures.

Among the eleven "conventional" crimes, some are "household crimes", i.e. those which can be seen as affecting the household at large, and respondents report on all incidents known to them. A first group of crimes deals with the vehicles owned by the respondent or his/her household:

- Theft of car
- Theft from car
- Car vandalism
- Theft of bicycle
- Theft of motorcycle

A second group refers to break and enter:

- Burglary
- Attempted burglary

A third group of crimes refers to victimisation experienced by the respondent personally:

- Robbery
- Theft of personal property
- Assault/threat
- Sexual incidents (women only)

The questionnaire finally addresses two more types of crime that may have been experienced by the respondents:

Consumer fraud  
Bribery/corruption

Much attention has been paid to the issue of translation of concepts and definitions into the various languages. Regular meetings of survey co-ordinators from participating countries have facilitated such exercise over time.

Data across this report are presented for European countries<sup>6</sup> divided into two groups, namely cities in Central-Eastern Europe and urban areas in Western Europe. Such classification was purely dictated by the project methodology. Furthermore, results from Western European surveys at the national level have already been published in the report by van Kesteren, Mayhew and Nieuwbeerta (2000). It should be noted that data presented here are based on respondents located in urban areas of at least 100,000 population, thus not directly comparable with those presented in the 2000 report.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1 – European cities/countries participating in the 2000 ICVS**

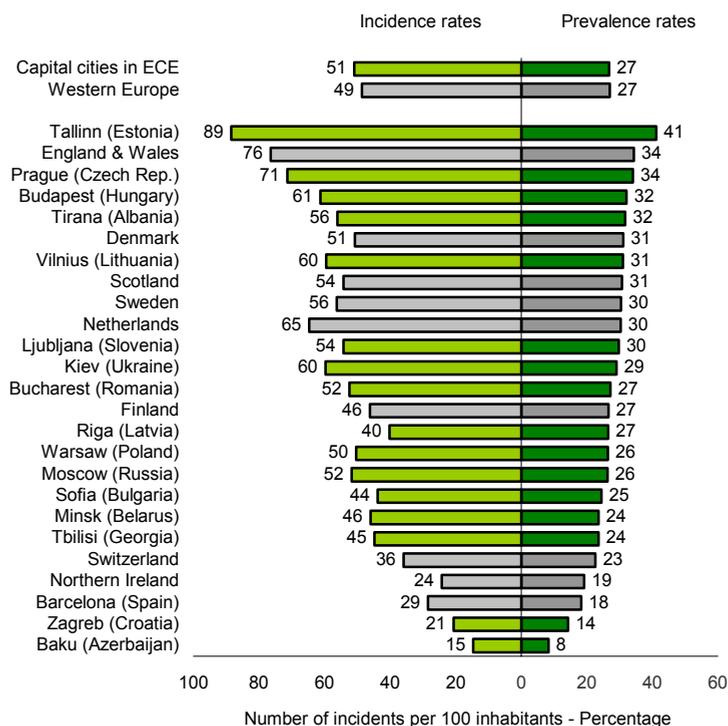
<i>Cities in Central-Eastern Europe</i>	<i>Type of survey</i>	<i>Urban/city sample size</i>	<i>Method of interviewing</i>
Baku (Azerbaijan)	city	930	face-to-face
Bucharest (Romania)	city	1,506	face-to-face
Budapest (Hungary)	city	1,513	CATI
Kiev (Ukraine)	city	1,509	face-to-face
Ljubljana (Slovenia)	national	513	CATI
Minsk (Belarus)	city	1,520	face-to-face
Moscow (Russia)	city	1,500	CATI
Prague (Czech Rep.)	city	1,511	CATI
Riga (Latvia)	city	1,002	face-to-face
Sofia (Bulgaria)	city	1,505	face-to-face
Tallinn (Estonia)	national	502	face-to-face CAPI
Tbilisi (Georgia)	city	1,000	face-to-face
Tirana (Albania)	city	1,498	face-to-face
Vilnius (Lithuania)	city	1,526	face-to-face
Warsaw (Poland)	city	1,061	face-to-face
Zagreb (Croatia)	city	1,532	face-to-face
<i>Urban areas in Western Europe</i>			
Denmark	national	723	CATI
England & Wales	national	255	CATI
Finland	national	462	CATI
Netherlands	national	353	CATI
Northern Ireland	national	301	face-to-face
Scotland	national	286	CATI
Barcelona (Spain)	regional	1,236	telephone
Sweden	national	533	CATI
Switzerland	national	1,716	CATI

<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Surveys conducted in Belgium, France and Portugal in 2000 resulted in too small urban samples (less than 250 cases) to be included in this report. Due to the small samples and small numbers, on several occasions data are presented for the entire groups rather than at the city/country level.

## OVERALL VICTIMISATION

Figure 1 – Overall victimisation by eleven types of crime



The overall victimisation is based on eleven conventional crimes. These are the crimes that have been in the ICVS questionnaire ever since the beginning of the project in 1989 and have served as a benchmark over the years.

### The 11 types of crime

Theft of car, theft from car, car vandalism, theft of motorcycle, theft of bicycle, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual offences (women only), assault/threat.

Victimisation can be measured in two ways:

- The prevalence rate: the percentage of respondents who were victimised at least once by at least one of the eleven crimes in the year preceding the survey.
- The incidence rate: the number of incidents per 100 respondents in the year preceding the survey.

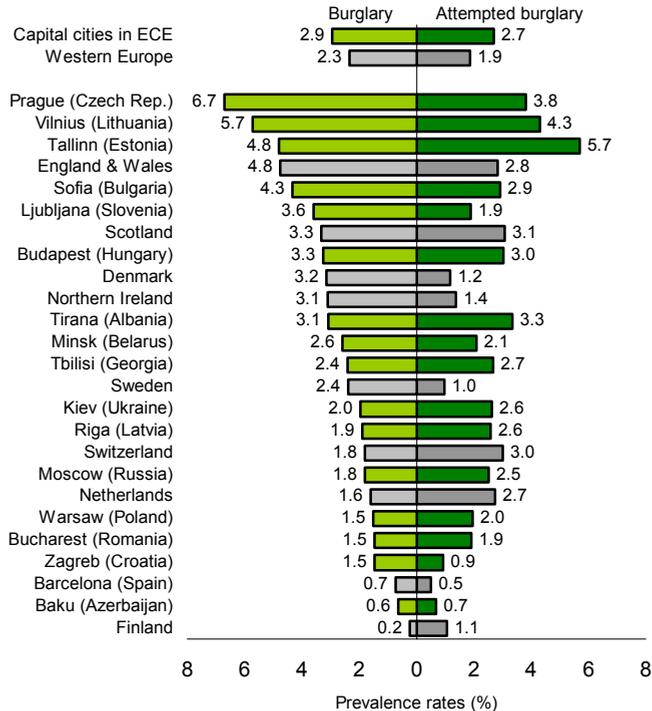
Both ways of measuring victimisation indicate that there are no major differences between urban sites in Western Europe and Central-Eastern Europe. In both of them, on average, a little more than one quarter of the respondents were victimised by at least one crime (27%).

