

1 POLICE STATISTICS

1.A.2 COMMENTS

1.A.2.1 Methodology

19. Three countries (Luxembourg, Malta and Turkey) reported not to have written counting rules (i.e. rules regulating the way in which the data shown in this table are recorded). As two of these countries are small, it can still be assumed that there is some consistency in the recording practices of the police. For countries that report to have written counting rules it should be kept in mind that the existence of counting rules is not a guarantee for consistency, but rather a stimulus.

20. Variations from the standard definition supplied are important when comparing levels of recorded crime. In particular it should be noted that:

- Twelve countries excluded assault leading to death from their homicide statistics and seven infanticide.
- Assaults vary widely in definition with sixteen countries including minor assaults which consist of only slapping and punching and three including threats. It also became clear during the survey that many Eastern European countries counted many assaults as public order offences.
- Rape statistics will be affected by the exclusion of violent intramarital intercourse (ten countries) or sexual intercourse without force with a helpless person (seven countries).
- Theft of small value was excluded by seven countries.
- The concept of burglary varies widely with some countries adopting a relatively narrow definition while others apply the (continental law) concept of aggravated theft. Thirteen countries include theft from a car as burglary. Definitions for domestic burglary appeared more consistent.
- For drug offences the standard definition could not be met by twenty-two countries.

21. The point in time in which the data is recorded, varies between countries. Only fifteen countries reported that offences were recorded (immediately) when the offence was first reported to the police. In thirteen countries recording is done subsequently, and in eight only after investigation. It is difficult to interpret these findings, but it seems safe to assume that the answers “immediately” and “subsequently” imply that the legal labelling of the offence is the task of the police (*input statistics*), while the answer “after investigation” seems to indicate that the labelling is done by the prosecuting authorities (*output statistics*) once the police enquiry has been completed. This might explain some of the differences in levels between countries, in particular for such offences as homicide and assault.

22. The rules for recording both multiple and serial offences vary between countries. Fifteen countries replied saying that they would record a multiple offence as two or more offences and eighteen countries as one offence (for details refer to tables 1.C.1 and 1.C.2.1.).

23. Thirty-three countries answered the question on the number of police officers. About one half (sixteen) were not able to meet the standard definition of a police officer (for details refer to tables 1.C.3.1. and 1.C.3.2).

1.A.2.3 Commentary on data collected

24. Some rather simple conclusions can be drawn from the data. In the following paragraphs rates per 100,000 population will be discussed for homicide, assault, rape, burglary and drug offences including trends in these rates. Brief comments on police staff and expenditure will also be made.

25. Some countries show very large increases in both recorded crime and suspected offenders over the years 1990 - 1996. This generally reflected low 1990 figures in several central and eastern European countries rather than high 1996 figures. In addition, large increases do not usually reflect actual increases in the rates under consideration, but more likely improvements in data collection or changes in policy.

26. For tables 1.B.2.2.1 to 1.B.2.2.3 (percentage of female, juvenile and alien suspected offenders) there was a wide variation between countries which could not be explained easily. However, for all offences and countries – with only two exceptions – the proportion of female offenders was considerably lower than 50%.

27. The highest proportions of suspected juvenile offenders (persons under 18) were found for theft of motor vehicles and bicycles and the lowest for violent and drug offences.

28. Only one half of the countries provided figures on the percentage of suspected offenders who were aliens. This is obviously a sensitive subject and, in practice, the nationality or ethnic origin of the suspected offender is not always recorded in the relevant statistics.

Homicide

29. Homicide rates varied considerably between countries, especially when attempted homicide was included. In 1990, the highest rate of total homicide (in Northern Ireland) was about 40 times as high as the lowest (in Ireland). In 1996, Ireland still had the lowest rate (despite a considerable increase over this period), but the highest rate (about 14 times higher) was reported by Russia. Seven countries showed a decrease in homicide rates between 1990 and 1996; the highest fall was for Northern Ireland, due to the cessation of paramilitary activity in 1994-1996.

30. For completed homicide (excluding attempts) in 1990, the lowest rate again was found in Ireland, but the highest in Russia. In 1996, Luxembourg had the lowest rate and Russia the highest. The largest increase was found in Ireland; ten countries reported a decrease. Several countries in central and eastern Europe had high increases up to 1994 and a fall between 1994 and 1996.

31. The comparison of the rates of completed homicides for nineteen countries with intentional homicide as recorded in health statistics, shows interesting differences as is indicated in summary table 1i. Though there is some correlation between the two indicators, police statistics seem to underestimate the volume of completed homicides for Austria, Denmark and Switzerland and overestimate it for France, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal.

32. The proportion of suspected female offenders in 1995 had a maximum of 21% for completed homicide; this proportion was only usually higher for theft (total). The overall

proportion of juvenile offenders among those suspected of homicide was smaller than for most other offences with a maximum of 10%.

