

PREVENTION OF ORGANIZED CRIME IN DENMARK AND SWEDEN

Observations of Measures and their Impact

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Foreword

In connection with the updating of Finland's strategy and action plan to tackle organized crime, it was useful to find out how organized crime is prevented in Sweden and Denmark. Nordic societies are similar in many respects, and the prevention of organized crime has been more systematic in Sweden and Denmark than in Finland. The starting point of the project was to learn from and utilize the best methods of these countries and to gather experiences of new effective measures in the prevention of organized crime.

In many respects, Finland's strategy and measures are similar to those considered and implemented in Denmark and Sweden. In addition to the content of individual measures, there is similarity in the duration and diversity of the control measures. The coherent operating model is based on the pursuit of effectiveness, which is best achieved when crime prevention measures are long-term and diverse and target a wide range of crimes.

The report "Prevention of Organized Crime in Denmark and Sweden. Observations of Measures and their Impact" by the Police University College and the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy of the University of Helsinki is an excellent and concise summary of the measures taken in Sweden and Denmark to prevent organized crime. The project has been carried out in good Nordic cooperation. Funding for the project was received from the Nordic Council of Ministers. The study visits to the Danish and Swedish Ministries of Justice and the police, and to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) were successful. During the visits, we gained valuable first-hand practical information on the prevention of organized crime and the challenges involved, as well as new partners for the future prevention of organized crime.

The publication of the report in English and the joint Nordic final webinar will promote the wider usability of the results in the Nordic countries and beyond. Many thanks to the parties and contributors who made the project possible.

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Summary

This report described the approaches against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden. It focused in particular on the impacts and effectiveness of selected programs, projects and measures. The report was carried out in the "Tackling Organized Crime: Viewpoints on Nordic Policies and Practices (TOC24)" project, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The key materials were collected from open sources and consisted of research literature and official documents. In addition, observations made during study visits to the target countries and statistical data on organized crime were used.

Due to their fresh and diverse content, the new strategic programs of Denmark and Sweden against organized crime can be considered as good examples for other countries. The features of harder criminal policy in Denmark have also been eagerly adopted in Sweden. Measures to combat organized crime also include a wide range of support and protection measures for different target groups.

The literature review found little evidence of the effectiveness of different measures based on strong set-ups. However, promising observations were related to the following measures: The Youth Crime Board intended for juveniles in Denmark, the joint operation Tore 2 against parallel society in Sweden, increased police presence in vulnerable areas, use of surveillance cameras, allocating resources and targeting measures into a specific problem as well as organizing exit work at the national level.

The authorities had promising experiences of a wide range of measures. In Denmark these measures concerned harsher penalties, restriction of criminal gangs' operations, multi-authority cooperation, criminal investigations, witness protection, improving prison safety, and support for exiting criminal groups. In Sweden promising results pertained e.g., diverse cooperation and exchange of information between the authorities, the integrity of register data, work targeted at key criminal actors, curbing the criminal economy as well as protecting children, young people, and persons in a vulnerable position.

Based on the project material, the key target areas in the fight against organized crime were identified. They concerned children and young people, weapons and violence, criminal economy and the international dimension. Cross-cutting perspectives in these target areas are related to the knowledge base, the prerequisites for the activities of the authorities, cooperation, the selection of measures, technology, trust and key rights.

If the measures against organized crime are to be based on strong research evidence, the range of possible measures is substantially narrowed, or they must also be sought outside the target countries of this report. For this reason, various agile experiments against organized crime, for example, also play an important role in the development of measures against organized crime.

The information produced has served the updating of the strategy against organized crime in Finland. At best, the practices created can support other countries in preparing, implementing and monitoring their strategies and measures against organized crime in the future.

1. Introduction

Organized crime changes constantly and rapidly and is becoming increasingly complex and international.^[1] It poses a threat to those falling victim to crime, organizations in different areas of society and even the critical functions in society. Action against organized crime requires a clear strategic direction and a diverse range of measures.

In 2023, Finland's first strategy against organized crime turned 10 years old. Since it no longer met the requirements of the changed operating environment, it was time to update it.^[2] The Program of the Finnish Government, adopted in summer 2023, mentions the need to examine the Danish approach to combating organized crime.^[3] The assignment of the working group preparing the update of strategy in Finland refers to examining the approaches of Denmark and the other Nordic countries.^[4] The cross-administrative updating of the strategy is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice.

To provide background for updating Finland's strategy, Denmark's and Sweden's approaches to combating organized crime as well as the impacts and effectiveness of the measures is examined in this report. These measures refer to both organized crime and gang crime. There are many different administrative and academic definitions for both, which are largely overlapping. [Chapter 2](#) details these concepts in brief.

The report has been prepared in the "Tackling Organized Crime: Viewpoints on Nordic Policies and Practices" (TOC24) project, coordinated by the Police University College (Polamk).^[5] The project was implemented from 1 June 2024 to 31 January 2025 and was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. In addition to the Police University College, the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy (Krimo) at the University of Helsinki participated in the data collection, analysis and reporting.^[6] The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the National Police Board and the National Bureau of Investigation were represented in the project's steering group.^[7] Danish and Swedish authorities, along with other actors, have provided useful contributions to the project.

1. COM(2021) 170 final; Europol, 2024.

2. OM, 2013.

3. VN 2023:58.

4. VN/24163/2023; OM080:00/2023.

5. See the project description on the Police University College website: <https://polamk.fi/en/tackling-organized-crime-en>

6. See <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/institute-criminology-and-legal-policy>

7. The steering group was chaired by Mika Junninen (Ministry of Justice) and steering group members were Sami Nevalainen (Ministry of the Interior), Tuomas Pöyhönen (National Police Board) and Markus Terenius (National Bureau of Investigation).

The project plan promised to investigate the best practices for combating and control of organized crime with the help of 20–30 key documents. According to the plan, research evidence would be collected selectively using existing summary reviews and other reports. The plan also included study visits to Denmark and Sweden. In practice, the project has been realized more extensively than planned.

The report is based on several data sources. Literature sources and statistical data from the Global Organized Crime Index are used to provide background for the review.^[8] Features of approaches against organized crime are presented through key strategic programs and legislation from Denmark and Sweden, as well as the related preparatory and monitoring material.^[9] The effectiveness of evaluated measures against organized crime is presented using a systematic literature review.^[10] The authorities' assessments of the implementation of the measures are reviewed on the basis of selected documents.^[11] The written material is supplemented by information collected from both countries during study visits in October–November 2024.^[12]

This report focuses on selected strategic programs to combat organized crime, the impacts and effectiveness of measures and, in part, also the characteristics of organized crime. It is not possible to monitor the lifecycle of measures to combat organized crime in this report. Thus, the range of methods presented in Chapter 3 as a background to the review, may include measures that have not been implemented. On the other hand, not all combating of organized crime directly reflects the national strategic programs. Accordingly, the assessments based on research data and data of the authorities include programs, projects and pilots that are not included in the strategic programs presented in [Chapter 3](#).

This report will be published in Finnish and English in spring 2025.^[13] The results will be presented in a final webinar before the final report is published. Speakers from Finland and both target countries will be invited to the webinar. The results of the review will be communicated to different target groups through various channels.

The information in the report serves the implementation of Finland's Government Program. During the project, information was shared with the working group responsible for updating the strategy against organized crime. This has supported the outlining of the strategic priorities and measures as well as legislative drafting.^[14] The report can be useful for developing activities of authorities, in public debate,

8. GI-TOC, 2023. For more information, see Chapter 2 of this report.

9. In this respect, the script prepared by the Police University College on strategic programs to combat organized crime in the target countries will be used (Mutttilainen et al., 2024). For more information, see Chapter 3 of this report.

10. To this end, the previously prepared review of the assessments of measures against youth gang crime was supplemented (Villman & Kaakinen, 2024). For more information, see Chapter 4 of this report.

11. For more information, see chapters 5–6 of this report.

12. In Denmark, representatives of the Ministry of Justice and the National Police were met. In Sweden, the Swedish Ministry of Justice and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå) were visited, and remote discussions with the police's experts on organized crime were also conducted. General observations from the study visits are reported on the basis of notes taken during the discussions. For more information, see Chapter 7 of this report.

13. The information in this report is mainly based on the situation on 16 December 2024.

14. Finland's updated strategy against organised crime was published in February 2025 (Junninen 2025).

in the scientific community and education related to the topic. The information can also support the planning of measures to combat organized crime in other Nordic countries and beyond.

After this introduction, the report presents some basic information on organized crime and its prevention ([Chapter 2](#)). The report continues with a review of the strategic programs and measures against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden ([Chapter 3](#)). The outcomes and effectiveness of the measures are then presented on the basis of research data ([Chapter 4](#)), official documents ([Chapters 5–6](#)) and data collected during study visits ([Chapter 7](#)). The conclusions of the report are compiled at the end ([Chapter 8](#)).

2. Background to the review

This Chapter briefly examines the characteristics of organized crime, the situation of the target countries in international comparison and the concepts of organized crime and gang crime. This information serves as background for the report.

2.1 Basic characteristics of organized crime

The structure of organized crime and the content of organized crime activities vary depending on, among other things, who commits the crimes, how they are committed and where the criminal activities are targeted. Organized crime is characterized by, for example, group or networked activities, some degree of persistence, operation in physical and virtual environments, a national and international dimension, a systematic approach, adaptability, serious crimes, pursuit of financial gain, improper influence, links with legitimate organizations, and utilizing technologies and subcontracting services.^[15]

According to the European Union's threat assessment, organized criminal groups operate in all Member States. The amount of criminal proceeds has been estimated to account for 1% of the Union's gross national product.^[16] In the EU, 821 criminal networks have been identified that operate actively or pose a threat to the internal security of the area. The networks have more than 25,000 members. Their key forms of activity include drug smuggling, fraud and property crime. The majority of networks specialize in a specific type of crime and utilize legal corporate structures. They have also infiltrated the public sector and utilize public funds.^[17]

Organized crime in Finland and measures related to its prevention are not the subject of this report. However, clarification of the operating models of Denmark and Sweden serves the updating of Finland's strategy against organized crime, which is why a few observations concerning Finland are presented in this context.

