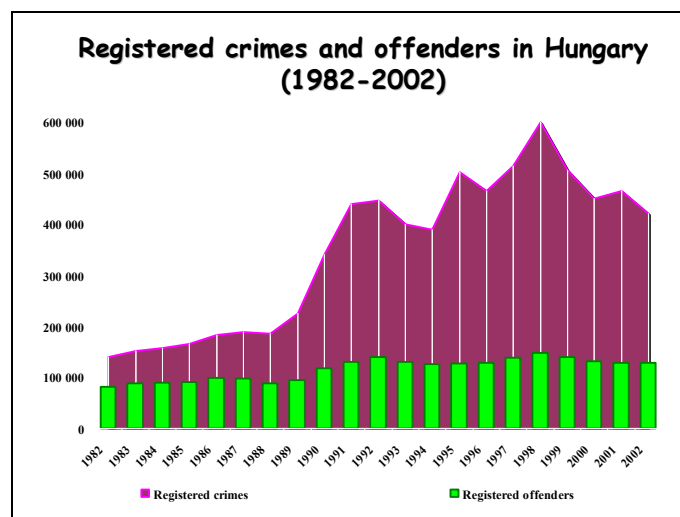


## The National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention

No one could question that the rise of crime and anti-social behaviour is a major blot on the CEE transition landscape. Western support for crime prevention measures in the accession states centres on combating organised crime, drug and people smuggling and the arms trade. Yet the type of crime that most affects ordinary people and determines their attitude to society and authority is relatively low level crime and anti-social behaviour committed within the community. It is seen as the most negative aspect of transition from ordered state to an open society, sometimes described as “the blind hole of the EU”.



The source of data is the detailed and public database of the Uniform Police-Prosecution Crime Statistics, which has been operating on the same principles since 1963. Data are recorded in this database when the stage of investigation is closed.

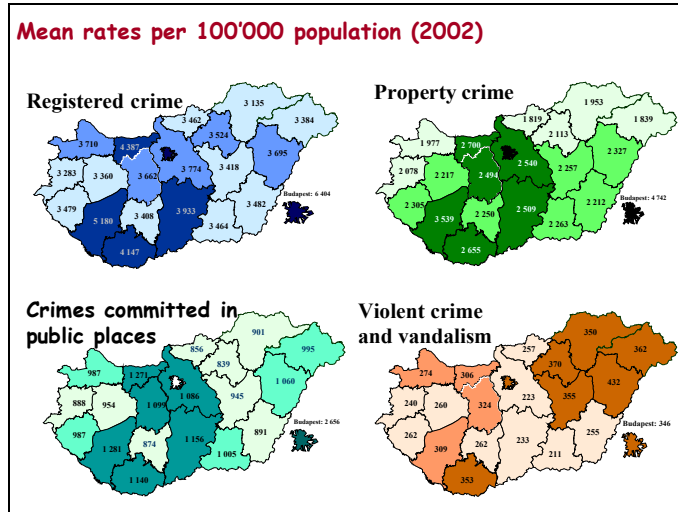
Why was a new crime prevention strategy needed? It turned out that the traditional methods of dealing with crime are not sufficient any longer.

In the period between 1970 and 1995, the number of revealed crimes increased fourfold in Hungary. The public was shocked by the speed of this rise in crime; however this phenomenon was not specific to Hungary, and similar trends could be observed in each of the former socialist bloc countries. Over a span of just three years (1989–1992), Hungarians had to face the boom in crime which Western Europe had two decades to get used to. Nevertheless, crime rates in Hungary (with an average of 410–450 per ten thousand of population) cannot be considered high.

It was primarily the increase in the number of crimes against property, which accounted for the rise (theft, burglary and robbery in particular). One in ten offences reported are public order offences. Consequently, property and public order offences constitute nearly 90 percent of all reported crime.

The rise in the number of identified offenders has lagged far behind the increase in the number of reported offences. The involvement of young people in crime has increased to a worrying extent.

