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A Survey of Public Opinion on the Issue of Crime Prevention
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Summary

The publication “*A Survey of Public Opinion on the Issue of Crime Prevention*” came out of an analysis of representative empirical research material. This was initiated by the Republic Committee for the Prevention of Crime and its remit was decided by the Institute for Criminology and Social Prevention. Field data collection was carried out by the Factum Invenio agency. In all, 1100 citizens of the Czech Republic over the age of 15 were polled. The choice of respondents was made by quota based on the categories of gender, age, education, region and size of the respondent’s place of residence.

The publication addresses several fundamental areas relating to preventive work. Respondents’ opinions were ascertained on the state and development of crime, on the causes for the incidence of crime and on the preventive methods which are more or less appropriate for combating crime development. In this respect respondents were asked where they learn about crime in our society, which preventive activities they are informed about and how they assess the development and current state in selected areas of anti-social behaviour.

Part of the research focused on the issue of victimology, i.e. on questions connected to respondents’ actual experience of crime, on their concerns regarding its threat and their willingness to report crimes to the police. On the other hand, the frequency of preventive measures respondents take to safeguard their homes was monitored. The research also looked at respondents’ views on the responsibility of the state and individuals for certain areas of personal and social life. Also covered were questions involving respondents’ relation with and confidence in law-enforcement bodies (particularly the Czech Police).

No less an important part of the research project were questions on the willingness of respondents to get involved in preventive work under current living conditions. Questions addressed on the one hand their general willingness to take part in prevent work and on the other the method, form and frequency of their possible involvement.

Overall, the research results indicated that almost half of respondents are convinced of the importance of preventive work, and that a fifth of respondents would be willing to participate in some form of preventive work at present. Respondents consider that crime and the incidence of other asocial phenomena have increased, and believe the main source of these phenomena to be the influence of alcohol and non-alcohol addiction and the portrayal of violence in the media. Respondents understand that the main responsibility for safeguarding their property lies with them, but see the state as having a larger role in protection against violent crime. Respondents place most faith in preventive programs that reduce the level of unemployment and which increase access to help in emergencies (police on the streets and security cameras), in addition to programs aimed at encouraging parents to bring up their children properly, drug addiction treatment programs and also the activities of various children's and youth organisations.