According to a survey conducted in 2023, a total of 90–100 criminal groups with less than 1,000 members have been identified in Finland.^[18] In this report, Finnish organized crime was seen in several forms, including networked crime, criminal groups bearing insignia, groups led from abroad and actors facilitating crime. So far, there is little evidence of criminal groups or networks based on family connections. Another report on the prevention of organized crime emphasized a

15. COM(2021) 170final; EU Socta, 2021; EUCPN, 2021.

16. COM(2021) 170 final.

17. Europol, 2024; GI-TOC, 2023; See also Korsell & Larsson, 2011.

18. Jukarainen, Juutinen & Laitinen, 2023a. The figures for Finland are not directly comparable with the figures for the EU area, presented above. This is at least partly due to different definitions. The classification of organized crime in the police in Finland is based on a fairly limited statutory definition, while the definition used by the EU is broader.

comprehensive situational picture and cooperation as well as better utilization of administrative crime prevention measures.^[19]

According to a recent report by the Grey Economy Information Unit, police intelligence data shows that 1,872 people in Finland are linked to organized crime. They had connections to 2,407 companies, of which approximately 2,000 were active in the year 2022. In 2022, the companies had a turnover of approximately EUR 1.5 billion and paid salaries to nearly 17,000 people. The annual tax deficit caused by them amounts to approximately EUR 65 million.^[20]

According to the Police Performance Management database (PolStat), the 279 cases classified as organized crime in pre-trial investigation in 2023, included 960 crimes. Thus, there were an average of 3.4 offences in these cases. The most common crimes were drug crimes (57%) and property crimes (29%). The proportion of crimes against life and health remained low (1.3%).^[21]

2.2 Findings of the Global Organized Crime Index

The Global Organized Crime Index includes information on organized crime markets and actors, as well as society's resilience to such crime.^[22] Crime is assessed on the basis of 15 indicators for the market and five indicators for the actors.^[23] The resilience analysis is based on the 12 indicators included in the four entities.^[24] This data, collected globally from experts using the same method, provides a solid basis for a general review and comparison of the phenomenon (Table 1).

19. Jukarainen, Juutinen & Laitinen, 2023b.

20. HTSY, 2024.

21. PolStat, 2024. However, these statistics do not fully describe the organized crime that has come to the attention of the police, as some of the cases may not be classified with this code in the pre-trial investigation.

22. See also Kaysser, 2023. On organized crime in Sweden, see e.g. Rostami, 2016; Mondani & Rostami, 2022; Brå, 2023a; Gunnarsson, 2023 and SBU, 2023 and in Denmark e.g. Cornils & Greve, 2004; Pedersen, 2014a and Onsberg Hansen, Mulvad-Reinhardt & Øland Ribe, 2018.

23. Criminal market constituents in the Global Organized Crime Index include human trafficking, human smuggling, extortion and protection racketeering, arms trafficking, trade in counterfeit products, illicit trade in excisable goods, flora crimes, fauna crimes, crimes related to non-renewable resources, heroin trade, cocaine trade, cannabis trade, trade in synthetic drugs, cyber-dependent crime and financial crime. Criminal actors may include mafia-style groups, criminal networks, state-embedded actors, foreign actors and private sector actors. (GI-TOC, 2023.)

24. The entities describing resilience include leadership and governance, criminal justice and security, economic and financial as well as civic society and social protection.

Table 1. Organized crime and resilience in society according to the Global Organized Crime Index in 2023.

	Sweden	Denmark	Finland	Europe	Global
Criminality	4.70	4.02	2.98	4.74	5.03
• criminal markets	4.60	4.33	3.27	4.60	4.88
• criminal actors	4.80	3.70	2.70	4.88	5.19
Resilience	7.46	8.13	8.63	6.27	4.81

The scale for the index number is 1–10 for all variables. The crime situation weakens and resilience strengthens as the number increases.

Source: GI-TOC, 2023; GI-TOC Denmark 2023; GI-TOC Finland 2023; GI-TOC Sweden 2023.

Based on this data, organized crime is less prevalent in Europe compared to the rest of the world. Of the Nordic countries under review, Sweden ranks lowest, and its index figure is in line with the European average. Denmark is somewhat better positioned than Sweden, while Finland is clearly better positioned. The order is the same for both criminal markets and actors. In Finland, the situation is the fourth best in Europe.

Cyber-dependent crime and trade in synthetic drugs are the main areas of organized crime in Finland. The next most important markets are financial crime and trade in cannabis and cocaine. Organized crime in Sweden operates strongly in most areas of crime. Key forms of crime include cyber-dependent crime, financial and drug crime, as well as arms trafficking and human smuggling. In Denmark, organized crime is the most active in the area of cyber-dependent crime.^[25] The next most important forms of crime are drug trafficking, arms trafficking and human smuggling.

The overall picture of resilience against organized crime is similar to the picture of organized crime. In other words, the overall global results are worse than those of Europe. The Nordic countries under review are in a better position than the whole of Europe, and their order is the same as above in the examination of crime. Finland has the strongest resilience to organized crime in the world. However, resilience is also quite good in all other Nordic countries.

25. Cyber-dependent crime is a key activity of organized crime in all of the Nordic countries mentioned in this context. These are defined as organized crimes that are dependent on the use of a computer, computer network or other forms of information communications technology (ICT). These include the spread of viruses or other malware, hacking, distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks, ransomware and cryptocurrency fraud. These activities are considered to be conducted for the purpose of obtaining a monetary or material benefit (as opposed to a political or ideological objective). (<https://ocindex.net/crime/cyber-dependent-crimes>)

According to the scores for resilience, anti-money laundering is one of the most important areas of development in Denmark. As challenges for Denmark, the qualitative country assessment also highlights the ever-increasing cyber-dependent crime, the brokering of illegal weapons to the Nordic countries and the increasing crowding of prisons. In Sweden, key areas of development include the protection of victims and witnesses and the prevention of the abuse of benefits, corruption and inappropriate influence. In Finland, resilience is at a consistently good level as assessed by all indicators. However, the Global Organized Crime Index highlights the following challenges in the Finnish context: the prevention of money laundering and financial crime, the safety of prisons, online hate speech targeted at the media and hybrid influence across the Russian border.

2.3 About combating of organized crime and gang crime

Although, in the comparison presented above, the situation in Finland is better than in Denmark and Sweden, it is highly relevant to examine the approaches of these countries. Denmark and Sweden are societies similar to Finland in many respects, and there are similar characteristics in crime and crime prevention as well. In addition, the latest strategic programs against organized crime in both countries have been published only recently. Their fresh and diverse range of methods can provide guidelines for Finland's work against organized crime.^[26]

The key sections of this report refer to organized crime on the one hand and gang crime on the other. This applies to research data, official documents and observations based on study visits. Both terms have been used in the combating of organized crime in both countries.

The debate in Denmark focuses on gang crime. This is also reflected in the fact that strategic programs against organized crime have been called 'gang packages'.^[27] The gang packages apply to both newer regional gangs and traditional organized crime, that is, motorcycle gangs. On the basis of the documents' titles, the model for cooperation between the authorities, launched in Sweden in 2009, and the latest strategic program from 2024, focus on organized crime, while the 34-point program from 2019 focuses on gang crime.^[28]

26. Bandepakke IV, 2023; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67. The report on the challenges and means of combating organized crime in Finland emphasized situational picture, cross-administrative cooperation and the strengthening of administrative measures (Jukarainen, Juutinen & Laitinen, 2023b). Objectives for combating gang crime have been recorded in Finland in the recent action program against gang crime (OM083:00/2023; Järvinen, Alanko & Piispa, 2024).

27. 2008/1 SF. L L 211; Justitsministeriet, 2009, 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023.

28. Ds 2008:38; 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

There is a lot of overlap in the concepts of organized crime and gang crime.^[29] However, not all gang crime is organized, and on the other hand, organized crime includes other actors in addition to gangs. Gangs often carry a meaning that refers to local groups, whether they are motorcycle gangs or other criminal gangs. However, the term "street gang", often used in Finland, does not appear much in discussions and documents in the target countries. The term "street gang" generally refers to very different groups and mainly to juvenile delinquency, but in some cases, it can be considered as part of organized crime and gang crime.^[30] Juveniles may also be otherwise directly or indirectly involved in organized crime or gang activities.

There is also a lot of overlap in the key strategic programs on organized crime and gang crime. It is possible that it has been easier to communicate the goals and measures to the public and get support for them by referring to gang crime rather than organized crime. Organized crime and gang crime can be distinguished in general as described in Figure 1, for example.

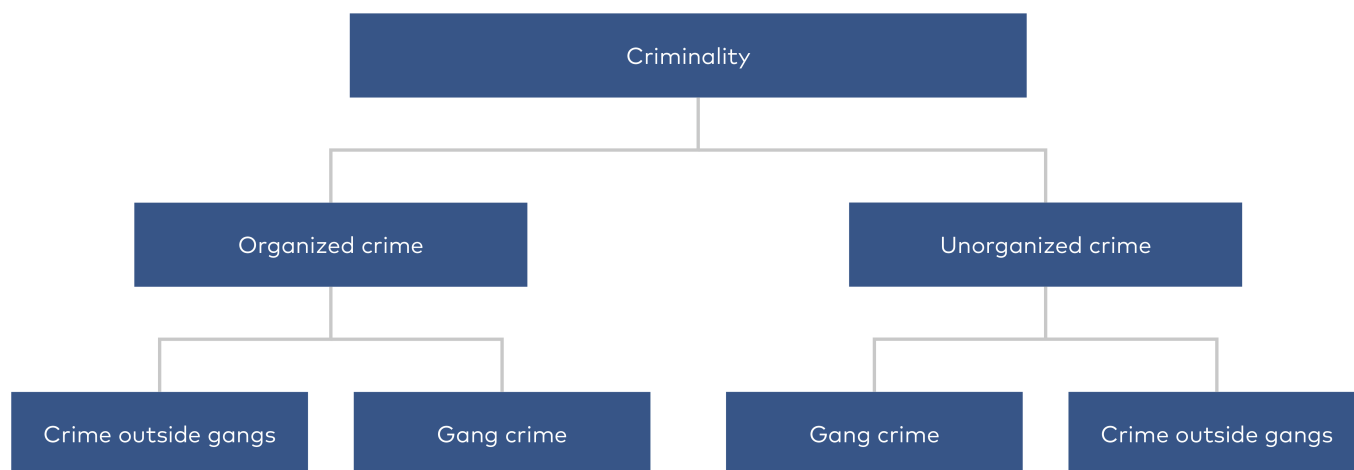


Figure 1. Distinguishing organized crime from gang crime

Figure 1 divides crime into organized and unorganized crime. Organized crime refers to systematic activities that take place in a group as described above. Other parts of crime are unorganized crime. Both of the above can be divided into gang crime and crime outside gangs. Some organized crime is gang crime, and some constitutes activities outside gangs. Gang crime can be either organized or unorganized activity, but this report targets organized forms of crime.