As regards the incidence rates, there were approximately fifty incidents every one hundred respondents. Some differences at the city level are notable. For instance, England and Wales and Prague show much higher incidence rates than Budapest and Tirana although the prevalence rates are almost the same. Given similar prevalence rates, the differences observed in incidence rates may be attributed either to victims who have experienced more than one type of crime or to repeat victimisation, i.e. victims who experienced the same type of crime more than once over the year preceding the survey.

Further analysis of the various types of crime will focus on victims, thus making use of the prevalence rates.

## COMPLETED-ATTEMPTED BURGLARY

Figure 2 - Burglary and attempted burglary in 2000



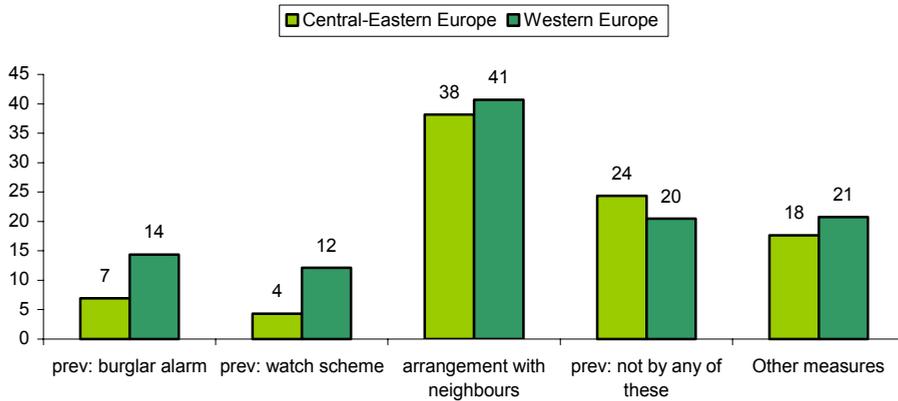
On average, victimisation rates for both burglary and attempts are slightly lower in Western Europe compared to Central-Eastern Europe. There is a correlation between attempted and completed burglaries (0.68,  $n=25$ ,  $p<0.10$ ). However, there are few exceptions: in some cities / urban areas there are higher percentages of completed burglaries and low percentages of attempts (Ljubljana, Denmark, Northern Ireland and Sweden). Furthermore, there are sites where attempted burglaries are higher than completed burglaries (for example, Tallinn, Tirana, Switzerland and Netherlands).

Prague and Vilnius show high victimisation rates for both burglary and attempted burglary. Barcelona, Baku and urban Finland are low on both completed and attempted burglaries.

On average, in over eighty percent of the burglaries something was actually stolen. In around sixty percent the victim indicated that there was damage done during the burglary.

## Household crime prevention measures

Figure 3 - Household measures for crime prevention



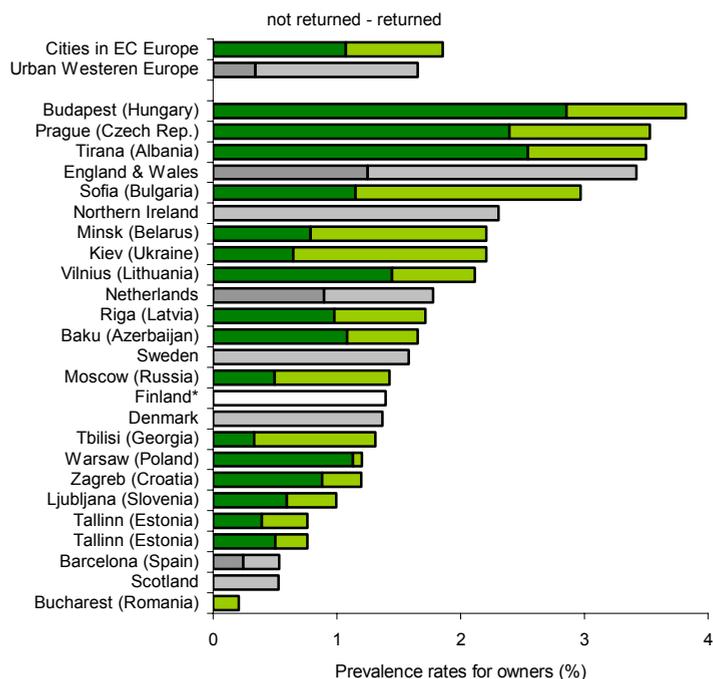
Among the reasons for lower rates of burglary and attempts in Western Europe may be that the use of preventive measures is more diffused and effective.

Actually, although the most frequent method to prevent burglaries adopted by approximately 40% of respondents across Europe is making arrangements with neighbours when leaving the house unattended, households equipped with burglar alarms were twice more frequent in Western Europe. The use of crime prevention schemes at the neighbourhood level is also used by 12% of Western Europeans against only 4% in Central-Eastern Europe. In general, Western Europeans appear to be more frequently adopting at least one measure to prevent burglaries at home.

When asked whether they felt if a burglary at their home was likely to happen over the next twelve months, respondents from Central-Eastern Europe were much more concerned than those in Western Europe. Almost half perceived that burglary was likely or very likely against less than one third in Western Europe.

## THEFT OF CAR

Figure 4 - Theft of a car in 1999,  
broken down by whether returned



Car ownership rates are on average lower in the capital cities in Central-Eastern Europe (around fifty percent), being lowest in Baku (23%) followed by Kiev with 32%, and highest (more than 70%) in Zagreb and Prague. In Western Europe car ownership in Denmark is 52%, while in all other urban areas 70% or more of the respondents are car owners.

On average 1.8% of the owners had their car stolen in the year preceding the survey, but there are large differences between the countries / cities. Car theft rates above three percent were observed in Budapest, Prague, Tirana and in urban areas in England & Wales. The lowest rates, below one percent, were in Barcelona, Bucharest and Scotland.

The risk for owners to have their car stolen in the urban areas in Western Europe is lower than in the capital cities of Central-Eastern Europe. However, if calculated on the basis of the whole population, the victimisation rates for car theft are almost identical across Europe, 1.2% in Western Europe and 1.1% in the capital cities in Central-Eastern Europe.

