

## **Ethical/Societal Dimension Topic 4 - Investigating the role of social, psychological and economic aspects of the processes that lead to organized crime (including cyber related offenses), and terrorist networks and their impact on social cohesion**

### Specific challenge:

There is a need for a deeper understanding of processes that lead to organised crime and terrorist networks. This needs to be examined from a social science, psychological and economic perspective. Where appropriate, research should also take into account the potential impact of organized crime on cohesion of societies.

Research on the human and economic factors in (cyber) crime has not kept pace with research and innovation regarding its technological dimensions. Yet, while the latter may be able to defuse a threat, it does not tackle its causes and remedies. The research needs to address a human and economical point of view in addition to a technological focus. By taking multi-disciplinary approaches, integrating the social, economical and technological sciences a new light is shed on the human factor in (cyber) crime. Proposers of projects seeking to understand cyber-crime should be aware of this emphasis.

### Scope:

Research should investigate the role of social, psychological and economic factors in progression of individuals who had unremarkable and ordinary lives into organised crime and terrorist networks. It could also take into consideration the analysis of the institutional environment in which these processes take place, as well as the

possibilities of connection between the emergence of these damaging organizations and the problem of trust in social dynamics.

This research may, for instance, examine the role of friendships, kinships, milieus and peer groups of (social) networks and social media. It could cover short- mid- and long term trends pertaining to the impact of organised crime and terrorist networks on societal vulnerabilities. It may also examine the characteristics of individuals that leave them susceptible to these influences and/or social conditions conducive to organised crime. The analysis may also take into account state of the art of theory and research on inclusion and social cohesion and apply economic measures (like e.g. Gini index) but also more qualitative social indicators (e.g. political participation, discrimination on the basis of race, age, class and gender). Research could also look into communication processes within and between networks as well as into processes that lead to terrorist cells.

Proposers could also adopt a further approach by focusing on the impact of social cohesion in the prevention of individuals' engagement in organized crime and terrorist networks.

Proposers need to develop solutions in compliance with European societal values, including privacy issues and fundamental rights. Societal aspects (e.g. perception of security, possible side effects of technological solutions, societal resilience) have to be taken into account in a comprehensive and thorough manner.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between €3m and €5m would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately (similar to the FP7 Capability Projects described in the general introduction). Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

In line with the EU's strategy for international cooperation in research and innovation<sup>[1]</sup> international cooperation is encouraged, and in particular with international research partners involved in ongoing discussions and workshops, and US homeland security research entities. Funding for third countries is however still subject to the evaluations.

#### Expected Impact:

- Better understanding of the origins and development of organised crime and terrorist networks;
- Better understanding of the process underpinning the progression of individuals from non-violence into violence;

- Enhanced ability to identify individuals at risk of joining or forming organised crime and terrorist networks;
- Enhanced ability to identify organised crime and terrorist networks in an early stage;
- Enhanced ability to prevent the emergence of organised crime and terrorist networks, and respond to the threat of existing organisations;
- Where appropriate to the project, give insights for policy makers at different levels (regional, national, European, international) into ways to improve social cohesion.

The action is expected to proactively target the needs and requirements of users, such as policy makers at different levels (regional, national, European and international).

The outcome of the proposal is expected to lead to development up to Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4; please see part G of the General Annexes.

Type of action: Research & Innovation Actions

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