29. Decker, Pyrooz, & Densley, 2022; Forss, 2023. See also the recent decision R 23/1629 of the Helsinki Court of Appeal, which contains an interpretation of the interface between gang crime and organized crime (HelHO, 2024).
 30. Decker et al., 2022; Forss, 2023.

3. Strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

This Chapter compiles information about the Danish gang packages and Sweden's two key strategic programs against organized crime and gang crime.^[31] Of these, focus areas and measures are described in particular. Many of these measures are subjected to evaluation in Chapters 4–7. The information is based on documents compiled from open sources.^[32]

3.1 Priorities in strategic programs

Denmark's first gang package from 2009 focused on harsher penalties for gang and weapon cases, development of investigative tools and increasing safety, particularly in socially vulnerable areas. The second gang package, published in 2014, focused on harsher penalties, improving the efficiency of supervision and enforcement, the tools of the authorities, crime prevention and gang exit. The third gang package from 2017 aimed to improve citizens' safety, imposing stricter sanctions for gang crimes and increasing pressure on gangs. The fourth gang package, presented in 2023, focused on criminal careers, tighter control and better justice, illegal weapons, criminal business activities, the tools of the authorities and cross-border crime.

The 34-point anti-gang crime strategic program, presented in Sweden in 2019, provided a broad range of tools for crime prevention, stricter criminal sanctions, means for breaking the culture of silence and a broader societal perspective on crime prevention. The latest strategic program against organized crime from 2024 focuses on stopping criminal careers, reducing the availability of illegal weapons and explosives, suppressing the criminal economy, preventing inappropriate influence and information management issues. Of course, work against organized crime had been performed in Sweden even before. For example, the model for cooperation between the authorities, published in 2009, and updated after the mid-2010s, refers to intelligence and operational means targeted at organized crime phenomena, networks and individuals.^[33]

31. This information is summarized from a script on the content of the key strategic programs in Denmark and Sweden (Mutttilainen et al., 2024). Of original sources, see e.g. 2008/1 SF.L L 211; Justitsministeriet, 2009; 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

32. Measures against organized crime and gang crime feature prominently in many other recent policy programs as well. In Sweden, for example, the topic is included in the national security strategy (Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:163) and the national crime prevention program (Regeringens skrivelse 2020/21:63). Measures against organized crime are also examined in Chapters 4–7.

33. Ds 2008:38. The model for cooperation between the authorities is examined separately in Chapter 6.

Figure 2 summarizes focus areas of the above-mentioned most recent strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden from 2017–2024.

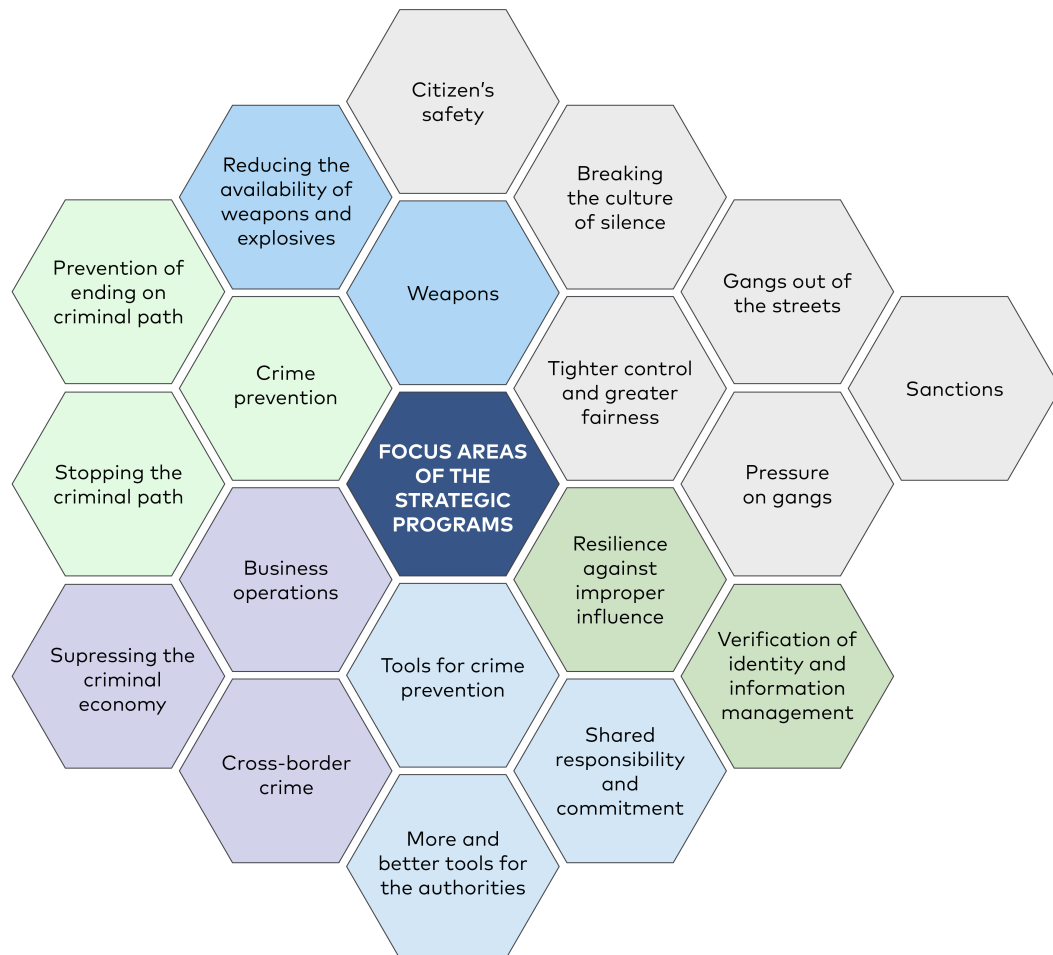


Figure 2. Focus areas of the strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden in 2017–2024.

Sources: Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

The strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden have developed into broad-based entities in terms of their content. On the one hand, they make criminal activities more difficult and impose stricter sanctions for crimes, and on the other hand, they develop the activities of the authorities and protect vulnerable persons in various ways. Harsher penalties and other repressive

measures in their various forms have been at the heart of the Danish model, but they are increasingly visible in Sweden as well. Of the themes of Sweden's latest strategic program, the prevention of inappropriate influence and issues related to identity and information management, include new points of emphasis.

3.2 Measures in strategic programs

The strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden include a remarkably wide range of individual measures. The four gang packages of Denmark and the two latest strategic programs of Sweden contain a total of approximately 170 measures as described in the sources used in this report. However, some of the measures are of the same type in these countries or in the same country at different times.

The measures in the strategic programs are related, for example, to the imposition of various prohibitions and restrictions, risk management and the enhancement of supervision by the authorities, stricter criminal sanctions, and the development of cooperation and the exchange of information between the authorities. In addition, the range of methods includes various services that prevent recruitment for crime and support gang exit.

Next, we take a more detailed look at the measures proposed in the strategic programs presented above. However, they are not described in their original form, but more concisely. Table 2 describes the imposition of harsher penalties, Table 3 the prohibitions, restrictions and control measures, Table 4 the enhancement of the authorities' activities and crime prevention and Table 5 the various forms of social support and protection. The range of measures in Denmark is slightly broader in this review, but there are also more programs under review than in Sweden.

Table 2. Proposals for harsher penalties in the strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

Denmark	Sweden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gang rule on doubling penalties and extending the scope of the provision • crimes related to gang confrontations • possession, use and storage of illegal weapons • possession of knives and stabbings • economic crime • recruiting children and juveniles for crime • humiliating violence, illegal coercion, systematic extortion • violence and threats against witnesses • preventing certain authorities from performing their tasks • violation of the residence ban and violation of the prohibition on using an assembly room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crimes related to confrontation of criminals • crimes involving weapons and explosives • recruiting juveniles for crime • abolition of mitigation of the penalty scale for young adults • drug trafficking • complicating legal proceedings • false statement and protection of the perpetrator

Sources: 2008/1 SF. L L 211; 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

In the debate on the Danish model, there have been constant references to hard repressive measures in combating organized crime. This refers, in particular, to the so-called "gang provision", which means double penalties for crimes related to gang activities under certain preconditions.

The frequency of regulation in the area of imposing harsher penalties has increased significantly. The scope of the gang provision has been extended, and other sanctions, prohibitions, restrictions and stricter controls have been introduced in new target areas. In addition, certain measures have been made stricter or their scope extended at a later date. Today, the strategic programs against organized crime in both Denmark and Sweden contain many examples of various repressive measures.