A main difference between the two groups is the percentage of stolen cars that are returned to the owner. While 80% of the cars stolen in urban areas in Western Europe are returned to their owner, this happened in less than 50% of the cases in the capital cities in Central-Eastern Europe. This may suggest that, for example, joy riding in Western Europe is a more important reason for stealing a car; that devices for tracking a stolen car are

more available in Western Europe; that the police are more efficient in stolen car recovery in Western Europe; that organised crime involvement in smuggling of stolen vehicles is more still more present in Central-Eastern European countries; and that the stolen car / car parts market is still prominent in Central-Eastern European countries.

Taking the recovery rate on consideration, theft of a car is a more serious problem in Central-Eastern Europe than it is in Western Europe. Nevertheless, rates of car theft reporting to the police are lower in Central-Eastern Europe (on average 86% against 92% in Western Europe).

### **Crime seriousness**

Victims were asked how they felt about the seriousness of the crime they experienced. There were three possible answers, namely that the event was “very serious”, “fairly serious” or “not serious at all”. On average, car theft was considered by victims the most serious crime in Central-Eastern European cities, with a mean score of 2.64, and the second most serious after robbery in Western Europe (2.24)<sup>8</sup>.

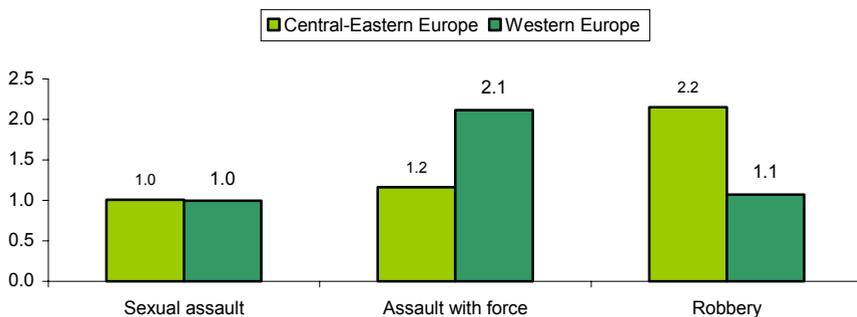
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<sup>8</sup> Averages based on all countries/cities calculated on a three-point scale (1 not serious at all, 2 fairly serious, 3 very serious).

## CONTACT CRIMES

The ICVS questionnaire addresses three types of incidents that involve a contact between victims and offenders, namely robbery, sexual incidents and assaults & threats. Among them, the only one that involves property is robbery, which is described to the respondents as theft involving force or threat of using force. The two other types of crime, assault and sexual incidents, have a very broad definition and may therefore be subject to differences in interpretation by the respondents. However, in order to allow victims to explain better what happened, the questionnaire includes follow up questions that produce sub-categories of crime. For example, sexual incidents can be broken down into sexual assaults and incidents only involving an offensive behaviour. As regards assaults and threats, a distinction can be made between incidents in which force was actually used and those in which the threat was prevalent.

Figure 5 - Prevalence for contact crimes



First of all, it can be observed that contact crime is not frequent across European cities. Rates of sexual assault are identical in the groups, while in Western Europe assault is twice more frequent. Inversely, in Central-Eastern Europe robbery is twice more frequent than in Western Europe.

Among the cities/urban areas with higher rates of contact crime are the Baltic cities (Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius) and Kiev as well as the urban areas in England and Wales and Finland. While in the Baltic cities and Kiev robbery defines the contact crimes ranking, in England and Wales and Finland it is assault with force.

## Incident details

### Use of weapons

**Table 2** Details on contact crimes: weapons present, kind of weapon and actual use of the weapon (percentages)

	Robbery		Sexual offences		Assault & threat	
	Central-Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Central-Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Central-Eastern Europe	Western Europe
Weapon present						
Yes	27	29	7	5	21	23
What kind of weapon <sup>1</sup>						
Knife	47	56	57	36	41	54
Gun	19	25	21	26	20	6
Other weapon	16	1	10	2	15	15
Something used as a weapon	16	18	12	35	20	23
Do not know	2	1	0	0	4	2
Was the weapon actually used <sup>1</sup>						
Yes	37	28	42	28	35	44

<sup>1</sup> Asked if a weapon was present

Many contact crimes involved weapons: victims were asked whether any of the offenders had a knife, a gun, another weapon or something used as a weapon. While it often occurs that the weapon is present only to threaten and intimidate the victim, on several occasions it may have been actually used.

Weapons were more frequently present on the scene of robberies and assaults, much less in sexual incidents. In general a weapon was more often present in Western Europe but actually used more frequently in Central-Eastern Europe. Furthermore, firearms represented a larger portion of the weapons used in committing robberies in the West than in Central-East. A notable difference was instead observed as regards assaults, in which firearms represented one fifth of the weapons in Central-Eastern Europe and only 6% in the West.

## Offenders and victims

**Table 3** Details on offenders of robbery, sexual incidents and assaults & threat, number of offenders, whether the offender was known and who was the offender (percentages)

	Robbery	Sexual offences	Assault & threat
Number of offenders			
One	33	77	46
Two	26	14	21
Three or more	31	6	28
Do not know	10	4	6
Was the offender known			
No	75	56	53
Yes, by sight	7	9	15
Yes, by name	5	25	26
Did not see the offender	9	3	4
Do not know	3	4	3
Who was the offender 1			
Spouse, partner (at the time)		3	9
Ex-spouse, ex-partner (at the time)		7	6
Boyfriend (at the time)		7	6
Ex-boyfriend (at the time)		5	4
Relative		3	11
Close friend		16	10
Boss colleague		34	13
None of these		26	38
Refuse to say		3	5
Do not know		4	4

<sup>1</sup> Asked if the offender was known, multiple answers were allowed, responses may add up to more than 100%

Details on the offenders of the contact crimes do not show much difference across Europe. Some differences can be observed however between the three types of offences:

- The majority of robberies involved more than one offender; the majority of sexual incidents involved one offender alone; in assaults the risk of being aggressed by more than one offender was approximately 50%.
- In general, the majority of incidents involved unknown offenders, although this was more frequent with robberies (in three-quarters of cases) than with assaults and sexual incidents.
- About a quarter of the victims of sexual incidents and assaults knew the offender by name; less frequently by sight only.
- When the offender was known, in almost a quarter of cases he/she was a (ex) partner/spouse or (ex) boy/girlfriend; the boss or someone else at work was indicated by one third of the women victims of sexual incidents. Relatives and close friends were also frequently involved as offenders.

