

## COOPERATION AMONG THE POLICE, CUSTOMS AND THE BORDER GUARD - Particularly in combatting serious crime

Serious crime, which is often international and organized, is known to have considerable social impacts as well as economic consequences. Damage caused by financial crime and the black economy and drug crime is estimated to total billions of euros a year. With threats multiplying, cooperation among authorities is increasingly important. In addition to combating drug, financial and property crime, cooperation among the Police, Customs and the Border Guard is expanding to new areas that are also significant for the European Union, such as fighting organized terrorism and illegal immigration.

The main question in this audit concerned the achievement of the objectives that have been set for cooperation among the Police, Customs and the Border Guard, especially from the viewpoint of effectiveness. The aim was to survey how well objectives have been met, how and with what indicators activities and their effects have been monitored and evaluated, and what obstacles and development needs have arisen.

Cooperation among the Police, Customs and the Border Guard has been based mainly on a Government decree, official orders and cooperation agreements, some of which have become outdated as a result of changes in activities and operating conditions. Cooperation should be covered by legislative provisions and these should place emphasis on combatting serious and international crime. The joint criminal intelligence and analysis work that began in 2004, largely on the basis of orders issued by the Ministry of the Interior, and the related handling of register information particularly lack a sufficient legal basis.

The kind of information that can be collected in criminal intelligence and analysis work should be spelled out and the exchange of information should be improved at different levels of administration. Collecting information to combat serious and organized crime

as well as possible is also important because information obtained through intelligence work is exchanged at the EU level, where decisions are made concerning international crime-fighting and the selection of targets.

The most significant problem in the joint use of information systems has involved restrictions on mass transfers of data. This should be taken into account in developing legislation.

Cooperation in combatting crime has been emphasized in several Government resolutions, including those behind the Internal Security Programme, the Action Programmes to Reduce Financial Crime and the Black Economy and the Drug Policy Action Programme. These programmes have not been adequately monitored, however. Monitoring should be developed so that it produces essential information for decision-makers and different actors on the achievement of objectives and also to support the planning of future activities.

Information obtained through intelligence, analysis and investigation work should be put to better use in activities so that this is visible at the planning and strategy level and in performance targets. The Police, Customs and the Border Guard should have joint focuses and performance targets, aimed for example at making it more difficult for organized crime groups to operate. Monitoring should pay special attention to creating indicators to measure performance and effectiveness in combatting serious, international and organized crime.

Despite the lack of concrete indicators, cooperation among the Police, Customs and the Border Guard has supposedly led to rationalization and cost cutting in a number of areas. Joint criminal intelligence and analysis work has supported operational activities and the detection of serial crime and helped authorities keep up with the crime situation and report on it in a new way. Cooperation has aided in selecting targets and focusing investigations. Positive experience has also been obtained in the sharing of official tasks, patrolling, the joint use of special equipment and the arranging of training.

The cooperation model applied in Finland has been considered exemplary in international evaluations. Increasing knowledge of good practices in the member states has been regarded as important in the European Union. Also in this respect it is essential to achieve a competent and reliable system for evaluating the effects of activities.