

# Innovation in European police forces

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(2009 Conference in Bad Hoenvedorp)

'Being one step ahead of the situation' — this has always been the wish of police leaders.

In a globalised world that faces new crime phenomena and worsening threat situations at a time of limited resources, the demands placed on police leadership are increasing. Decisions have to be made quickly, should take the situation, the circumstances and the environmental factors into consideration to a large extent — it would be best to anticipate developments.

The good old 'gut feeling' or pure intuition no longer suffice — or never sufficed in the first place. A clear analysis is necessary.

How do we, as the persons responsible, reach decisions? On what basis can we take them and what instruments are available? And how can future developments be taken into consideration?

The BKA has ventured many experiments in this context — and, in my opinion, this is a story of 'trial and error' with a happy ending.

More than 20 years ago, for example, a so-called 'prognosis body' was set up at the BKA which consisted of high-ranking representatives of this office and was tasked with analysing trends and preparing a 'prognosis'. Feasibility? This question remains unanswered — the body has been discontinued. The future remained a secret.

Later, in the mid-1990s, a unit called 'Strategic Crime Analysis' (SCA) was set up. Here, attempts were made to identify foreseeable trends and subject them to examination by using a systematic approach. The topics dealt with included the introduction of the euro etc.

However, a more comprehensive approach was lacking which mainly considered the planning needs and requirements of an internationally functioning criminal police office.

Consequently, the BKA decided to take a further step by newly founding the 'International Co-ordination' division in 2004 and to establish future-orientated corporate planning, taking into account relevant future developments of criminality within the European and international context.

I would now like to introduce two approaches with which the BKA attempted to take these requirements into consideration: early detection and environmental scan.

What do we understand by the term 'early detection'?

Early detection provides a comprehensive, systematic overview of the influencing factors relevant to the tasks carried out by the BKA. The significance of early detection for the BKA is important both for internal command and planning processes (in bodies as well as in the 'Planning and Target Establishment Conference')

and for external processes. Thus, early detection substantiates and promotes:

- the strategically correct prioritisation in connection with diminishing resources;
- the conceptual pioneer role of an authority — especially in the federal system of the German police;
- the future orientation of the authority.

The factors influencing crime development as well as the opportunities and risks for the BKA's activities were carefully analysed on a broad basis during the process of early detection. This is also done by identification and analysis of 'weak signals', also from the open-source segment.

In connection with early detection, we distinguish between two fields: geographic and strategic early detection.

Geographic early detection consists of the country reports and analyses and the regional analyses. The analyses are made up of various sources and information that have to be compiled systematically. The purpose of geographic early detection is to evaluate a country or region's significance regarding security-situation and criminal-politics, to recognise developments in that field which might interact with the security-situation in Germany and finally to develop proposals of measures to act.

Strategic early detection in its current form is a relatively new instrument at the BKA. It has been developed systematically since 2004 and has been integrated into a process that encompasses the whole authority.

The early-detection approach of the BKA is made up of four fields and concentrates on developments which will determine the next five years. All four elements form the basis for 'setting objectives, strategy planning and prioritisation' at the BKA.

The first field is 'situation reports and analyses' — these situational tasks are covered by the operational fields such as trafficking in human beings, drug crime, international terrorism etc.

This information is supplemented by phenomenon- and offence-related information obtained from the operational fields which forms the second element.

Both aspects are the basis for the expert strategies.

The third subject areas are the field of criminalistic-criminological research and technological monitoring. While technological monitoring predominantly recognises technological developments relevant to the police in good time and should check them for further development and use, it is the task of research to also address long-term assertions and developments (over a period of five years).

The fourth element is the environmental analysis which is the (product) basis of strategic early detection formed by the environmental scan. Here, the environmental scan topics society, technology, economy and politics (the STEP approach: social, technological, economic, political factors) are monitored continuously and systematically. New developments, tendencies and trends — but also 'weak signals' from other aspects than the above STEP factors — are detected at an early stage (environmental scan).

This STEP approach deals in the sociological scan ('S') with aspects like demography, matters on families, religion, migration and integration. The technology ('T') issue relates to influences of future technologies and data networks while the economical ('E') developments include the economic and social situation of the population. The political scan (P) includes questions of political understanding and participation, fear of crime, private security agencies, international police missions and developments of European internal security.

The challenge of the strategic early detection lies in the specification of relevant key factors, their relevance to the current situation and the problem of how to measure often weak signals. Other issues are the collection of well-founded data, the abstraction level, the different time horizons and, in an organisation, the involvement of decision-makers in this process.

The STEP approach is performed by a team of BKA researchers and experienced police officers. They collect, analyse and evaluate the necessary information and data. Furthermore they interact constantly with

the operational departments and the research and technology units within the BKA. Of course the process involves a lot of time and effort. It is repeated annually and is implemented in every organisational unit of our office. The 'top down — bottom up' principle is actively lived as a principle of countervailing influence.

One of the instruments used for this whole process is the scenario technique. The technique which is well established by big companies around the world consists of different systematic steps. For a police organisation using the scenario technique is still something quite new and the results and consequences of it are often under discussion. One reason for that is that expectations for concrete results sometimes might be too high.

For using the scenario technique a lot of challenges have to be faced. It starts with a definition of the problem, then the relevant key factors have to be extracted, a projection must be formed and then, finally, the relevant scenarios must be developed. The scenarios are created in the form of a best-case scenario, a worst-case scenario and a trend scenario. For each of them different options for acting then have to be developed.

As mentioned before, the early-detection process forms the basis for 'setting objectives, strategy planning and prioritisation' at the BKA. This is one of the most important matters for leading a big police organisation with a broad range of tasks.

As a recommendation for organisations considering implementing such a process the exchange of knowledge and experience with other agencies like the BKA should be sought. This might help to avoid mistakes and to invest money and personnel in the right place. Also for the use of scenario technique it is recommended to look for professional support from specialised companies. The BKA is still using external support from the private sector when it comes to this technique. Everybody familiar with the market situation knows that this is quite an expensive investment. So the definition of the key questions must be well set.

I was often asked for what reasons we as a police force are putting so much effort into this approach which seems to be time-consuming, expensive and expects no clear results.

The answer is simple: we want to do better!

A large number of factors and underlying conditions determine our actions. The environment for policing is much more complex than years ago and our current decisions lay the grounds for our future success as a police organisation.

Early detection and the environmental scan based on this offer the police management a possibility of gaining analytically supported principles for decision-making.

Thank you for your attention!