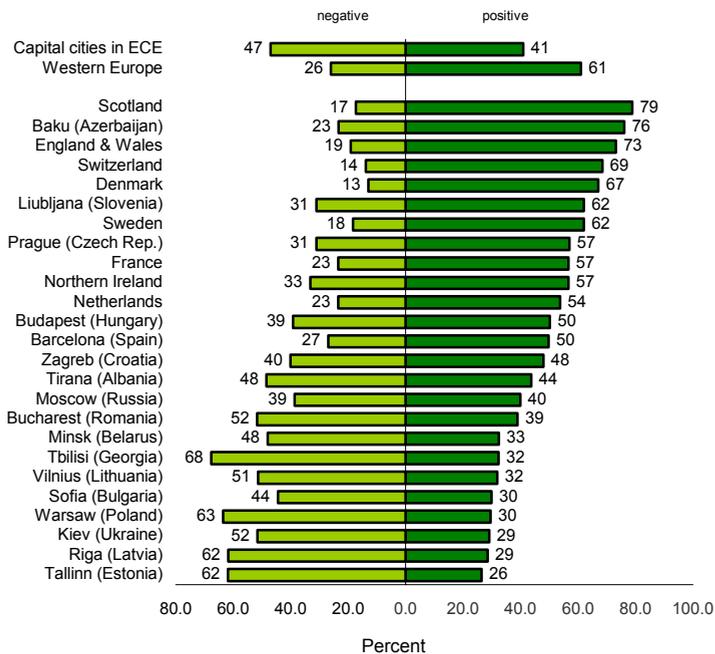


## CITIZENS AND POLICE

Victim surveys often capture many incidents that are not reported to the police because of their minor characteristics, which are frequently described by victims as “not worth reporting”. For this reason crime rates in victim survey may appear inflated with respect to those recorded by the police. Nevertheless, consistent reporting patterns may be identified, especially in countries/cities where a good relationship between citizens and police has been established.

### Overall satisfaction with the police

Figure 6 - Police performance 2000



On average, most respondents in Western Europe (61%) gave a positive assessment of the way the police dealt with preventing and controlling crime in their area. Instead in Central-Eastern Europe the sample was split among those with a positive evaluation (41%) and those (47%) who were dissatisfied with the police performance.<sup>9</sup>

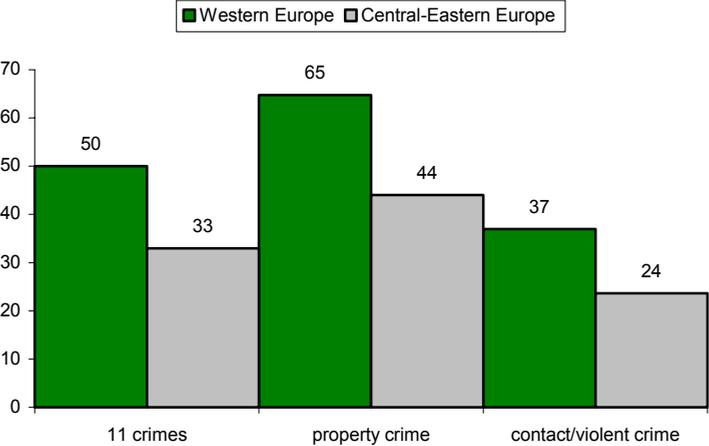
Among the top seven ranking as regards a positive evaluation of the police, we observe only two Central-Eastern European cities, namely Baku and Ljubljana. Nevertheless, in

<sup>9</sup> Respondents were also given the possibility not to express their opinion. This resulted in the “don’t know” category, which counted for 12% in Central-Eastern Europe and 13% in Western Europe.

comparison with the other five, these two cities show a higher percentage of negative opinions, thus confirming that the assessment of the police performance is more controversial in these countries.

**Reporting to the police**

**Figure 7 - Crimes reported to the police**



**Chart categories:**

The 11 types of crime: Theft of car, theft from car, car vandalism, theft of motorcycle, theft of bicycle, burglary, attempted burglary, robbery, theft of personal property, sexual offences (women only), assault/threat.

Property crime: Theft of car, theft from car, car vandalism, theft of motorcycle, theft of bicycle, burglary, attempted burglary, theft of personal property.

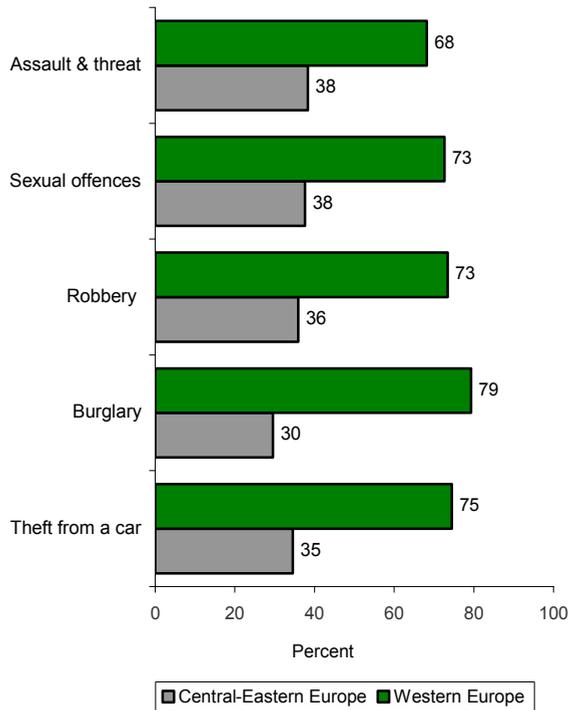
Contact/violent crime: Robbery, sexual offences (women only), assault/threat.

Reporting rates are consistently lower in Central-Eastern European cities than in Western Europe. On average, half of the incidents were reported in Western Europe and only one third in Central-Eastern Europe. Property crime was more frequently reported in the two groups, but the difference in frequency of reporting is even more marked (65% in Western Europe and 44% in Central-Eastern Europe).

Responses to the survey have showed that victims' expectations about what the police would or could do with respect to crimes reported are different in the two groups.

## Satisfaction with the police on reporting

Figure 8 - Satisfaction with the police on reporting



Victims of theft from car, burglary, robbery, sexual offences and assault and threat who reported to the police were asked whether, on the whole, they were satisfied with the way the police dealt with the matter.