Table 3. Proposals for prohibitions, restrictions and control measures in the strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

Denmark	Sweden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criminal register entry for an infringement of the weapons act • more extensive use of remand imprisonment in cases involving weapons • residence ban for individuals convicted for gang crime and gang guards, extension of the residence ban area • prohibition on contacting other gang members • prohibition or closure of gang assembly rooms • nightlife bans to prevent drug trafficking • prohibition on travel for serious cross-border crimes, broader possibilities to deport gang members • enhanced supervision with shooting associations • closer police supervision in the approval of security stewards • refusal of child and youth allowances and reduction of victim compensation for convicted gang members • stricter conditional prison sentences, terms and conditions of parole and release of gang criminals • linking parole with the exit process and electronic surveillance • prohibition to leave prison during gang conflicts for gang members and those more loosely associated with gangs • isolation of gang leaders in prisons and stricter discipline • more stringent supervision of letters and visitors for gang criminals in prisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the risk of detecting and prosecuting crimes related to illegal weapons and explosives • control of the handling and trade of weapons and explosives • preventing the import and smuggling of weapons and explosives • restricting gang members' residence and meetings in certain areas • camera surveillance at borders and in cities • accelerating and increasing criminal prosecution of serious crimes in criminal environments • youth supervision sanction • compulsory imprisonment for more types of crime • linking parole with the exit process and prevention of recidivism

Sources: 2008/1 SF.L L 211; 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

The strategic programs under review include numerous means for developing crime prevention and investigation. They concern many basic aspects of the activities of the authorities, such as resources, operational authorizations, tools, situational picture, cooperation and exchange of information. Some of the measures are well targeted, such as the measures focused on different crime types, target groups and investigation methods. The strategic programs also highlight numerous matters requiring further research.

Table 4. Proposals for developing crime prevention and the preconditions for investigation in the strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

Denmark	Sweden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visibility of the police in general and in gang gatherings • expansion of investigative methods: phone tapping, secret searches, decryption, cryptocurrency investigation, asset confiscation, camera surveillance, rewards for tip-offs • enhancing the exchange of information between the authorities and providing instructions, passing on confidential information of persons under the age of 18 to related parties • forwarding of register identification data to other authorities • resources: strengthening operational investigation, forensic investigation capacity in shooting cases, use of civilian actors • targets of crime prevention: cross-border crime, vulnerable areas, gang status symbols, exploitation of the leasing industry, gas and signaling weapons • Al Capone cooperation to prevent misuse of benefits • matters requiring further research: gang members' profile and costs of crimes, camera surveillance, circle of persons subject to an order of non-disclosure for personal safety reasons, smuggling of cigarettes, judgments of imposing a fine in the prevention of vandalism, need for a permit system for leasing companies, misuse of public services and benefits, deportation of foreign gang criminals, motorcycle gang members' wearing of a helmet • security of private weapons storage and shooting associations • enhanced intelligence picture in the prison institution and exchange of information when a gang member is released 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Security Council • preparedness in society for crime, strengthening cooperation between the authorities, international cooperation • use of technologies in general, automatic camera surveillance in border areas • expanding investigation possibilities: encrypted communication, secret coercive measures, searches of a domicile, investigation of suspected crimes committed by children • integrity of public decision-making, information management, biometric data, access to information in digital environments • prevention of insider and infiltration threats, prevention of the exploitation of public funds and companies, prevention of money laundering, prevention of drug-related crimes • utilizing administrative means, improving the recovery of criminal proceeds • reports on providing false information in a police interrogation, anonymous witnessing and the crown witness system • security stewards to make police work easier • review of the authorities' crime prevention duties, municipalities' crime prevention obligation

Sources: 2008/1 SF.L L 211; 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

In Nordic welfare policy and criminal policy, different forms of social support and services have a long tradition, which is also reflected in the strategic programs against organized crime. The measures included support and protect

particularly children and young people, vulnerable areas and persons who require special protection in legal proceedings, in prisons and in exit programs. Forms of social support and other protective measures can be provided by both the authorities and other actors, and they can concern, for example, a group of persons, an area or an organization.

Table 5. Proposals for developing social support and other forms of protection in the strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

Denmark	Sweden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Prevention Committee • funding of the SSP cooperation council (school, social services, police), instructions on SSP cooperation between municipalities and the police, targeted SSP cooperation to protect gang members' brothers • protecting vulnerable areas and groups from gangs, gang councils in vulnerable areas, knock-knock strategy, youth crime boards, pocket money work • instructions for municipalities on unwanted assembly rooms and how to prevent their use • more interviews on causes for concern with young people, working group to support municipalities' work with risk groups • developing the training and access criteria of security stewards • expediting hearings, securing evidence, the defense attorney can process the matter for longer • assault alarms and secure legal proceedings for whistleblowers and witnesses • sheltered departments in prisons and remand imprisonment, protection of prisoners through transfers • enhancement of the exit program and expansion of the target group, exit point within the police, cooperation between the authorities, fund for special exit measures • national weapon return campaign without sanctions, return of weapons in the exit program without sanctions • flexibility in youth criminal care services (supervision, compliance with programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term activities of schools and social welfare authorities in vulnerable areas • early intervention in problems by social welfare authorities, evening and weekend standby duty in vulnerable areas, social preparedness groups • coordinated measures for risk groups, preventing young people from becoming socialized in crime • placement of young people outside the home, higher-quality placement locations for these young people • reducing the risks of recidivism • protection of and support to witnesses and their families, witness protection program • national exit program

Sources: 2008/1 SF.L L 211; 2013/1 SF.L L 112; Bandepakke III, 2017; Bandepakke IV, 2023, 34-punktsprogrammet, 2019; Regeringens skrivelse 2023/24:67.

The strategic programs against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden also include a wide range of organizations involved in combating organized crime. They include state, regional and municipal authorities as well as private sector, third sector and civil society actors. In addition, numerous research tasks and cooperation bodies show that work against organized crime is nowadays multidimensional and requires a broad knowledge base and dialog.

Over time, programs against organized crime have expanded into diverse policy programs in both countries. They include a wide range of preventive, repressive and administrative measures. The selection of measures varies from precisely targeted measures (e.g. areas, risk groups) to wide-ranging measures (e.g. quality of register data, international cooperation). These strategic programs have numerous links to many other policy programs that address the prevention of organized crime in some way. At the same time, this describes the extent of organized crime and the related separate phenomena as well as the resulting diverse needs for prevention policy.

4. Research evidence on the effectiveness of measures against organized crime

A systematic literature review was carried out to map out the evaluated measures against organized crime in Sweden and Denmark. The review was carried out by supplementing a previous review that addressed measures taken to combat gang crime of juveniles in Sweden and Denmark.^[34] Keywords related to organized crime were added to the previous review. Further information on the search terms, search strategy and findings of the literature review can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

We have included both outcome and process evaluations in the systematic review: evaluations of whether the measures work and how they work.^[35] We consider both approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of the measures to be important. In most cases, the outcome evaluation had not been carried out with such a methodological set-up that it could be used as basis for drawing definite conclusions about the effectiveness of the measures evaluated. The text takes into account the study designs of the outcome evaluations by classifying them into randomized experimental designs (strongest evidence), quasi-experimental designs (weaker evidence), correlative designs (weakest evidence) and descriptive designs, which we do not consider to be actual outcome evaluations in this context. A more detailed description of the classification is provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Next, we review the research evidence on the effectiveness and functionality of the measures evaluated. From the research, we highlight examples of measures whose outcomes have been evaluated or which, based on process evaluations, provide strategic key information for the sector. These are presented thematically, focusing on recruitment to criminal groups, imposition of harsher penalties, influencing the activities of criminal groups, cooperation between the authorities, intervening in proceeds of crime, enhancing exiting from criminal groups and protecting vulnerable areas.

4.1 Recruitment to criminal groups

In the review, all of the measures aimed at preventing recruitment to criminal groups targeted young people. The most important form of work in Sweden has been the groups called "Sociala insatsgrupper" (SIG), where police, schools and

34. Villman & Kaakinen, 2024.

35. Rummens, 2016.

other public authorities work together to map out the situation and possible service needs of young people whose criminal behavior is at risk of becoming permanent, or who want to break away from criminal networks. In correlative outcome evaluations, SIG has not been found to have a crime preventive outcome.^[36] However, based on the qualitative process evaluations, the operating model may be important in strengthening the participants' relationship with the authorities and participation in education or the labor market.^[37]

Denmark has developed a method called "En vej ind", which consists of a four-month group-based intervention for young people at risk of being recruited into criminal networks. Based on the process evaluation and descriptive analysis, the young people involved generally felt that they benefited from the program in many ways: due to reduced risk behavior, as well as in terms of work, education and confidence in the future. In the program's own assessments, positive developments were seen particularly in risk behavior. Young people committed fewer crimes and were assessed to be less at risk.^[38]

4.2 Harsher penalties

Although the imposition of harsher penalties targeted at criminal groups has attracted a lot of attention, the effects of these legislative amendments have been studied very little. However, two examples were found, both in Denmark, and related to juvenile delinquency. The first concerns lowering the age limit for criminal liability from 15 to 14 years of age in 2010–2012. A quasi-experimental outcome evaluation found that the reform did not reduce the likelihood of 14-year-olds committing crimes.^[39] On the other hand, the young people suspected of crime who were affected by the lowering of the age limit were even more likely to commit a new crime. These young people also succeeded less well at school.

A new form of punishment for young people was introduced in Denmark in 2019: The Youth Crime Board (ungdomskriminalitetsnævnet). Its aim is to prevent juvenile delinquency by prescribing targeted individual preventive measures for 10–17-year-olds who are suspected (10–14-year-olds) or who have been sentenced to a custodial sentence (15–17-year-olds) for violent offenses or other serious crimes. The results of the quasi-experimental evaluation of the form of punishment indicate a positive crime prevention effect for 10–14-year-olds. The connection was similar, but not significant for 15–17-year-olds. However, there are several reservations about the results, particularly as recidivism was only monitored for one year.^[40]

36. Roxell, 2016; Socialstyrelsen, 2017; Socialstyrelsen, 2020.

37. Brønnert & Ekholm, 2022; Zamparutti, 2016.

38. Oxford Research, 2018.

39. Damm et al., 2017.

40. Fuglsang, Hansen & Hjarsen, 2023.

4.3 Influencing the activities of criminal groups

In recent years, the Gang Violence Intervention (GVI) model has been introduced in Sweden to reduce serious violence by criminal groups. The GVI model follows the so-called focused deterrence method, and within its framework, the police, municipality and prison institution work together to convey a clear message to the most violent local groups. According to the model 1) Violence is not tolerated. We care about you, and we don't want you to be hurt or you to hurt others; 2) Future acts of violence have legal consequences for every member of the group and not only for the individuals directly involved in the event; 3) Help is available to those who want to change their life situation and exit the criminal lifestyle.

