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Analýza trendů criminality v roce 2013

Analysis of trends in criminality in 2013

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Summary

We are living in a time of constant change, both social and in everyday life. Therefore when comparing newly revealed phenomena and significant changes we generally only look to the preceding year and forget important events that occurred two or more years ago. For this reason it is important to map long-term development – e.g. changes that have occurred over the course of ten, twenty, fifty years etc. Only then will it be possible to reach conclusions as to whether our findings really represent a change or just a repeated fluctuation in a development trend otherwise following the same development in the long-term.

This view lies behind all publications issued annually (since 1992) by the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention, the purpose of which is to paint an overall picture of the state of criminality in the preceding year using official and ministerial internal sources of information, including materials available only on the internet, and to compare it with long-term (at least ten-year) developments on the criminal scene. Integral to the study are time series of selected criminality indicators dating from the beginnings of computer processing of statistical data on criminality, i.e. since 1973 and 1974. “Analysis of Trends in Criminality for the Year...” is published both in hard copy, but is also available in electronic form on the ICSP website.

While composing each chapter contained in the publication we make extensive use of statistical data acquired from the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, also in recent years utilising the internet. This basic data is then supplemented by statistical data from the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic and data from Supreme State Prosecutor’s Office reports, annual reports from the Prison Service and from several further departmental and non-departmental materials, evaluating the situation and trends in criminality and the situation and trends in the numbers of arrested, arraigned, convicted and imprisoned offenders in that particular year in the form of development charts. By publishing our study, we are attempting firstly to publish our own view of criminality during a particular period of time, and secondly

to focus all available information on the situation in criminality without being constricted to aspects particular to a particular authority and in a context of its development in the longer term. Since the “analysis” also exists in hard copy, it can enjoy wider use and has been repeatedly praised for the convenience commended by users of the printed edition.

The aim of the publication is to keep not only the widest possible professional community informed, but also others interested in trends in criminality in the Czech Republic, using the latest available departmental data mapping quantitative indicators on criminality in the Czech Republic.

In the first chapter of the study, the head of the team of authors (A. Marešová) comments on **the basic criminality indicators of the preceding year and the changes that have occurred over the past decade**, also presenting **information about offenders categorised according to sex, age and recidivism**. Changes in numbers of registered victims and some information on suicides are described in general terms. Appendices published at the end of the study follow up on this section in tables which expand upon the graphs appearing in the chapter with further statistical data.

As far as developments in criminality are concerned, 2013 will be permanently associated with the Czech President’s amnesty announced on 1 January 2013. President Klaus’ New Year amnesty was an unpleasant surprise **for the** majority of society because in various opinion polls, the question of amnesty has been repeatedly and fiercely rejected and society associates its potential implementation with a rise in criminality (Alena Marešová a kol., 2012). **In consequence to the enacted amnesty, the professional community was taken aback by the fact that amnesty was implemented without any systemic solution of the problems that had already arisen in the course of and in consequence of Havel’s amnesty of 1990.**

The result of President Klaus’ amnesty was the release of more 6,000 than inmates from Czech prisons and the halting of thousands of unfinished criminal cases (more than 100,000 cases in total).

When compared to the preceding period, in 2013 a several-year long trend of falling criminality halted having reached its low in 2012, and on the contrary, there was a slight rise in the numbers of criminal offences recorded. The rise was identified by the police and other authorities involved in criminal proceedings as a result of the implemented amnesty, amongst other reasons. Some of the beneficiaries of amnesty (not only released prisoners, but also those whose cases were halted at the stage before proceeding to court) began committing new criminal offences immediately on having received their pardon. Just by the end of 2013, those

amnestied committed more than 5,000 of all solved criminal offences and it is assumed also many of the unsolved crimes too, and for this reason January's amnesty is cited as one of the causes of the rise in criminality in the Czech Republic.

The other chapters inform about current issues connected with criminality, which however have been addressed in departmental materials only in brief without wider context and trend analysis. The authors of the separate chapters of this publication are exclusively ICSP employees.

The second chapter gives a description of **organised crime within the Czech Republic** and its development up until 2013. The information comes from systematic criminological research which began in the Czech Republic at the beginning of the '90s. Research, which since 1993 has predominantly taken place at the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention, has progressed from theoretical definition and establishing special methodological procedures to creating likely models of criminal groups structures and analysis both of their illegal and associated activities. In the course of this research, a range of specific topics have been processed relating to the following specific areas: manufacture, smuggling and distribution of drugs, organisation and operation of prostitution, illegal migration, theft of works of art, violent crime, extortion. Organised criminal operations in the field of finance and financial criminality also came under scrutiny. The efficacy of specific legal provisions instituted and applied with the intention of fighting organised crime are regularly evaluated. In 2014, the **XXI Expert Survey** in which **27** employees of specialised units of the Police of the Czech Republic (Criminal Police Service, Organised Crime Unit, National Anti-Drug Unit, Corruption and Financial Crime Unit) and of the General Customs Directorate and the Prague Customs Directorate all expressed their opinions on the structure and forms of operations of organised criminal groups for the year 2013. The chapter presents only some results focusing on quantitative data that reflects the structure of criminal groups operating within the Czech Republic and what their criminal and possible associated activities comprise.

The third chapter entitled "Fear of Criminality in ICSP Studies" addresses **trends in fears of specific forms of criminal activity** amongst Czech citizens, based primarily on data from two representative surveys conducted in 2005 and 2012. This data is supplemented from other sources.

The fourth chapter, contains a commentary on data from the Police of the Czech Republic **on registered victims of criminality in the year 2013** and its development trends, which is the most far-reaching material available, providing comprehensive information about

the victims of criminal activity in the Czech Republic not published elsewhere. The chapter also includes tables containing statistical data on victims, broken down into detailed categories. The chapter also contains information on various relevant events and moments during the past year in the Czech Republic and abroad associated with victims of crime, e.g. the new Victims Act which became effective as of 1 August 2013, the Victim Support Europe conference etc.

The last chapter is devoted to the matter of **recidivism pertaining to the crime of theft**. According to statistical data addressing the structure of criminality and the proportion of separate types of crime against overall criminality, **theft** is the most frequently occurring crime of all in the Czech Republic, regardless of region. Perpetrators of theft also make up the largest prisoner category. As a rule, these are also the most frequent reoffenders of all perpetrators of crimes. The new Penal Code has stiffened up the penalty in cases of special recidivism, and the fifth chapter focuses on how this change has manifested itself in judicial practice. It also contains a proposal for possible amendment of the Penal Code.

Appendices form a significant part of the publication – tables showing continual development of criminality overall and also the development of individual types, and also less readily available information discovered while addressing other ICSP tasks which however has a wider relevance to the matter of evaluating criminality in the Czech Republic (e.g. statistical data on the numbers of people imprisoned worldwide). In view of the sheer number of graphs, tables, footnotes and appendices directly unrelated to each other, these are numbered separately in each chapter to ease orientation.

Translated by: Presto