On average, three quarters of victims from Western Europe were satisfied with the performance of the police in assisting them with reported incidents. The difference with Central-Eastern Europe is striking: only one third of victims could declare their satisfaction with the assistance received by the police. Among the five types of crime considered, in Western Europe burglary was the one for which victims expressed the highest satisfaction with the police. On the contrary, burglary was the one crime for which victims in Central-Eastern European cities felt least assisted. In general, it appears that the police performance was assessed in a more positive way as regards property crime in Western Europe, while in Central-Eastern Europe this was more often the case with victims of contact crime. This may indicate that citizens have different expectations on the services that could be rendered by the police upon reporting crimes, in particular as regards the possibility to recover stolen goods.

## Reasons for dissatisfaction with police performance in reporting burglary

Victims who reported burglary to the police in Central-Eastern European cities felt frequently dissatisfied with the follow up to their report because of these main reasons:

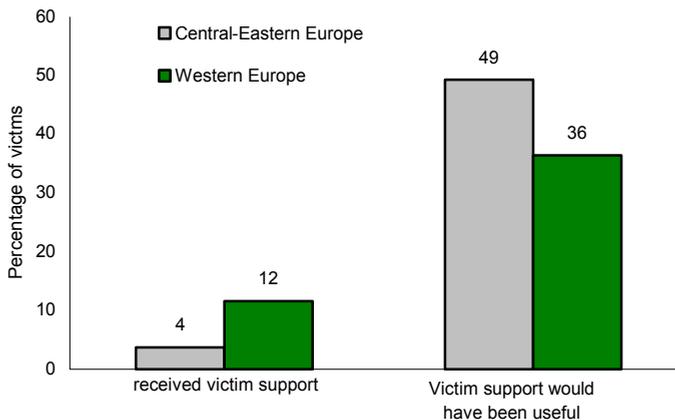
### The police

did not find the offender (mentioned by)	50%
did not do enough	48%
did not recover my goods	46%
were not interested	41%
gave no information	26%
were incorrect/impolite	15%
were slow to arrive	14%

## Victim support

Victims of burglary, robbery, sexual offences and assaults and threats were asked whether they received any support from a specialized agency and if not, whether this kind of support would have been useful. In Central-Eastern Europe only 4% of victims of all four crimes received support. In the urban areas in Western Europe the question was asked only from those who reported to the police, nevertheless the percentage of those assisted was three times higher (12%).

Figure 9 - Victim support received and would it have been useful (last victimisation in a period of 5 years)

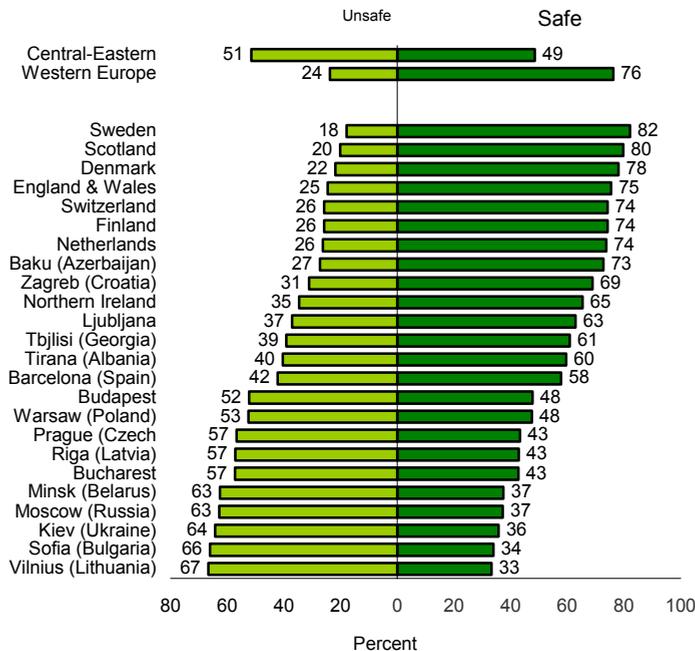


Much more frequently victims did not receive any formal support. Among them, approximately half in Central-Eastern Europe and more than one third in Western Europe indicated that some specialised help would have been useful to cope with the situation.

**FEAR OF CRIME**

Now I would like to ask some questions about your area and about your opinion of crime in your area. How safe do you feel walking alone in your area after dark? Do you feel very safe, fairly safe, a bit unsafe, or very unsafe?

**Figure 10 - Fear of crime 2000**



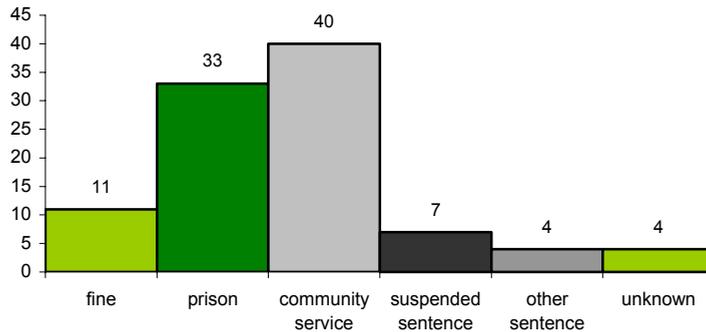
Although victimisation levels observed in the two groups were almost identical, a marked difference was observed as regards feelings of safety. Three quarters of Western European citizens felt either very safe or fairly safe, while this was the case only with 49% in Central-Eastern Europe. In the fourteen cities/urban areas where the majority of citizens felt safe one can find all Western European urban areas and Baku, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Tbilisi and Tirana. In all remaining Central-Eastern European cities the majority of respondents felt more frequently unsafe rather than safe. Perceived unsafety was correlated to likelihood of burglary in the next twelve months ( $r=.74$ ,  $N=24$ ). The analysis of the two different measures of fear also revealed that in Western Europe citizens were more frequently concerned with the specific risk of burglary than with general feelings of unsafety (32% said that burglary in the next twelve months was likely or very likely while only 24% were fairly or very unsafe).

Those who felt very unsafe were also likely to assess the police performance as poor ( $r=.61$ ,  $N=24$ ). It can be assumed therefore that a high level of satisfaction with the police plays an important role in supporting citizens' feelings of safety and security.

Respondents were also asked about their perception of feelings of safety at home after dark. On average 76% of the respondents in Central-Eastern Europe felt very safe or fairly safe, while in Western Europe that was true for almost the entire sample, i.e. 96% of the respondents. Citizens of Tallinn were those who most frequently felt unsafe (59%), followed by those in Sofia and Vilnius (32 and 31% respectively).

## ATTITUDES TO PUNISHMENT

Figure 11 - Type of sentence



All respondents were asked what type of sentence they would prefer for a young recidivist burglar who has stolen a colour TV set. It should be noted that, as in other parts of the questionnaire, reference was made to hypothetical categories (fine, prison, community service...) rather than to actual sentences available in each country. Thus, in theory, a respondent could choose a sentence not available in his/her country if he or she believed it the best one in the given context.