Assault

33. It should be borne in mind that the assault rates presented in the Sourcebook might sometimes exclude a specific sub-category of offences, which could be called “breach of the public order” or “hooliganism”, as seems to be the case in several eastern European countries such as Bulgaria, Russia or Romania. In the countries mentioned offences of this type are not recorded at police level and for this reason assault rates tend to be surprisingly low. This issue of definition was not taken into account in the Sourcebook questionnaire.

34. Apart from this specific problem, other rather big differences between countries could not be explained in a fully satisfactory way. In principle, countries where “only causing pain” and “slapping/punching” were included in the definition of assault should have high rates of assault, as was the case for Sweden and Scotland; however, there were exceptions to this rule such as Cyprus, Estonia and Turkey. Differences in the rules for counting multiple assaults may also be important here.

35. Although, in general, assault rates increased between 1990 and 1996, in five countries there were falls of 10% or more (Czech Republic, Ireland, Malta, Moldova, Spain). The proportion of suspected female offenders was, overall, relatively high, that of juveniles relatively low in relation to their share in the total population.

Table 1.i: Completed intentional homicide in 1994, rate per 100,000 according to police statistics and health statistics

police statistics	lowest 33% (< 1.5)	middle 33% ($1.5 - 2.65$)	highest 33% (> 2.65)
<i>health statistics</i>			
lowest 33%	Greece Norway Sweden	France Luxembourg Netherlands	
middle 33%	Austria Denmark Switzerland	Germany Poland Slovenia	Hungary Portugal
highest 33%			Bulgaria Estonia Finland Latvia Russia

Rape

36. The level of rape offences recorded by the police will be influenced by the willingness of victims to report such offences. Changes in such reporting may be reflected in the changes measured between 1990 and 1996. It is therefore interesting to compare police statistics to the results of crime victimisation surveys. In summary table 1.ii, the average rape rate over 1990 - 1996 is cross tabulated against the average sexual assault rate for 1988 - 1995 from the

international crime victim survey (ICVS).¹ According to police statistics, between 1 and 20 rapes were recorded per 100000 inhabitants, while according to the ICVS between 1 and 3400 people per 100000 become victims of sexual assault. Of course, a large part of this difference will be due to the fact that the concept of sexual assault is broader than that of rape.

37. If we use both rates as indicators of the occurrence of sexual offences, it is interesting to note that some countries had very low police figures but very high ICVS figures (Albania, Italy). The scores for Bulgaria and Northern Ireland were relatively high in the police statistics, but very low in the ICVS.

¹ We used the sexual assault rate for urban areas, as given in the ICVS, because this allows ranking of the largest number of countries.

Table 1.ii: Rape, rate according to police statistics, averaged over 1990 - 1996 vs. sexual assault, rate according to ICVS, averaged over 1988 - 1995

	rape lowest 33% (police statistics) (< 5.1)	middle 33% (5.2 - 7.9)	highest 33% (> 8.0)
sexual assault (ICVS)			
lowest 33% (< 1.0%)	Croatia Hungary Malta Spain Switzerland	Latvia Romania	Bulgaria Northern Ireland
middle 33% (1.0 - 1.7%)	Lithuania The F.Y.R.O. Macedonia	Finland Germany Scotland	Belgium France Netherlands England & Wales
highest 33% (> 1.7%)	Albania Italy	Austria Czech Republic Estonia Poland Slovenia	Norway Russia Sweden

38. In most countries rape offences recorded by the police rose between 1990 and 1996. The main exceptions were Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Russia, Slovenia and Switzerland. However, as stated previously, any changes may only reflect differences in reporting practices.

39. It is rather surprising to see women among the offenders suspected of having committed rape offences; several countries such as France and the Netherlands actually reported figures of up to four percent. The most likely explanation is that suspected female offenders acted as accomplices in rape incidents. The proportion of juvenile suspects varied considerably between countries, but was on average slightly lower than for most other offences.

Burglary

40. The proportion of burglaries defined as domestic varied to a large extent: in Albania, France, Germany, Ireland, England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, for instance, about half of all burglaries recorded were domestic, while countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” reported much lower proportions. Such differences appear to be related to whether or not theft from a car was included in total burglaries.

41. In a number of countries both total burglaries and domestic burglaries having risen from 1990 and 1993 have fallen since then. The overall proportion of women among suspected offenders was relatively low, while that of juveniles was relatively high.

Drug offences

42. None of the twenty-six countries which provided figures on drug offences (total) for the whole period 1990 - 1996 reported a decrease. Only four of them showed an increase of less than 15% while four other countries reported an increase of more than 1000%. For many countries the increase was from a very low base rate leading to apparent increases of more than 1000% (e.g. Romania).

43. Approximately one third of the countries had less than 20 drug offences (total) per 100000 population in 1996. Another third had levels of more than 100 drug offences per 100000.

44. Fewer countries (eighteen) could provide figures on drug trafficking with the proportion varying from at least 50% of all drug offences to only 20%. This seems to reflect different policies as regards drug possession/use. For example, in Italy and the Netherlands possession of small quantities of drugs for an offender's own use would not be recorded as an offence whereas in France and Switzerland it would be (for details refer to table 0.II.J and 1.B.1.13).