The effects of the GVI model on firearms violence in Malmö have been studied using a correlative setup. The change in the number of shooting incidents was compared to other cities before and after the start of the intervention. The average number of shooting incidents per month decreased by approximately 25%, from 4.4 to 3.3 incidents. However, the change was not statistically significant. The GVI pilot was carried out at a time when the number of shooting incidents was already declining in Malmö, and therefore the decline cannot be definitely linked specifically to the intervention.^[41] A couple of years later, a descriptive analysis found that the number of shooting incidents decreased annually until 2021 and increased slightly in 2022. During the period under review, the number of people injured or killed in connection with shooting incidents had also decreased. However, it is difficult to conclude to what extent the GVI model had influenced crime trends.^[42]

According to process evaluations, it has been possible to organize the GVI in Sweden according to the model adopted from the US by adapting it to local conditions and legislation. However, implementing the GVI model is a long-term process that requires a lot of work.^[43] The biggest challenge has been to identify the boundaries between violent groups in the city, as individuals move between different groups and loyalty and ties to different gangs can vary quickly. This can lead to uncertainty about the groups at which sanctions should be targeted. Another challenge has been to understand the role of civic society in the GVI model. The projects have largely been implemented by public authorities, but efforts have been made to increase the participation of civic society.^[44] The legislation on the exchange of information and confidentiality and its interpretation has also been a challenge in the cooperation.^[45]

41. Ivert & Mellgren, 2021.

42. Ivert & Mellgren, 2023.

43. Brottsförebyggande rådet, Polismyndigheten & Kriminalvården, 2024; Gustafsson et al., 2023; Hellfeldt et al., 2023.

44. Ivert, Mellgren & Nilsson, 2020.

45. Starke & Larsson, 2023.

Focused deterrence strategies have also been used in Denmark. In the Danish approach, the police cooperate with, for example, local bar owners or doormen to ensure that gang members are denied access to local bars and nightclubs. No evaluation study was found on the effectiveness of the strategy in the literature review. According to process evaluations, this informal cooperation has significantly increased the police's influence in private nightlife environments, but the strategy has also raised concerns about double punishment and the difficulties of escaping control.^[46] Those who were once included in the program usually remained subject to various external actions, even if the police had found that their affiliation to gangs had ended.^[47]

As part of the entity of measures included in Denmark's first gang package, the Danish police were given the authority to impose area bans (or exclusion zone orders, *zoneforbud*). Area bans can be used to prevent a designated person from staying in a certain area for a maximum of three months at a time. The police may impose an area ban if the person can be proven to have acted in a particularly threatening manner and caused fear in the specified area. According to the descriptive time series analysis, crime decreased during monitoring in the areas covered by the area ban. Of the seven target areas, the number of reported crimes decreased moderately in six when these provisions were in force. There were no signs of crimes moving outside the areas affected by area ban (Nielsen et al., 2018).^[48]

The effectiveness of the investigation processes of serious and organized crime in Sweden has also been evaluated. According to the process evaluation, the use of special situational organizations of the police may be appropriate in the first hours or days after serious crimes. In the longer term, however, the disadvantages associated with such use of resources outweigh the achievable benefits.^[49]

In Sweden, the effects of increasing the numbers of investigation personnel have also been examined by means of a process evaluation and descriptive analysis. In 2018–2023, the number of employees increased from 8,000 to approximately 10,900, that is, 2,900 persons or 36%. At the same time, the total number of serious crimes in Sweden increased by nearly 30%. Serious crimes are also becoming more complex. However, the clearance rate for serious crimes did not change, but remained at approximately 19%. The clearance rate of crimes varied according to the type of crime. The clearance of serious crimes related to organized crime became more efficient. According to the process evaluation, new and improved working methods have probably contributed slightly to the investigation of serious crimes related to organized crime.^[50]

46. Søggaard, Houborg & Tutenges, 2016; Rowe & Søggaard, 2020.

47. Rowe & Søggaard, 2020.

48. Nielsen, Slothower & Sherman, 2018.

49. Riksrevisionen, 2023.

50. Brå, 2024.

4.4 Cooperation between the authorities

In Sweden, the authorities have been cooperating systematically to combat organized crime since 2008. According to the Swedish National Audit Office's (Riksrevisionen) process evaluation, the work of the Government and the twelve cooperating authorities has been carried out in such a way that the operational objectives can be achieved. However, it was noted in the evaluation that the Government has not specified what should be achieved through cooperation between the authorities or how the participation of individual authorities should be prioritized in relation to their other functions. This has remained up to the authorities to decide, which gives them considerable leeway to interpret the task and decide on its scope.^[51]

Cooperation to combat organized crime is also carried out locally in Sweden. In 2011, an extensive joint authority operation, Tore 2, was launched in Södertälje against the criminal parallel structure. The aim was to investigate, prosecute and take other measures against criminal activity. The Swedish Police, the Public Employment Service, the Security Service, the Tax Agency, the Social Insurance Agency, the Coast Guard, the Enforcement Authority, Customs, the Prison and Probation Service, the Prosecution Authority, and the Swedish Economic Crime Authority participated in the cooperation.

The measures taken by the authorities targeted just over half of the 82 people believed to play a significant role in organized crime in Södertälje. According to the process evaluation, the successes of the operation were partly due to good planning and systematic implementation as well as significant allocated resources. Another important factor was the cooperation methods developed between the agencies. For example, weekly meetings, clear problem mapping and decentralization of decision-making to agency coordinators promoted commitment to the cooperation.^[52]

A correlative outcome evaluation of the Tore 2 project found that the level of reported crime and perceived fear and vulnerability had decreased more in Södertälje than in the control group, which consisted of other medium-sized cities. However, the measured outcomes cannot be limited or directly linked specifically to the Tore 2 project. The project also aimed to weaken the criminal parallel structure in Södertälje. The results of the evaluation do not support the fact that the measures taken would have had a significant impact on the structural prerequisites of alternative law, corruption or unofficial debt systems.^[53]

51. Riksrevisionen, 2019.
52. Brå, 2022.
53. Brå, 2022.

4.5 Intervention in proceeds of crime

The evaluated projects found in the literature review that relate to the tracing of the proceeds of crime all deal with money laundering. In many cases of money laundering, the aim is to make it more difficult to trace the proceeds of crime, which is why intervening in money laundering is a key approach against organized crime. In the process evaluation of the amendment to the Swedish Money Laundering Act, it was observed that the legal process mainly reveals simpler cases of fraud. Organized crime and advanced money laundering arrangements, on the other hand, do not lead to judgments to the same extent. However, the number of reported money laundering offenses has increased significantly since the legal amendment. Between 2010 and 2013, the average number of those reported was 500 per year, while in 2018, the number of cases rose to nearly 7,000. Network analysis suggests that approximately 15% of suspected cases of money laundering relate to cases that showed indications of organized crime. A relatively small proportion of the cases and convictions concerned advanced money laundering arrangements. According to the evaluation, successful prosecution of these requires more strategic coordination of cases.^[54]

According to the Swedish National Audit Office's assessment, the supervision of money laundering is not sufficiently effective or comprehensive to enable the measures to constitute a significant barrier to money laundering by criminals.^[55] It has also been stated that the Swedish Economic Crime Authority (Ekobrottsmyndigheten, EBM) has not been given the opportunity to act effectively against organized economic crime and EBM does not have sufficient resources. For example, the intelligence department has not had direct access to the financial information needed to detect and prevent organized financial crime.^[56]

In recent years, changes have been made to the Money Laundering Act in Denmark. In 2017, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that combats money laundering found that Denmark did not sufficiently comply with current international standards in force in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Since then, efforts have been made to make Danish measures more effective through various political agreements and several amendments to the Money Laundering Act. However, the national audit office (Rigsrevisionen), has assessed that the joint efforts of the ministries and the tax administration to combat money laundering and terrorist financing have been ineffective, and the input of the Ministry of Justice in particular has been inadequate.^[57]

54. Brå, 2019.

55. Riksrevisionen, 2024.

56. Riksrevisionen, 2021.

57. Rigsrevisionen, 2020.

4.6 Improving the efficiency of exiting from criminal groups

Work to support exit from criminal groups is organized differently in Sweden and Denmark. In Denmark, the national exit strategy provides definite guidelines for exit work, whereas in Sweden, exit work seems more fragmented.

Exit work in Sweden

In Sweden, the police and social welfare services are involved in the exit work, but the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården) and other authorities and organizations can also implement exit programs. Since the exit programs of municipalities do not carry out practical work themselves, the basic functions of social welfare services or external actors are responsible for implementing the measures. The SIG model includes exit work among young people, but is rarely the primary goal for SIG.^[58] Konsultationsteamet, active in Malmö, is an example of a multidisciplinary exit program that operates in the municipality.^[59] However, the descriptive analysis does not provide answers about its effectiveness.

