

Marešová Alena, Baloun Vladimír, Cejp Martin, Kadeřábková Drahuše:

Kriminalita v roce 2003

Criminality in 2003

ISBN 80-7338-038-2

Summary

The publication of the volume of papers on crime in 2003 represents the continuation of a long-established tradition for the IKSP: the annual publication offers a set of evaluations of the overall crime level in the previous year (with reference in the tables to the many years of statistical data on certain forms of crime in the Czech Republic) and provides an in-depth perspective on problems that were typical of a certain form of crime in the relevant year.

In the first contribution the head of the group of authors comments on the basic crime indicators in 2003, changes from the previous period and possible developments in crime in the immediate future. The appendices published at the study's end refer to the opening article.

Ing. Baloun's article forms another section of the statistical quantification of crimogenic factors, this year looking at the structure of communities by their size and the consequent effect on crime. It thus represents the fourth part of the quantification: the first part, published in 2000, examined the influence of poverty on crime, or unemployment in the regions; the second looked at the impact of the density of settlements; the third studied religiosity among the populations of comparable regions.

Dr. Cejp has traditionally addressed the question of organised crime, its state in the Czech Republic and its development up to 2003.

Ing. Kadeřábková's article describes the current state of economic crime and how it differs from previous years.

The final contribution (Dr. Martinková) looks at the issue of victims of crime in the Czech Republic in 2003 and is compiled from the Czech Police's non-standard statistical records requested by us on an annual basis.

The appendices form a separate part to the volume. These are intended *inter alia* to show the continual development of crime generally and the development of specific criminal phenomena.

The basic information referred to in the volume can be summarised briefly as follows:

The overall state of crime in the Czech Republic in 2003, as expressed by statistical data and compared with previous years, can be viewed as the continuation of an unremarkable period of stagnation. In 2003, the Police recorded a total of 357 740 crimes, which was about 15 thousand less than in the previous year. Of the crimes recorded in 2003, 135 581 were solved, which was around 16 thousand less than in 2002. Including those additionally solved, the police dealt with 154 thousand crimes for which the culprit was either known or ascertained. This means that the police recorded 36 crimes per 1 000 of the population, with Prague recording a rate of 82 crimes. This reflects Prague's proportion of overall crime, which stands at around 30 %. The amount of crimes solved in Prague also continues to fall. In all, more than three-quarters of crimes committed in Prague in 2003 (mostly property crimes) remained unsolved, which can be interpreted as meaning that a significant number of crimes committed in Prague during 2003 paid off for their perpetrators. For property crime, which generally involves burglary or 'ordinary' theft, only around 9 % of recorded crimes were solved in Prague. And when we take into account the fact that the majority of petty crimes remains latent (meaning that a proportion of the victims, whether domestic or foreign, do not report the crime to the police) we see that petty crime is one of the most profitable and low-risk occupations in the metropolis. It is clear that Prague is, among other things, still the centre of criminal tourism, and the counter-measures adopted thus far have had little or no effect.

The number of persons apprehended and investigated by the police (what is termed known offenders) for crimes recorded in the solved crimes section for 2003 also shows a reduction, albeit very minor. In comparison with 2002, there were approximately two and a half thousand fewer known offenders. In total, around 121 thousand offenders were apprehended and investigated for about 144 thousand crimes (including additionally solved with additionally ascertained culprit). As a proportion of the number of inhabitants of the Czech Republic, the Czech Police apprehended and investigated 12 persons for every 1 000 inhabitants in 2003.

Of the total number of 121 393 known offenders, 14 577, or 12 %, were women, and 6 923, or 6 %, were foreigners. Compared with 2002, the number of known offenders fell slightly and the number of culprits – foreigners rose slightly (by about 700 persons).

If we look specifically at under-age offenders (younger than 18 years of age), meaning juveniles and children up to 15, from the number of all known offenders, it is evident that in the past two years there has been a radical fall in crimes committed by them (recorded by the police) and a fall in the number of persons apprehended and investigated in this age group.

This marked reduction, which was first registered in 2002 in comparison with the previous decade, was explained by the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office of the Czech Republic in its report on activities for 2002 as follows: 1) a general fall in the numbers of juveniles as a proportion of the population; 2) the amendment to the penal code, which from 1 January 2002 radically increased the level for damage (by more than double), impacted on the statistics for juvenile crime. The amount of damage caused by crime is the most important criterion in distinguishing crimes from corresponding misdemeanours, which are not recorded in police statistics any more. In our opinion, the first reason applies for a longer time period and cannot therefore explain a reduction over one year. We thus favour the second reason.

Only future years will show which reason for the fall in crimes in 2002 and 2003 will be correct and whether the curve for the future development of crime will really begin to go down.

Translation : Marvel