45. The proportion of suspected female offenders varied widely among countries, with Poland having a relatively high figure (50%) for drug offences (total) and Italy for drug trafficking (40%).

Trends

46. The following table summarises trends (i.e. percentage changes between 1990 and 1996) in police data for several types of offences.

Table 1.iii: Trends in police data (percentage change between 1990 and 1996)

	Homicide		Assault	Rape	Robbery (Total)	Theft		Burglary (Total)	Drug offences (Total)
	Total	Com- pleted				Total	Motor vehicl e		
Albania									
Austria	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	++
Belgium									
Bulgaria	++	+	++	+	++	++	++	++	
Croatia	-		0	-	0	-		-	++
Cyprus	+	-	++	++	+	-		0	++
Czech Republic	+	+	-	-	+	+	++	+	
Denmark	0	+	0	-	0	0	+	-	0
Estonia	++	+	+	+	++	+	+		++
Finland	+	0	+	0	-	0	0	+	++
France	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0	+
Germany	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	+
Greece	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	++
Hungary	+	+	+	0	0	+	++	+	++
Ireland	++	++	--	+	+	0	0	0	+
Italy	-	-	+	+	-	-	0	0	+
Latvia	+		++	0	--	+	+		++
Lithuania	+		+	-	++	+	++		++
Luxembourg	+	--	+	+	0	-	+	+	0
Malta	0		-	++	-	-	-	-	
Moldova	+		-	-	0	-		-	+
Netherlands	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	0
Norway									
Poland	+	+	+	0	+	0	++	-	+
Portugal									
Romania	0	0	+	+	++	++	+		++
Russia	+	+	+	--	++	+	++	+	++
Slovenia	+	+	+	-	++	-	+	-	++
Spain	0		-				-		
Sweden	+	-	+	+	0	0	-	0	+
Switzerland	-	-	+	-	0	-	-	0	++
The F.Y.R.O. Macedonia	+	0	+	0	++	+	++	++	++
Turkey	+		+		+	++	++		
United Kingdom									
England & Wales	++	0	+	+	++	0	0	+	
Northern Ireland	--	--	+	++	0	0	+	0	++
Scotland	+	++	+	++	+	-	0	-	++

-- = decrease of 50% or more, - = decrease of 10 – 50 %, 0 = decrease or increase of less than 10% , + increase of 10 – 100%, ++ increase of 100% or more

Police staff

47. The rate of police officers (excluding civilians) per 100000 population (hereafter referred to as police density), in the countries that provided data varied between 200 and 700. In summary table 1.iv, the distribution over five density categories is given.

Table 1.iv: Number of police officers (excluding civilians) per 100000 population (police density) in 1995

under 200	200 - 299	300 – 399	400 - 499	500 and over
Denmark	England &	Albania	Croatia	Cyprus
Finland	Wales	Austria	Czech Republic	Northern
Netherlands	Luxembourg	Belgium	Greece	Ireland
Romania	Moldova	Estonia	Italy	
Switzerland	Norway	France	Lithuania	
	Poland	Hungary	Malta	
	Scotland	Ireland		
	Slovenia	Latvia		
	Sweden	Portugal		
	Turkey	Spain		
		The F.Y.R.O.		
		Macedonia		

48. 33% of the countries had a police density between 300 and 400 and 60% had a density between 200 and 400. Densities of more than 500 were only found in Cyprus and Northern Ireland, while densities below 200 existed in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland. Overall there does not seem to be a clear relationship between police density and the level of recorded crime.

49. There were considerable differences in the ratio police officers/civilian employees. In four countries (Lithuania, Slovenia, Sweden and England & Wales), about one third of the staff were civilians. In five countries (Croatia, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) about a quarter of the police staff were civilians, while in eleven countries (Albania, Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey) this proportion was about one tenth or less. In summary table 1.v civilian staff was included in police density and the distribution given over five categories.

Table 1.v: Police staff (officers and civilians) per 100000 population in 1995

under 300	300 - 399	400 - 499	500 - 599	600 and over
Denmark	Albania	Austria	Cyprus	Croatia
Finland	Belgium	Estonia	Czech Republic	Lithuania
Luxembourg	England &	Hungary	Malta	Northern
Moldova	Wales	Latvia		Ireland
Netherlands	France	Slovenia		
Romania	Ireland	The F.Y.R.O.		
Sweden	Norway	Macedonia		
Switzerland	Poland			
Turkey	Portugal			
	Scotland			
	Spain			

Police expenditure

50. Figures on police expenditure (running costs) were provided by 25 countries; only 20 of them were able to provide data on capital costs. When the expenditure in ECUs per 100000 population was computed (see table 1.B.1.3), eight countries (Cyprus, Finland, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and England & Wales) emerged which had running costs of between 100000 and 150000. Four countries (Croatia, Greece, Malta and Portugal) had running costs between 50000 and 100000, and eleven (Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and Scotland) reported running costs of less than 50000. However, since the definition of a police officer and the methods used to estimate running and capital costs varied widely between countries such conclusions must be treated with caution.