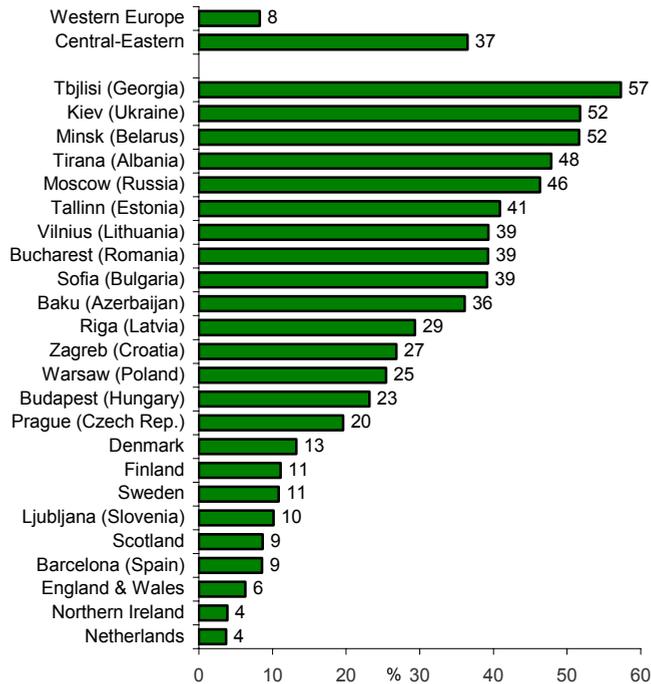
Very small differences were observed across European cities / urban areas. The largest group of respondents (40%) indicated that working for the community (community service) as the most appropriate sentence. A more punitive approach was expressed by one third of the respondents who chose imprisonment. A follow-up question about the length of imprisonment was addressed only to those who indicated "prison" as the preferred sentence. An average length in months was calculated on the basis of the available categories of response (from less than one month up to more than 25 years and life imprisonment). Results from the two groups are very different. While citizens from Central-Eastern Europe indicated an average of 37 months imprisonment as the appropriate sentence for the hypothetical burglar, in Western Europe respondents indicated only 16 months. This indicates a more punitive approach in Central-Eastern European cities than in Western European urban areas.

People have different ideas about the sentences, which should be given to offenders. Take for instance the case of a man of 21 years old who is found guilty of burglary/housebreaking for the second time. This time he has taken a colour TV. Which of the following sentences do you consider the most appropriate for such a case?



## CONSUMER FRAUD

Figure 12 - Consumer fraud



Last year (in 1999), were you the victim of a consumer fraud? In other words, has someone when selling something to you or delivering a service cheated you in terms of quantity or quality of the goods/service?

Differences between Western-European urban areas and Central-Eastern European cities in crime matters were very small, with the exception of consumer fraud and corruption.

The question on consumer fraud is likely to address mostly minor episodes of cheating, such as receiving short change or overpaying goods. It was also frequently mentioned by respondents that the quality of goods purchased did not correspond to their expectations.

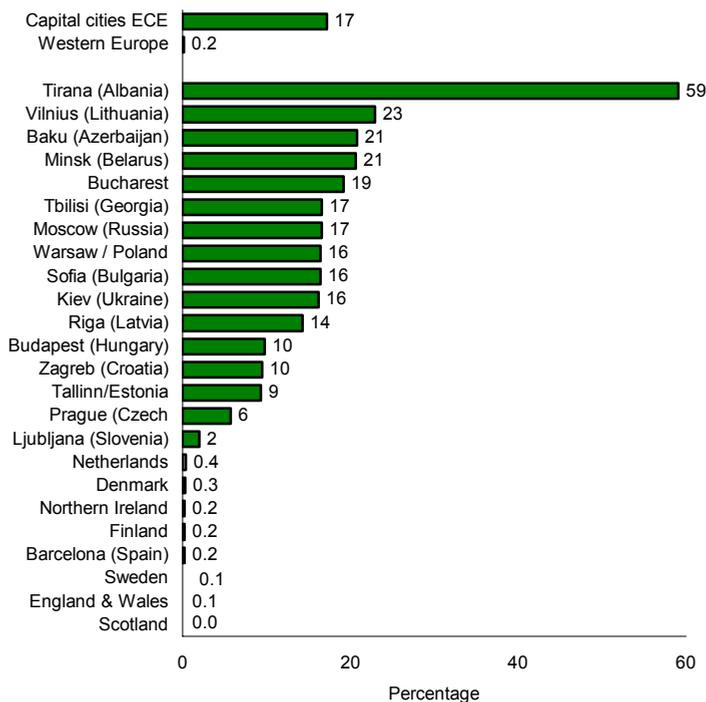
Consumer fraud was more frequent in Central-Eastern European cities, where more than one third of the respondents (37%) indicated that they had been victimized in the year preceding the survey. High rates above 20% were observed in all Central-European cities, with the exception of Ljubljana and Prague. Although risks were smaller in Western European urban areas (8%), consumer fraud represented the most frequently experienced type of victimisation in this group, followed by theft from cars, car vandalism and theft of personal property with 7% each. This indicates that attention should be paid to this type of

victimisation that may be perceived as particularly disturbing by citizens who expect high standards of integrity in services and commercial transactions.

The frequency of reporting consumer fraud to the police was very low, approximately 2% in Central-Eastern European cities and 5% in Western Europe. More frequently victims reported to other authorities, especially in Western Europe (18% versus 3%). This indicates that the expectation for integrity also leads to the establishment of specialised bodies to monitor correctness in commercial transactions to which citizens can address their complaints.

## CORRUPTION

Figure 13 - Experience of corruption



In some areas there is a problem of corruption among government or public officials. During 2001, has any government official, for instance a customs officer, police officer, traffic officer, court official, pensions officer or building inspector in your own country, asked you or expected you to pay a bribe for his/her service?