According to a process evaluation, the exit work of municipalities is hampered by unclear definitions of persons entitled to exit work, bureaucracy and structural challenges related to municipal autonomy, social welfare service legislation and other regulations. Exit work is also challenged by the increase in the number of people in need of help, housing shortage, long waiting times for trauma care and psychiatric services, and the increase in the number of organizations providing exit services. Municipalities and the police must also ensure the safety and protection of former members of criminal groups. The process evaluation proposes that a national exit work structure should be created, a national register established, and a national structure developed for the placement of exiters who are subject to serious threats.^[60]

There are also rehabilitation centers in Sweden, such as the evaluated Passus, the aim of which is to support gang members in shaping their lives and identity to achieve a new situation in life. Passus' client assignments mainly come from social welfare services or the police, and they are financed with special state funds to support exit. According to the process evaluation, a key success factor in Passus is close contact with the participant. The round-the-clock support provided by Passus is mentioned as crucial, especially at the start of treatment. The Passus program has high credibility among its participants compared to other forms of support. This is partly due to peer support workers who share the participants' experiences

58. Johansson & Kangasvieri, 2015; Socialstyrelsen, 2016; Wollter, Kassman & Oscarsson, 2013.

59. Andersson, 2015.

60. Hedlund, 2023.

of a criminal lifestyle and are therefore not easily deceived. Passus' administration that is independent of the state makes it more flexible and increases its legitimacy among the participants. No recidivism study has been carried out among Passus participants, but according to the process evaluation, the interviewees no longer seem to have connections to gangs.^[61]

Exit work in Denmark

In Denmark, exit work focuses on the national exit strategy from 2011, when regional multidisciplinary exit units were established across the country. The police, local authorities and the Prison and Probation Service participate in the multidisciplinary work. The units assess gang members' motivation and suitability for the exit program. Individual agreements are made with the participants, with concrete plans and responsibilities for both the participant and the authorities.

No outcome evaluation has been carried out on the exit units, but according to the process evaluations, many participants feel that the program helps them to stay away from crime and secure a job or study place.^[62] Participating in the exit program during a prison sentence can be particularly effective because the participants are highly motivated at that time.^[63] The majority of the participants were ordinary or key members of their criminal organizations, while there were fewer leaders and peripheral members. However, by the time they joined the program, the participants had already started to distance themselves from their gangs.^[64] The target group often has complex problems, and the exit work requires tailored, concrete and individual cooperation with program participants. In the process of leaving the gang, employees become trustworthy and important for the exiters. They can temporarily replace old social relationships and act as bridge-builders towards a new way of life.^[65]

In addition to the national exit program, Denmark has local operating models and rehabilitation programs that reinforce the national exit strategy or are a part of it. One example is Ny Fremtid, a private exit project in the city of Fredensborg and its surrounding municipalities. The project consists of a period of at least 20 weeks that includes motivating work, finding a job or training and exit support. The aim of the project is for one half of the participants to have found employment or place in education and to have withdrawn from the insider circle of the criminal group within six months. According to the descriptive analysis, 71% of the project participants were employed or attending education six months after joining the program. Participants who did not start working or attending education, participated in either psychological or drug treatment, or were serving a prison sentence.^[66]

61. Alstam, Forkby & Holm, 2021.

62. Pedersen, 2016.

63. Pedersen, 2014b.

64. Pedersen, 2015.

65. Johansen, 2021; 2022; 2024.

66. Als Research, 2017.

Another Danish exit program, the Breathe SMART yoga course, is aimed at people with a background in crime, drug abuse and gang affiliations. In addition to yoga, meditation and breathing techniques, the Breathe SMART course consists of lectures inspired by the yoga philosophy. The Breathe SMART program consists of a five-day course, after which participants can join weekly two-hour group sessions. Breathe SMART is available also in several prisons and drug rehabilitation centers, and you can get a referral to the program from municipalities, the Prison and Probation Service and the national exit program, for example. According to the process evaluation, the most noticeable change for participants under the age of 25 was that after the course, they reacted less aggressively and violently in situations where they would normally have been violent.^[67] According to them, holistic mental commitment led to increased internal awareness and adoption of softer emotions.^[68]

The boxing-based rehabilitation program "New Start" (pseudonymous name), active in a disadvantaged neighborhood of Copenhagen, has also been studied. Like the national exit program, enrolling and participating in the New Start program prevents cuts of young gang members' social benefits. Successful completion of the program may also enable their name to be removed from the national list of gang criminals. The process evaluation stated the following about the program: its structure and routines, social ties and meaningful activities promoted optimism during the New Start program. However, according to participants, returning to their own environments after the program caused stigma, peer pressure and frustration.^[69]

4.7 Protecting vulnerable areas

Measures aimed at vulnerable areas have been a strategic focus in both Sweden's and Denmark's work against organized crime. This section presents evaluations of the police's operations, the effectiveness of CCTV surveillance and social initiatives in the residential community in vulnerable areas.

Police operations in vulnerable areas

"Ordning och säkerhet" was a regional project launched in 2020, which gave the Malmö police additional resources for working with vulnerable areas, criminal networks and gang violence. Thanks to the initiative, the Malmö Police had up to 20 police officers on duty during the evening shifts, who focused on vulnerable areas, open drug trade and conflicts between criminal networks. The targeted areas in the project were defined by weekly decisions. According to a correlative outcome evaluation analysis, during the increased presence of the police, more people were

67. Ahlmark, 2015.

68. Deuchar, 2020.

69. Deuchar et al., 2016.

arrested by the police as suspects in offenses involving weapons and drug crime, which indicates more efficient work against criminal networks. On the other hand, the number of violent offenses or thefts did not decrease significantly during the increased presence.^[70]

Fenix was a regional police operation, launched in 2014, targeting the areas of Rinkeby, Tensta and Husby. The aim was to reduce crime locally and increase the safety of people living in the areas. The project also aimed to increase trust in the police and improve the working environment of police officers working there. The operation included setting up a special investigation team in the area and strengthening community policing. According to the descriptive analysis, the number of robberies, assaults in public places, violence against the police, burglaries and cases of arson registered by the police had decreased since the start of the project compared to the neighboring areas. The change was statistically significant in the case of robberies and burglaries. However, the number of registered narcotics offenses and traffic offenses increased in the target areas. The increase was statistically significant as concerns narcotics offenses. The growth indicates that the police have succeeded in tackling these types of crime in accordance with the objectives of the operation. Although the operation affected some types of crime, the population did not feel that the overall public order, feeling of security or trust in the police had improved in the area.^[71]

According to the overall evaluation made by the Swedish National Audit Office, police operations in vulnerable areas are not entirely well suited to purpose. Firstly, the police must make the method for identifying vulnerable areas more reliable. Secondly, there are not enough community police officers in vulnerable areas. The evaluation also states that as the local police district has been given more resources to work in vulnerable areas, the situation in these areas has improved. However, funds allocated to vulnerable areas must be long-term.^[72]

Cooperation between the police and the municipality in particularly vulnerable areas has also been studied. According to the process evaluation, joint crime prevention had difficulties in finding a suitable target when dealing with the risk of aggravated violence or when the activities were targeted at more organized crime. These two elements are part of the definition of particularly vulnerable areas. It was more effective to work with young people who were at risk of using drugs or committing minor crimes.^[73]

70. Gerell & Ellberg, 2021.

71. Brå, 2016.

72. Riksrevisionen, 2020.

73. Alstam & Forkby, 2022.

Camera surveillance in vulnerable areas

The use of surveillance cameras by the police and other actors has become more common in recent decades, and special attention has been paid to vulnerable areas. In Sweden, the outcome of camera surveillance on crime and solving of crimes has been analyzed using a correlative approach.^[74] The analysis compared the development of crime and solving of crimes in the target areas and in control areas that were as comparable as possible, before and after the start of surveillance. The study found that the introduction of surveillance cameras was linked to a decrease in violent crimes, but not to a significant change in property crimes or the rate of crimes solved.

Another correlative study evaluated the development of crime in surveillance areas and comparable control areas before and after the start of CCTV surveillance.^[75] The study found some indications of improvements in the area studied: the number of violent crimes decreased, but that of property crimes did not. The number of narcotics offenses increased, probably due to the police's additional resources for investigating narcotics offenses. The results of the process evaluation in the same area indicate that open drug trade and other problems have decreased in the area under surveillance. Drug trafficking has moved partly to more sheltered places in the area under supervision, and partly to other areas.

Since 2018, the Danish Parliament has funded the installation of 450 surveillance camera systems. The aim was to increase the feeling of security, prevent crime and support the investigation of crimes. According to a correlative analysis by the National Audit Office of Denmark, surveillance cameras did not have a crime-preventing effect. On the contrary, cameras led to an increase in the number of crime reports. However, the solving of crimes improved in areas where surveillance cameras were installed. This particularly applied to crimes related to weapons, violence, disorderly conduct and narcotics. According to the evaluation, the Ministry of Justice has not ascertained that the police have placed surveillance cameras in places where they would most effectively prevent street crime.^[76]

Social initiatives in the residential community

Local projects that promote more positive development in several residential areas have also been evaluated.^[77] One of the more thoroughly evaluated initiatives deals with the areas of Sofielund in Malmö, which have long been considered insecure and crime-prone. Approximately 20 property owners established the BID Sofielund organization in 2014. The founders identified the need for a new cooperation model

74. Gerell, 2021.

75. Kronkvist, Nordqvist & Ivert, 2019.

76. Rigsrevisionen, 2021.

77. Ekholm & Dahlstedt, 2021; Höglund, 2020; Nilsson & Karström, 2020; Pilemalm, Grahn & Källgården, 2020.

to solve the challenges in the area. Within the framework of the model, for example, cleaning of public environments, farming projects, basic cycling courses, children's reading and writing workshops and safety walks have been implemented. According to a correlative analysis, the number of crimes reported in the area has decreased since the establishment of BID Sofielund. However, this does not apply to narcotics offenses, the number of which has developed variably during monitoring. According to surveys and interviews conducted in the evaluation, residents feel that several disruptive factors have decreased over time. Certain forms of insecurity, such as the fear of going out alone late in the evening, have also decreased. However, it is impossible to link individual measures to the observed changes or to determine exactly what role the property owners' organization BID Sofielund has played in the positive development of the area.^[78]

Since 2014, Denmark has made a conscious effort to develop communities in vulnerable areas through social initiatives in the residential community (Boligsociale indsatser). The National Building Fund (Landsbyggefonden) has distributed funds annually to vulnerable residential areas. The funds have been allocated to rent subsidies and social initiatives in the residential community, such as leisure work, youth councils, sports and exercise activities, fire brigade youth, parental networks and mother groups. The primary objective of such development projects has not directly been to solve crime. However, they can potentially indirectly prevent crime by targeting activities at children and young people in risk groups. The correlative outcome evaluation of these projects did not find any immediate crime prevention effects.^[79] However, crime among 10–14-year-olds, for example, has decreased in vulnerable areas during the projects.^[80]

4.8 Key findings

The evaluation study review described above found little evidence based on strong set-ups on the effectiveness of different measures. However, some promising measures can be highlighted on its basis.