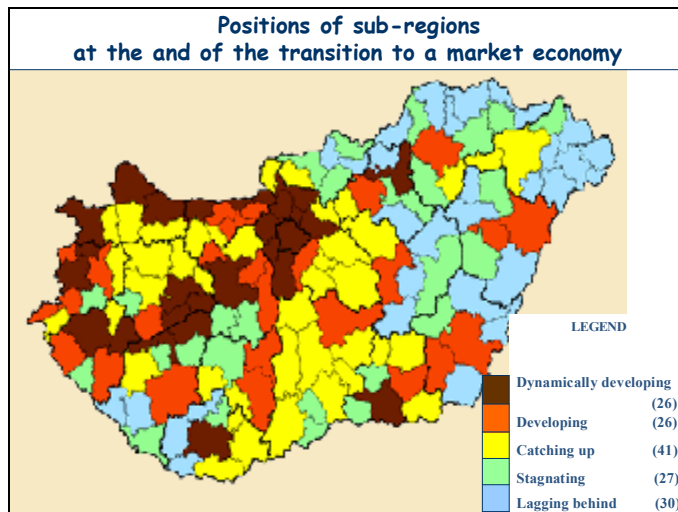
Approximately 3-400,000 victims of crime are registered each year. If the victims' families are included, then nearly 1.5 million people experience the consequences of crime.



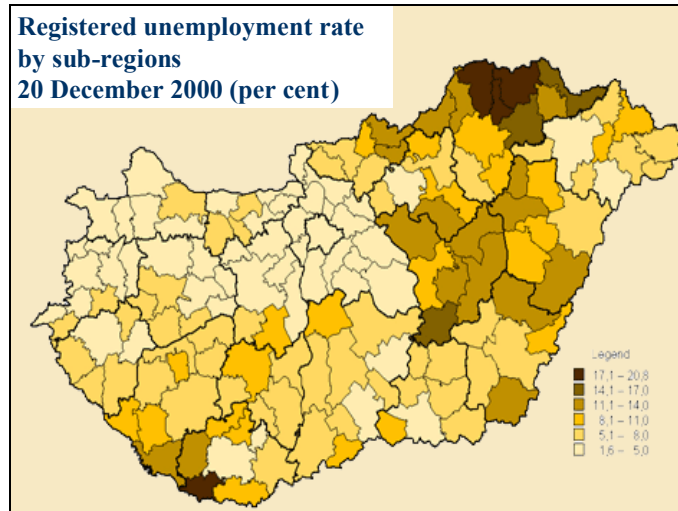
The crime prevention strategy stresses, that safety is a “common property” that everybody should share.

The levels of registered crime varied across different counties. The number of crimes against property has a crucial impact on the number of crimes in total. The population's sense of security is greatly influenced by the fact that in recent years near one third of revealed crimes were committed in public areas.

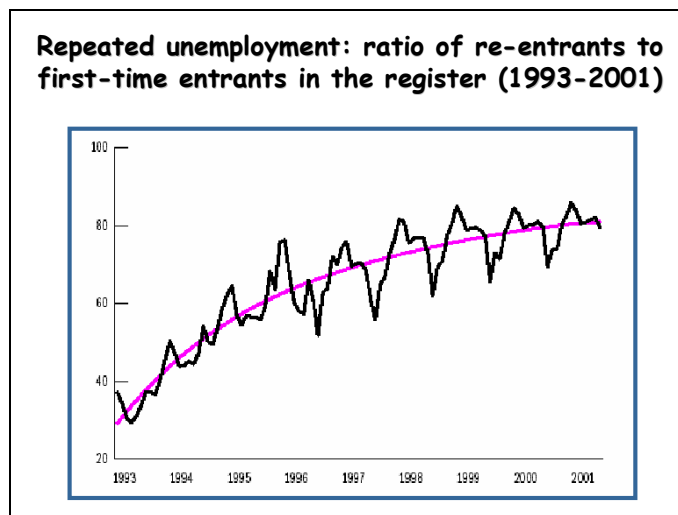
As regards violent crimes and vandalism, the differences between the counties/police jurisdictions are also significant. Committing violent crime and vandalism often goes hand in hand with alcohol consumption. Unfortunately Hungary occupies a leading position as regards total alcohol consumption. The role of alcohol has increased significantly in violent crimes: between 1985 and 1990 28 percent of offenders committed these kind of crimes under the influence of alcohol; between 1991 and 2001 this figure rose to 40 percent.







Legal employment forms a bond with society. Crime is linked to unemployment through the latter's connection with poverty and income inequality. The substantial number of inactive people, who have disengaged from the labour market, together with the worsening situation of the Roma and other disadvantaged groups, requires increased and more effective use of assistance in tackling the “East/West divide” within the country.