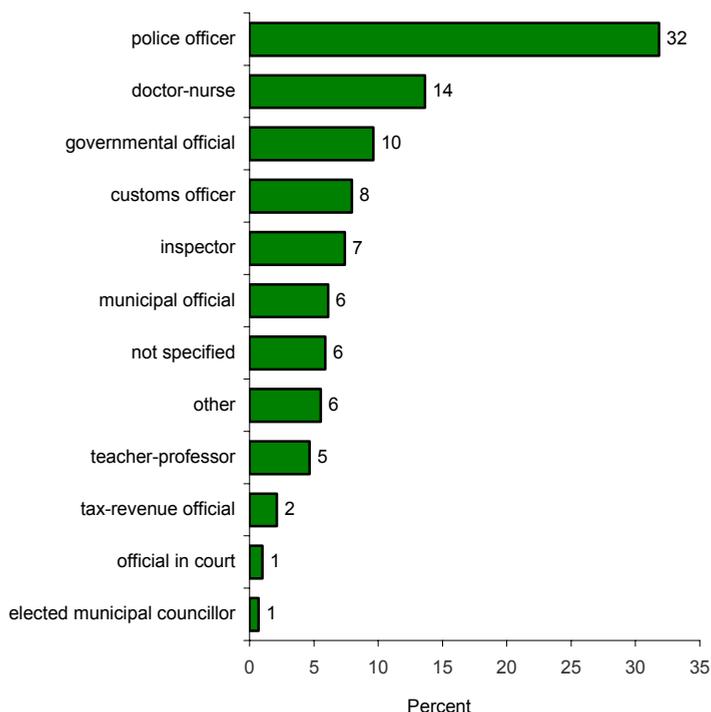
While almost nobody was affected by requests for paying bribes in Western European urban areas (0.2% on average), this was quite a serious problem in Central-Eastern European cities (17%).

Rates above the average were observed in Tirana, Vilnius, Baku, Minsk and Bucharest, while five cities (Tbilisi, Moscow, Warsaw, Sofia and Kiev) showed average rates. The lowest rates in the group were recorded in Ljubljana and Prague.

In the capital cities in Central-Eastern Europe, police officers are most frequently mentioned as regards requests for bribes (32%). This was more frequent in Zagreb, Warsaw, Prague and Moscow, where a police officer was mentioned by more than half of the victims of corruption. Other public officials mentioned by respondents were medical

staff (14%), especially in Kiev, Sofia and Vilnius (above 20%). Governmental officials, customs officers and ‘inspectors’ were mentioned in 10, 8 and 7% respectively.

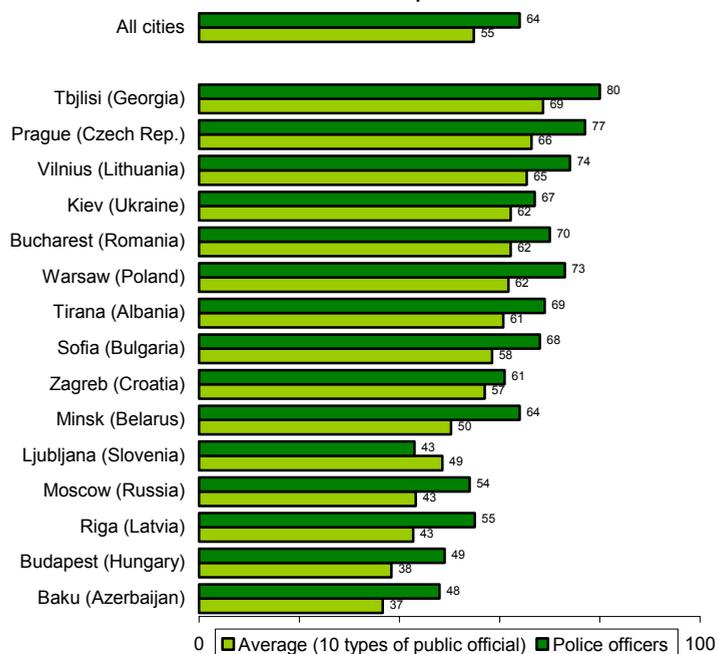
Figure 14 - Who was the corrupted officer - C-E Europe



Due to the importance of the phenomenon in Central-Eastern Europe, the ICVS questionnaire used in this group included some additional items on the perception of corruption - not included in the questionnaire used in Western Europe – that were addressed to all respondents. When asked whether it was likely that a given official would ask for a bribe or would expect to be bribed, the large majority of respondents confirmed that all the mentioned public officials would accept bribes.

It is known that in some countries the problem of corruption among government or public officials is highly perceived by citizens. Imagine a person who needs something that is entitled to him/her by law. Is it likely or not likely that this person would have to offer money, a present or a favour (i.e., more than official charge), to get help from Members of Parliament, officials in the ministries, elected municipal councillors, municipal officials, customs officials, police officers, tax/revenues officials, doctors / nurses, inspectors, teachers / professors, officials in courts.

**Figure 15 - Percentage of respondents who feel likely that a public official will ask for or expect a bribe**

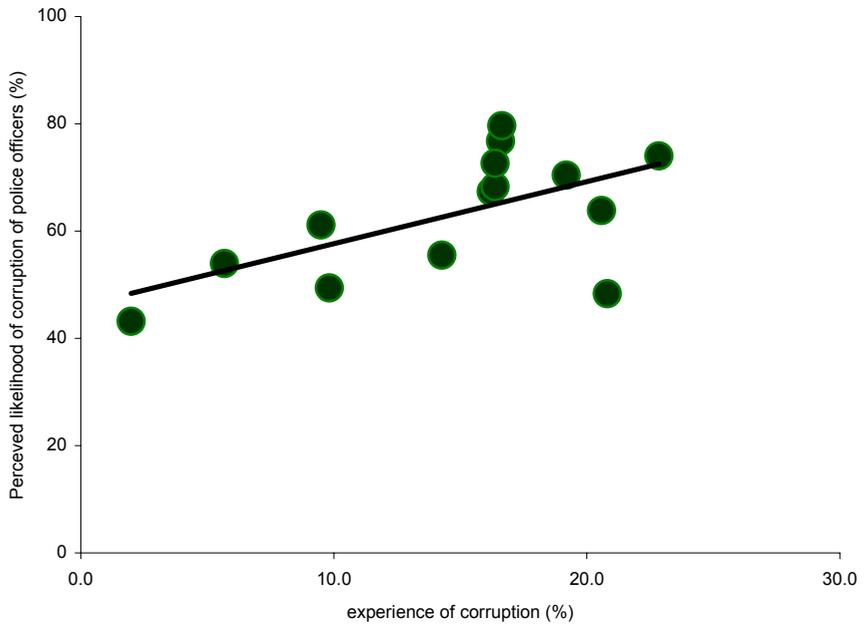


The cities where corruption of public officials was perceived as most likely were Tirana, Warsaw, Kiev, Bucharest, Vilnius, Moscow and Tbilisi (all with more than 60% on average). Among the various types of public officials mentioned, those who were perceived by the respondents as the most likely to accept bribes were doctors and nurses, police officers and customs officers, all indicated by more than 60% of the respondents on average.