- The Youth Crime Board in Denmark, whose results indicate a positive crime prevention effect, although there are several reservations.^[81]
- The authorities' Tore 2 project, aimed at counteracting the parallel structure, in which the level of reported crime as well as perceived fear and vulnerability decreased during the project. However, the measured effects cannot be easily isolated or directly associated with the operation.^[82]

78. Ivert, Di Rocco & Kronkvist, 2023; Kronkvist & Ivert, 2020; Kronkvist & Ivert, 2017.

79. Christensen et al., 2021; 2022.

80. Christensen et al., 2019.

81. Fuglsang et al. 2023.

82. Brå, 2022.

- Increased police presence in vulnerable areas, resulting in more people being detained by the police as suspects^[83] of armed crime and narcotics offenses, and a reduction in reported cases of robbery and burglary.^[84] Cooperation between property owners has also been observed to reduce the number of crimes in vulnerable areas.^[85]
- About the use of surveillance cameras: In Sweden, the introduction of surveillance cameras was associated with a reduction in violence, but not a significant change in property crime or crime investigation.^[86] In Denmark, camera surveillance was not found to prevent crime, but crime solving improved in the areas where surveillance camera systems were installed.^[87]

The process evaluations have also highlighted some important observations about the effectiveness of the measures:

- Allocating resources to a specific problem must be long-term. For example, regional police operations in vulnerable areas have shown good results, but temporary operations have had a short-term effect above all.^[88]
- Organized crime often requires special measures. Several evaluations show that if measures were designed to target a wide range of crime problems, including crime by criminal groups, these measures were often more effective in combating less organized and less serious crime.^[89]
- Organizing exit work at the national level can facilitate the organization of systematic work, a multidisciplinary approach to work and the placement of exiters who are subject to serious threats.^[90]

83. Gerell & Ellberg, 2021.

84. Brå, 2016.

85. Ivert, Di Rocco & Kronkvist, 2023; Kronkvist & Ivert, 2020; Kronkvist & Ivert, 2017.

86. Gerell, 2021; Kronkvist, Nordqvist & Ivert, 2019.

87. Rigsrevisionen, 2021.

88. Rigsrevisionen, 2020.

89. Alstam & Forkby, 2022; Wollter & Oscarsson, 2018.

90. Hedlund, 2023; Johansen, 2021.

5. About the implementation of measures included in Denmark's gang packages

At the end of 2020, the Danish government and various political parties decided to carry out an evaluation of the gang packages. The Ministry of Justice asked the National Police of Denmark to coordinate the compilation of the assessment report. The report describes the views of the police, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Prison and Probation Services, but also those of the Ministry of Taxation and some municipalities. The assessment titled "Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne" was published in February 2022.^[91] It covers gang packages I, II and III and the 12 new initiatives released after gang package III.^[92] The assessments cover the impacts of the measures, but also challenges and development suggestions.

In this context, only some key findings can be presented from the extensive content of the assessment report. Assessed by the above criteria concerning research evidence, these are mainly descriptive settings. The assessments are not consistently documented, which makes it often difficult to assess the impact or effectiveness. The authorities often pointed out that the assessment of a measure is difficult due to deficient information.

5.1 Penalties and measures related to weapons

Harsher penalties

The gang provision in section 81a of the Criminal Code on doubling penalties has proven to be a key tool for the police in combating gang crime.^[93] It has generally been regarded to have a preventive and deterrent effect on violent conflicts between gangs. According to the police, this effect intensifies when the police initiate massive investigation operations and other countermeasures to mitigate gang conflicts. Some criminals consider the consequences more closely, gang conflicts are resolved faster and longer sentences calm down criminal environments. On the other hand, due to the gang provision, gangs utilize young people and individuals more loosely linked to the gangs in committing crimes. Looser gang connections can be difficult to prove.

91. Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022.

92. About the first gang package, see LOV nr 501 af 12/06/2009 and 2008/1 SF.L L 211; about the second gang package LOV nr 733 af 25/06/2014 and 2013/1 SF.L L 112; about the third gang package Bandepakke III, 2017 and Hvad handler bandepakken om? (2017) and about the additional 12 initiatives published after the third gang package, Justitsministeriet, 2017. The fourth gang package from 2023 is not included in the assessment (Bandepakke IV, 2023).

93. On harsher penalties, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 9–13.

The Director of Public Prosecution's assessment of the application of the gang provision is quite positive. There have been references to the doubling of penalties in case law. For example, from mid-2018 to the end of 2021, a total of 89 persons received a final harsher punishment in accordance with section 81a of the Criminal Code. It has been challenging to obtain evidence on that all elements of the provision have been met.

Penalties for systematic extortion were made harsher as a follow-up measure to the third gang package. According to the police, this is unlikely to have affected the extent of extortion in criminal circles. Some cases are not reported because protection money has been paid or there is fear of retaliation. According to the Director of Public Prosecutions, only a few cases have progressed to prosecution.

Penalties for threatening a witness in gang environments were aggravated in 2018, but the police still consider threats to be a problem. Reports are not made, and statements in legal proceedings are withdrawn or amended. Harsher penalties are unlikely to increase the willingness to testify and do not protect witnesses from threats. Prison sentences for threatening of witnesses have been extended.

Initiatives concerning weapons

The penalties for serious firearms offenses have been significantly aggravated since the first gang package.^[94] According to the police, people with affiliations to criminal groups rarely carry firearms in public places, unless in question of, for example, a gang conflict or a planned attack. Weapons are kept hidden, for example, in a person's home. Prison sentences for serious firearms offenses have become longer. The prosecutor estimates that stricter legislation concerning firearms is reflected in legal practice. Possession and use of knives have become more common.

Section 81b of the Criminal Code applies to crimes committed in a public place using a firearm, other weapon or explosives. The provision has not been applied much due to the wide application of the gang crime provision.

The working group that considers the safety of the private storage of weapons has recommended clearer conditions for the storage of weapons, an information campaign and increased fines for violations. The information campaign and other recommendations of the working group have been implemented. The police cannot assess the impacts of the measures on the availability of weapons in criminal circles. The voluntary weapon return campaign has reduced the total number of illegal weapons, but criminals have their own channels for acquiring weapons. Since 2018, members of firearms associations have been required to give permission to leave firearms in the association's possession. The police processes good reputation applications concerning members of shooting clubs. In the first less than three years, approximately 1% of the total of 15,000 applications were rejected.

94. For initiatives concerning weapons, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 13–18.

5.2 Intervening in gang meetings

Initiatives concerning gang premises

According to the police, banning gangs' assembly rooms or staying in them is a useful tool in the prevention of gang conflicts.^[95] The terms and conditions for imposing temporary residence bans have been eased and the sanctions for breaching the ban have been aggravated. The police's possibility of imposing a temporary residence ban on gang premises has been justified by the risk being caused to the immediate surroundings. According to the police, the bans can now be applied to smaller conflicts than before, in which case, for example only one party has committed violent acts. The purpose of closing the premises is to send a serious message to both the criminal group and the local residents about intervening in criminal activities.

Under the legislation on banning assembly, a municipality may close a gang's assembly room if significant harm is caused to the immediate surroundings. Municipalities have little experience in applying this legislation. According to some municipalities, a guide on the application of the law would be necessary. The police welcome the fact that municipalities have a lower threshold to close gangs' assembly rooms.

The above-mentioned bans are estimated to make it more difficult to organize gang meetings during conflicts and to attack another criminal group. They can also help in making the surrounding area calmer, as conflicts typically are not moved elsewhere. Closing the assembly rooms may increase the risk of gang conflicts in public places. Other criminal groups than motorcycle gangs usually do not have permanent assembly rooms, so they are less affected by these restrictions.

Area and residence bans

Since the first gang package, the police have been able to impose an area ban that prevents a person who behaves particularly threateningly from moving or staying in a designated area.^[96] The prohibition is intended, among other things, for so-called gang guards who guard the gangs' territory in the residential area. In the second gang package, the radius of area bans was extended from 500 meters to 1,000 meters and penalties for violating these bans were aggravated.

The police do not have much information to assess the impact of area bans. Some police units have used this method to prevent gang crime and behavior that threatens public security. The extended area ban has only been applied in individual

95. For initiatives concerning gang premises, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 18–20.

96. About area and residence bans, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 37–41.

cases. The long processing times at courts pose a challenge in cases of the ban being breached.

The residence ban, which entered into force in 2017, prevents a person sentenced for gang crimes to imprisonment or other deprivation of liberty from staying in a certain area. Violation of this ban is punishable. Approximately one half of the police units have applied this residence ban. According to the police, it is an effective way to keep a person away from their usual environment. The residence ban has sometimes resulted in the gang becoming weaker, but some gangs have moved outside the area subject to the ban. According to the authorities' assessment, it would be justifiable to apply the residence ban to knife crimes as well, as they have become more common as a result of stricter provisions related to firearms.

According to the prosecutor, there are challenges in providing evidence for gang crimes because the courts can assess the time of the perpetrator's gang affiliation differently. Courts prefer not to impose residence bans for the entire municipality, but rather for a smaller area.

5.3 Perspectives on crime prevention and investigation

Forms of preventive work

Local gang councils have been established in police units in relevant areas.^[97] They bring different parties together to discuss, on a regular basis, key safety challenges and how to counter them. Today, all police units have cooperation forums that also deal with gang crime. According to the police, cross-administrative cooperation is effective in preventing crime, and cooperation with municipalities in particular is important.