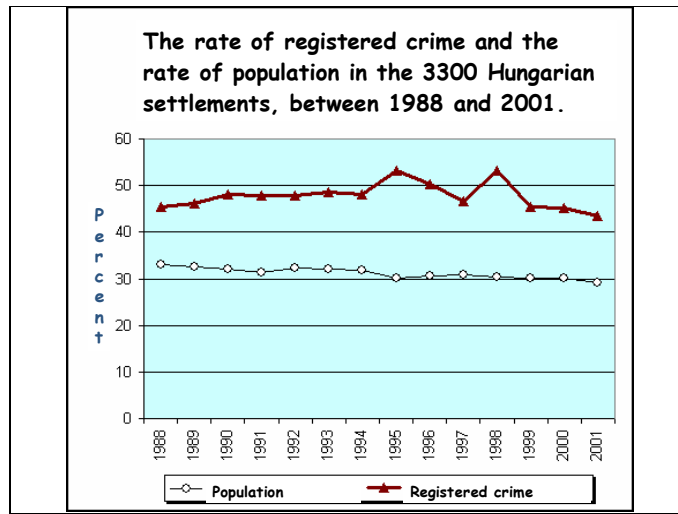
Longitudinal research among cohorts of young people explicitly shows that whether or not, crime is committed strongly depends on unemployment. Here, it must immediately be said that many unemployed persons do not belong to a high-risk group. Age plays a critical role. These factors alert us to two main points.

1. Firstly, youth should be a primary focus for crime prevention. Many of the factors that lead to crime are ones that require early intervention. The experience of the past 20 years shows that the “criminal careers” are starting at an increasingly younger age.

For instance:

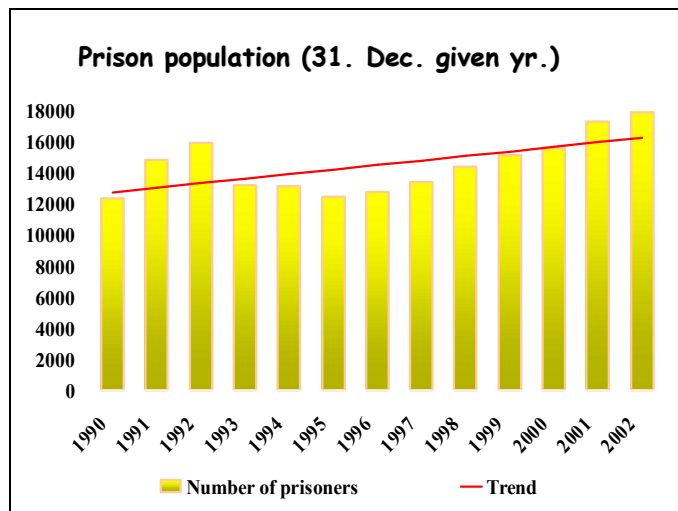
- 12 of every 100 identified offenders are juvenile.
- Every third robbery is committed by a juvenile.
- More than the half of the convicted juvenile delinquents has not completed primary education.

2. Secondly, the built environment can impact on crime, and can therefore be manipulated to reduce levels of crime.



Crime is principally an urban phenomenon in Hungary, too. Urban residents are 25-30% more likely to experience crime than those living in other areas. Three-quarters of revealed crimes are committed in cities and towns (in Hungary, urban residents account for half of the country's population). In the capital the situation is even worse.

The rise of urban crime is also a cause of population outflow from the cities and the emerging segregation in inner areas of the large cities, especially Budapest.



During the past ten years, the prison population in Hungary has steadily increased. The prisons are incredibly overcrowded. It is well-known that people of Romany origin are disproportionately represented in prison.

The number of adult first offenders has grown by about a third, but the number of adult offenders with previous criminal records has multiplied dramatically by 2 to 2.5 times.

The people, who are processed as offenders by the criminal justice system and, especially, those who end up in prison, come, to a hugely disproportionate extent, from the lowest strata

of Hungarian society. These offenders tend to be from much marginalised groups in terms both of material wealth and access to the opportunities and benefits of society.

I tried to summarize you briefly the background of our crime prevention strategy.

During the assessment process leading to it we used SWOT analysis, because the internal consistency of the CP strategy needed to be strengthened by highlighting how it would contribute to achieving the different (and potentially conflicting) objectives and priorities.

- We tried to be as realistic as we could
- We tried to distinguish between recent and future crime prevention activities
- We tried to be as specific as we could, so as to avoid grey areas
- Last but not least, we tried to keep our SWOT short and simple
- But we should keep in mind that SWOT is always subjective.