Police officers, who had very often been indicated by victims as the public officers responsible for their experiences of corruption, were indicated as likely to accept bribes by the majority of respondents in all cities with the exception of Budapest, Baku and Ljubljana. A correlation between experienced corruption and the perception of police officers as likely to accept bribes was found ( $r=.60$ ,  $N=14$ , see Figure 16<sup>10</sup>). A correlation was also found between experienced corruption and likelihood of corruption of doctors/nurses ( $r=.62$ ,  $N=14$ ) and teachers/professors ( $r=.61$ ,  $N=14$ ), thus confirming that the experience of corruption provided by the ICVS can be used as a proxy for assessing the presence of small scale corruption, the type of corruption that is more likely to affect day-by-day life of citizens.

<sup>10</sup> Tirana was excluded from the correlation because of its extremely high rate of corruption victimisation (59%, more than twice than the second ranking city, Vilnius, with 23%).

Figure 16 - Likelihood of corruption of police officers and experience of corruption



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## CONCLUSIONS

Many findings of the ICVS in urban Europe reflect those already presented in previous analysis focussing on national samples. Nevertheless, there is a great potential for research on large cities, urban agglomerates and regions. The recent development of urban studies gives good reason for a specialised approach to the analysis of social phenomena such as crime from an urban perspective. This implies moving on from an exclusive link between crime and the criminal justice system, i.e. considering that crime can only be prevented through law enforcement and a more efficient criminal justice system, to a wider involvement of multiple actors who are responsible for addressing various social issues, each of them contributing to the welfare of citizens and the consequent prevention and reduction of crime. For example, the “urban renewal” framework for dealing with crime as an integral problem of urban quality of life, because of its potential is widely accepted both in the developed and in the developing world.<sup>11</sup>

According to this approach, the principle of improving the quality of life is prevalent and everybody should participate in a cooperative effort to reduce strain, disorder, traffic, unemployment, poverty and maladjustment in order to provide for a healthy living environment for all.

Obviously, a very important role is played by law enforcement and the criminal justice system. This not only relates to their respective tasks in containing criminality, but also involves improving their relationship with citizens, in terms of accessibility, reliability, efficiency and timeliness of services delivered, transparency and integrity. It also involves addressing a number of citizens’ complaints that are not “criminal” *strictu sensu*, but are perceived by citizens as disturbing and generating disorder. The police, being very visible and present on the territory, tend to become the reference point for callers who address a wide range of complaints and requests that would not qualify as “reporting crimes”, but rather indicate the need to respond to potentially dangerous and/or conflict generating situations (domestic conflicts, drunken people or drug addicts, problematic youth, individuals with psychiatric problems, abandoned children).<sup>12</sup> This may also be the consequence of relatively low levels of crime, when the tolerance and the perception of citizens tend to fine-tune towards less serious incidents rather than focussing on serious crime. A closer relationship with the public also brings the need for different skills to be acquired by police officers, who at the same time have to keep involved in crime investigation.

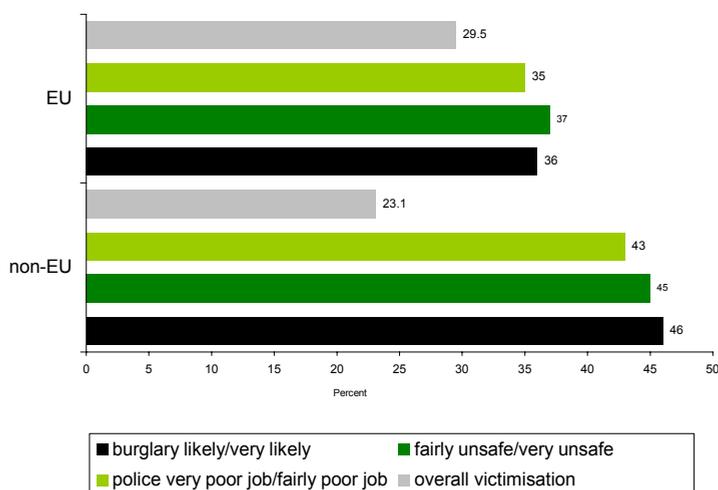
On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2004 an enlarged European Union will come into force: ten new members will join the current fifteen, thus bringing into being a new political region, composed by twenty-five members. Among them, twelve participated in the ICVS in 2000, either with city or national surveys. It is therefore possible to look at some of the findings presented in this report from a different point of view, i.e. dividing the sample in EU and non-EU members.

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<sup>11</sup> For example, on this approach see the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Sustainable Safety: Municipalities at the Crossroad, UNHABITAT in cooperation with UNODC and the eThekweni Municipality. eThekweni, South Africa, 25-28 November 2003.

<sup>12</sup> It has been estimated by the police in Turin, Italy, that approximately half of the calls received by the emergency number refer to non-criminal cases and in particular deal with requests for assistance in the prevention and management of conflicts in the family or in other social situations.

Figure 17 - EU vs. Non-EU cities



The chart shows selected indicators that have been discussed in the previous chapters, namely overall victimisation, fear of crime (expressed through likelihood of burglary in the next twelve months and feeling unsafe at night), and perception that the police are not doing a good job in preventing and controlling crime. Although overall victimisation is lower in non-EU cities/urban areas than in EU members (23.1% versus 29.5%), all other indicators are much higher. This means that in non-EU members there were higher levels of feelings of unsafety, more frequently respondents felt it likely that their home would be the target of burglars over the next twelve months and expressed a more negative opinion about the performance of the police, at the same time when less crime was observed.

The transition process in non-EU countries also requires addressing citizens' concerns as regards their safety and trust in the police. The two as noted go hand in hand, while there is little if no correlation between actual levels of victimisation, fear of crime and trust in the police. It also appears that attitudes to punishment may have to do with overall concerns of citizens rather than the level of crime as such. The experience of corruption that is most directly related to the police, also indicates that addressing police transparency and integrity as well as focussing on service delivery may improve the general standing of the police with the public. It would be interesting to monitor trends in levels of corruption in the new EU members, which showed markedly higher corruption risk than the old EU members.

The potential of the ICVS as a measurement tool for Europe has been perceived by the European Commission that is providing funding for the carrying out of a part of the 2004 ICVS<sup>13</sup> in view of launching a European victim survey that is likely to be largely based on the ICVS methodology.

<sup>13</sup> Within the framework of the 6th Framework Programme on Research, Technical Development and Demonstration, a consortium composed by Gallup Europe, UNODC and the Max-Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law will conduct the "International Crime Survey" (ICS) in 15 EU member countries.

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