

Conclusions

1st Annual Conference of the Max Planck Partner Group for Balkan Criminology

"Mapping the Criminological Landscape of the Balkans"

Zagreb, 28th to 30th of August 2014

Introduction

After three days of an intensive and productive work during the 1st Annual Conference of the Max Planck Partner Group for Balkan Criminology, this short paper aims to summarise the main findings as well as present what was proposed in order to further build a sustainable Balkan Criminology Network.

The Max Planck Partner Group for Balkan Criminology, established in January 2013 by the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law and the Zagreb Faculty of Law, conducts scientific research and works to facilitate a regional network of experts in the field of criminology and criminal justice. The main goal of the Conference was to jointly explore the state of art of criminological research and crime in Southeast Europe. Based on the uniform feedback from the participants, we believe that the Conference accomplished this objective.

The Conference was organized with the generous support of the Max Planck Society, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law and the Zagreb Faculty of Law. Participation and engagement of more than 30 experts from law faculties from all the countries in the region was also essential for the success of this meeting. We would like to thank all of them for the important contributions and for making this significant and regionally unique scientific cooperation possible.

Conclusions

The following proposals and conclusions have emerged from the Conference:

- It was proposed to develop a template for annual national reports which should be submitted by participants prior to the BC conference. The primary rationale was that this would help to optimize the time of the conference to share and explore ideas/themes collectively.



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- Smaller working groups and/or workshops on particular topics, which could easily meet for a day or two, were considered to be optimal because they could be more operational than a conference.
- Almost uniformly, the presentations indicated that the most significant problem in undertaking criminological research in the region is accessing and collecting valid data. Overcoming this obstacle would provide an opportunity to more readily publish country surveys about criminology and crime in the Balkans in such journals as the *European Journal of Criminology*.
- Although there was some reservation about creating a sustainable Balkan Criminology journal at this point, it was agreed that starting a Balkan Criminology Newsletter would be a good start to provide a platform for sharing research and ideas.
- In an effort to initiate a possible agenda and theme for next year, several topics and issues were discussed. It was suggested that next year there should be a specific topic (e.g., corruption, sentencing etc.).
- The group agreed that it would be beneficial to have a Working Group on Balkan Criminology within the European Society of Criminology (ESC). The relevant application has meanwhile been accepted. The creation of an ESC working group will enable the Network members to use the ESC forum at the annual conferences to meet and discuss current Balkan Criminology issues in addition to our annual BC conferences and the BC course in Dubrovnik. Members of the Working Group are required to have membership in ESC. More detail can be found at: <http://esc-eurocrim.org/workgroups.shtml#balkan>.
- Prof. Marcelo Aebi announced that Dr. Anna Maria Getoš Kalac is a candidate to a board of ESC and explained the amendments to the ESC constitution. Subsequently at the September 2014 ESC annual meeting in Prague, Getoš Kalac was elected to the Executive Board for a full three year term.
- The importance of creating a sense of common ownership is essential for the Network. It was stressed that experience has shown that there is a challenge of continuity and transition in groups such as this one.
- The MPPG will prepare trilateral cooperation agreements for all the BCNet member and circulate them by the end of 2014.
- It was pointed out that visibility is an important issue which should be addressed by all the members. For example, it was suggested that it would be readily possible to create institutional and personal pages for all the Network's members on MPPG's web site.
- It was agreed that the Power Point presentations from the Conference will be published in PDF form on MPPG's web site.
- In conclusion, Professor Hans-Jörg Albrecht expressed his pleasure in participating in the discussions and he hopes that all the participants will meet again next year at the Second Balkan Criminology Conference, whether in Bucharest or in Sarajevo – both cities are considered potential hosts.