From this we could then do three things:

- Determine priority areas
- Establish goals pertaining to these areas
- Put in place action plan to achieve these goals

<p><b><i>SWOT:</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Strengths:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Public Foundation for a Safe Hungary (mitigation of damages for victims of violent crimes)</li> <li>➤ Victim protection bureaus and Crime Prevention Centre at the Ministry of the Interior</li> <li>➤ National Crime Prevention Council was set up in 1995</li> <li>➤ Ministry of the Interior has developed a crime prevention network in the counties</li> <li>➤ Certain NGOs have also developed an awareness of the importance of crime prevention</li> <li>➤ The development of the standardised probation system</li> <li>➤ Widespread situational crime prevention has brought in civilian resources</li> <li>➤ The police's and local governments' increased efforts to reduce crime opportunity</li> </ul>
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The analysis was performed in different sub-categories. Concerning [Strengths and Weaknesses]: Resources; Structure; Value and Level of Professionalism. Based on the findings of the professional analysis we have identified some items in each area to use as the focus for this strategic plan.

Examples of such strengths include:

- Public Foundation supports the victims of violent crime and mitigating their damages
- recognition of the importance of victim protection is shown by the fact that the Victim Protection Bureau was established in the Ministry of the Interior;
- the existence of the National Crime Prevention Council since 1995;
- at the turn of the 1990s a number of settlements set up “civil guard” organisations as civil initiatives (there are 600 such NGOs existing today);
- Crime prevention received special attention in the work of the police. The police and local governments increased their efforts for spread out situational crime prevention information.

The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. In some cases a weakness may be a flip side of strength. For example some local authorities established their crime prevention committees, but they are still in the initial phases of establishing the new system. Researches indicate that partly personal factors, partly the size of the problem make the local government take the public safety issue seriously.

<b><i>SWOT:</i></b>	<b><i>Weaknesses:</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Communication and co-operation between ministries is ineffective</li> <li>&gt; Financial resources are insufficient</li> <li>&gt; No special services available to victims and offenders</li> <li>&gt; Communal participation in supporting justice system tasks is very limited</li> <li>&gt; Ineffective information flow in the criminal justice system</li> <li>&gt; Recidivism prevention is a low-priority issue in the penal system</li> <li>&gt; Local governments lack an adequate sense of responsibility for local public security</li> <li>&gt; Lack of co-operation with social, health care and educational organizations</li> <li>&gt; Crime management system disregards ethnic minority issues</li> <li>&gt; Lack of comprehensive information on latent crime and frequency of victimization</li> <li>&gt; Low ratio of cleared-up crimes</li> </ul>

The following features were considered as weaknesses - among many others:

- The shortage of financial resources
- The lack of specialized victim services
- Local governments lack an adequate sense of responsibility for local public security. Although they financially support local police units, they are not so willing to take the broader responsibility for crime prevention
- A standard system of measuring latent crime is underdeveloped in Hungary. Many researchers feel that victimization surveys are the only accurate measure of crime. Police forces consider police statistics as a better measure. In reality, a dual approach can be most effective in understanding crime.

<b><i>SWOT:</i></b>	<b><i>Opportunities:</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The Government's commitment to crime prevention guarantees workability</li> <li>&gt; New welfare programme seeks to tackle social, employment, and educational problems</li> <li>&gt; Nationwide children's welfare and child protection system</li> <li>&gt; Hungary has a modern drug strategy</li> <li>&gt; A national network of legal aid services is being developed</li> <li>&gt; An anti-discrimination law is under way</li> <li>&gt; Accession to the EU will significantly increase financial resources available for prevention tasks</li> <li>&gt; Making the media an ally in mediating crime prevention objectives</li> <li>&gt; Joining to the European Crime Prevention Network</li> </ul>

As I mentioned earlier the SWOT analysis was performed in different sub-categories. Concerning the external environmental analysis [Opportunities and Threats] we took: Political; Economic; Social and Technical sub-categories.

The analyses revealed certain new opportunities for crime prevention. Some examples of these include:

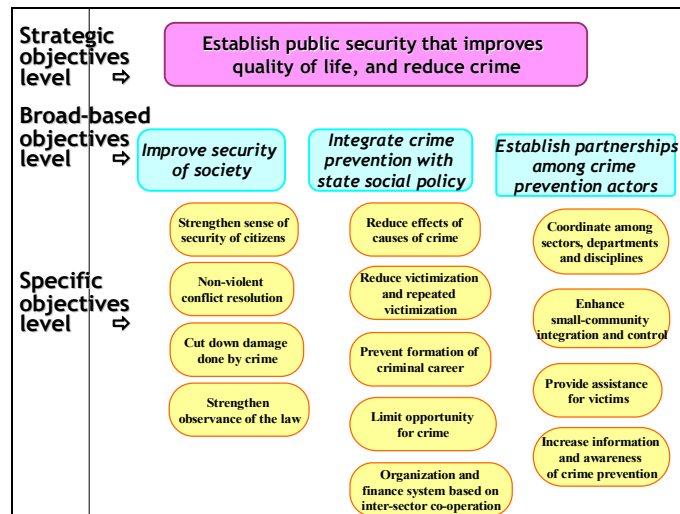
- First of all, the Government's commitment to crime prevention is essentially for launching any kind of new initiatives
- A nationwide children's welfare and child protection system has been set up
- A new drug strategy and action plan is under implementation
- The media could help to spread out information on crime prevention programs and results
- Joining to the EUCPN brings new possibilities, for example to adopt blue-print model-programs in crime prevention

<b><i>SWOT:</i></b>	<b><i>Threats:</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Cancellation of institutionalization of co-operation system</li> <li>➤ Different organizational culture and special interests might overwrite crime prevention objectives</li> <li>➤ Actual accomplishment may be at variance with political intentions and expectations</li> <li>➤ Insufficient commitment of certain organisations could be counter-productive</li> <li>➤ Lack of necessary funding and/or unequally distributed funds</li> <li>➤ Increasing disparity between regions</li> <li>➤ Fear of crime still does not match the facts regarding the dangers of becoming a victim</li> <li>➤ A generation has grown up whose socialisation lacks work culture</li> <li>➤ Further increase in rate of criminals from marginal social groups</li> <li>➤ Many media still only consider sensation to be marketable</li> <li>➤ Local governments' commitment to tasks will not go beyond supporting situational crime prevention</li> </ul>

Changes in the external environmental also may presents threats to the working system of crime prevention.

Some examples of such threats include:

- Different organizational culture might overwrite crime prevention objectives in the practice
- Insufficient commitment is always counter-productive
- Fear of crime will not match with the danger of victimization and new information will deepen this kind of fear
- There is no special resource at the local authorities for crime prevention, and they might confined to support situational crime prevention



We could define the three levels of our objectives in crime prevention strategy.

- On one hand they have emerged by clustering the key areas identified in other ministerial policies and plans – those in which problems are overlapping with community safety issues.
- On the other hand we summarized the results of former and present-day professional crime prevention efforts and fitted them to the new demands.

We think that there is no reason to change the overall objectives of crime prevention strategy, but priorities themselves should change from time to time, if the underlying circumstances transform.

The notion of social crime prevention encompasses a range of initiatives/objectives, which previously may not have been considered “crime prevention”. It is a well-known fact that the population’s sense of security is influenced – in addition to crime figures – by factors such as worsening living standards, greater unemployment rates, or the lack of future prospects.

The strategic, the broad-based and the specific objectives of the strategy are in a (cross)-link connection. This is helpful in order to understand that the different priorities and measures at specific and broad-based level do not stand alone, but are embedded in a broader context.

In general terms, the strategy covers a wide range of areas and opens the door for a fairly large number of measures.

On the strategic objectives level, the crime prevention strategy aimed at achieving public security in a way that improves quality of life must therefore be based on a comprehensive set of objectives. It must improve quality of life by creating security for the public and reducing crime.

The three broad-based objectives may be regarded as giving the main directions of the strategy. These are:

- to improve the security of the public;
- to integrate crime prevention into state social policy;
- to set up partnerships between different parties from the community involved in crime prevention.

They are enabling a vertical approach to the social crime prevention strategy in three major target areas:

- the everyday life of the public;
- the arena of social policy concerned with crime prevention;
- local and multi-sector players active in crime prevention.

This three-way division will make the goals clear both to the “subjects” of public security – the citizens – and to the bodies responsible for implementing the strategy: the state and public administration bodies in charge of management and action, and local people and organisations involved in community crime prevention.

The community crime prevention strategy identified following five priority crime prevention tasks for Hungary:

1. Prevention and reduction of juvenile crime
2. Improving urban security
3. Prevention of violence within the family
4. Prevention of victimization, assisting victims and compensating victims
5. Prevention of recidivism

Before finishing my presentation I would like to remind you the title one of Professor Nils Christie’s article. He asked the question of the day: “How tightly knit a society?” So we could ask: How much can present societies endure of mobility, geographically and socially without falling into pieces?

Well, crime prevention strategy presented here has given a possible answer to this basic question. Hungary therefore faces unique challenges in developing and implementing its social crime prevention agenda.