Local crime prevention measures have been targeted especially at children and young people who are at risk of being influenced by gangs. Special attention has been paid to identifying risks. The police consider discussions of concerns with young people belonging to the risk group to be a well-functioning practice. The National Police College offers training in the implementation of discussions.

Under certain conditions, the police may, in order to prevent crimes, share confidential information about persons over the age of 18 with their parents or relatives. According to the police, this has been a useful tool in cross-administrative cooperation against gangs. Some police units have used this opportunity.

The police have hired civilian employees for preventive work, especially in vulnerable areas. These employees build relationships with young people belonging to the risk

97. About preventive work, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 35–37.

group and support cooperation with local actors, such as schools, municipalities and residents. According to the police, this operating model has improved cooperation with municipalities. Civilians have brought new perspectives to both cooperation and activities with young people.

Examples of cooperation in the fight against criminal economy

The gang packages include initiatives, one aim of which is to control the misuse of public services and benefits.^[98] These include, for example, the National Gang Council (Banderådet) and the so-called Al Capone cooperation.

The National Gang Council commits several ministries and authorities operating at different levels to the work to counter gang crime. It serves as a strategic forum for coordination and dialog. Matters related to the criminal economy are included in the Council's scope of tasks. The National Gang Council is satisfied with its activities, which have promoted the exchange of information and discussion on current cross-administrative challenges.

In the Al Capone cooperation, multidisciplinary working groups investigate suspected misuse of public funds by gang criminals and track the proceeds of crime. The police, tax authorities and many municipalities find this cooperation useful. According to the authorities, the behavior of criminals has changed, and misuse of benefits is reported less frequently.

According to the authorities, gang criminals are increasingly interested in financial gain. They have connections to business operations and take advantage of easy opportunities to set up companies and open bank accounts. They also utilize the services of professionals in various fields in their criminal activities.

In 2019–2020, the Al Capone cooperation processed matters concerning a total of more than 1,600 people. According to the assessment, the police and the tax authorities recommend expansion of the operating model. More authorities should be involved in the activities, and their content-related target scope should also be extended to economic crime beyond the misuse of benefits.

Investigation tools

In gang crime proceedings, hearings before the main proceedings have been accelerated.^[99] This prevents witnesses from altering their accounts due to violence, threats or pressure. According to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the application of this provision has been rare.

The possibilities for phone tapping in the case of certain serious crimes was expanded in connection with the first gang package. The right to phone tapping is

98. For initiatives regarding misuse of benefits, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 20–22.

99. About investigation tools, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 31–35.

targeted at the individual in question and is not limited to one telephone subscription only. According to the prosecutor, this has had a positive impact on the investigation of narcotics offenses and serious offenses involving weapons. Phone tapping has become more flexible, simpler and more effective. The police see this as being useful more widely, for example, in economic crime investigations.

Private persons can be paid for their tip-offs to police. In connection with the second gang package, the amount of rewards for tip-offs was significantly increased. The payment of the rewards was centralized with the police, which has harmonized the practices. Higher rewards increased the number of tips and useful tips in an operating environment that is difficult to assess.

The police have hired more experts to process digital traces. This has strengthened the knowledge and analysis-based approach to criminal investigation and improved the quality of investigation plans and investigation support. Regional police units have assessed this development positively. For example, tele data, encrypted data and open sources have been utilized in the investigation of gang crimes. Sometimes this information has resulted in harsher penalties than usual.

The new technology pool has enabled the police to acquire new technology for use in surveillance, crime prevention and crime investigation. The National Special Crime Unit is responsible for allocating funding to the activities. The technologies are used nationwide. According to the police, the technology pool has promoted prosecution of gang crimes, the police's knowledge of new technology and the police units' mutual support in technology matters.

5.4 Prisoners' conditions for leave and exit from crime

Initiatives concerning imprisonment and release

Gang members, who can pose special risks, are placed in specially protected wards in prisons and pretrial detention.^[100] The Prison and Probation Service estimates that this has improved the general order in prisons and the safety of prisoners and personnel. The number of gang conflicts has decreased, particularly in small units. There is no information about the effects of transferring a prisoner, who behaves in a very negative manner, on gang conflicts.

Leading gang members are prevented from serving their prison sentence with other gang members. Disciplinary measures for very negative behavior have been tightened. According to the Prison and Probation Service, these measures have weakened the hierarchies of gangs in prisons. With the growing number of members of different gangs in prisons, it is becoming increasingly difficult and resource-intensive to isolate gang members from each other.

100. For initiatives regarding imprisonment and release, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 23–30.

The conditions for gang members' release on parole and release from prison have been significantly tightened. Release on parole is not possible if the police assess that the prisoner is affiliated with a group that is involved in an active gang conflict. Further influential factors include participation in the exit program, criminal history and behavior during imprisonment. Staying with other gang members in prison is restricted.

According to the Prison and Probation Service, these tighter measures have achieved the desired results. The police estimate that they have reduced the number of gang conflicts and encouraged exiting from crime. However, after imprisonment, there is a risk of returning to the former criminal environment.

The stricter conditions for leave have been aimed at limiting prisoners' contacts with gangs, visits to gangs' regular meeting places, participation in various events and other encounters. According to the Prison and Probation Service, these methods are effective, but their monitoring is difficult.

The tracking of prisoners with a GPS ankle monitor was piloted in 2014–2015, and it produced information on the movements of prisoners. Monitoring was limited to those participating in the exit program, those released on parole and certain other prisoners. The conditions for monitoring were revised and a more extensive pilot was carried out at the end of the 2010s. According to the Prison and Probation Service, GPS tracking is a suitable monitoring method, but it is very resource-intensive. Limited data made the assessment difficult.

Prisoners with contacts to persons involved in active violent gang conflicts are not allowed to receive visitors from such gangs. In prisons, the visits of leading gang members can be monitored, correspondence read, and phone conversations listened to. According to the Prison and Probation Service, these methods have made gang members' communication more difficult and made it harder for them to coordinate their activities.

Strengthening exit efforts

Gang packages have included numerous initiatives for exiting from crime.^[101] An exit contact point has been established in the National Police. It cooperates with municipalities, police units and the Prison and Probation Service, providing advice and support in exit measures. These measures have strengthened the coordination and systematic nature of the authorities' activities.

One practical measure has been to allocate funding to specific exit measures, such as relocation, removal of gang tattoos and psychological support. According to the police, these special measures are an important part of the exit process. Some measures could also be extended to the person's relatives, who play an essential role in the person's separation from the criminal gang.

101. About strengthening of exit efforts, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 41–43.

The target group of the exit programs has been expanded in the second gang package from the original so that they also apply to persons more loosely affiliated with gang environments. According to the police, it has therefore been possible to intervene proactively before gang affiliations become too firm.

The possibilities for special address protection have been extended to persons who experience threats due to gang affiliations and participation in the exit program. Special address protection was added to the police's guidelines and it has been used in exit measures. The City of Copenhagen estimates that address protection does work in the early stages of the exit, but it may have a negative impact on practical matters (e.g. insurance matters).

5.5 Other initiatives

As a result of the first gang package, the possibilities to deport foreign citizens who have committed serious crimes were expanded.^[102] A separate working group proposed guidelines on the preconditions for and expansion of deportation and sharing of best practices. The police have used deportation at the borders fairly rarely and referred people met inland to the immigration authorities. Deficiencies in statistics make assessment difficult.

To improve the efficiency of the collection of fines, a special pilot operation has been carried out between the police and the tax authorities. The aim of this has been to alleviate the avoidance of fines and to increase awareness of the possibility of property being seized to cover debts. Gang members may be in debt to public communities but still own valuables. After the experiment, the operation was expanded to cover the entire country and the collection of the suspect's funds to cover debts was made more efficient. According to the police, the new methods have been utilized to some extent.

Witness protection was developed as part of the 2017 gang initiatives. According to the Director of Public Prosecutions, some police units have experience of conducting interrogations in other ways than on-site or denying arrival for a hearing. Courts have prohibited individuals or groups from participating in hearings if that has been necessary to obtain truthful statements.

Witnesses and persons involved in the exit program have been protected with assault alarms. Their use varies from police unit to police unit, but they are most often given to those participating in exit programs. However, the basis for use is not systematically recorded in statistics. According to the police, assault alarms have had a positive impact on the relationship between their carriers and the police.

102. About the other initiatives, see Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022, 41–43.

The gang initiatives of 2017 included a measure to terminate the Loyal to Familia criminal group. At the prosecutor's proposal, the Ministry of Justice decided to bring the matter before the court. The matter proceeded to the Supreme Court and the group's activities were prohibited. The police estimate that as a result of the ban, the group's activities are less visible locally and in the public domain. Gang symbols are not displayed, international contacts are more difficult and recruiting new members is more challenging. However, it is hard to assess the impact of the ban on the criminality of group members.

5.6 Key findings

According to the information presented above, the key measures of the Danish gang packages support the work of the police and other law enforcement authorities in many respects. The most important observations based on the authorities' self-assessment of promising measures, at least to some extent, can be summarized as follows:

Penalties and measures related to weapons

- The gang provision on doubling penalties has proven to be a key tool for the police in combating gang crime and making criminal environments calmer.
- The imposition of harsher penalties for serious firearms offenses has made it less common to carry firearms in public spaces, but the use of knives has increased.

Intervening in gang meetings

- Restrictions on gang assembly facilities are effective in preventing gang conflicts, but do not have an effect on gangs that do not have permanent facilities.
- Area and residence bans seem to keep gang members away from their usual environment, but the police have little information about the effects of these bans.

Improving criminal processes

- Rapid hearings in legal proceedings, higher rewards for tip-offs, strengthened digital analysis and a technology pool have improved the preconditions for detection and investigation of gang crimes.
- Remote interrogations, assault alarms and bans on arrival for hearing have protected witnesses to crimes.

Promoting the safety of prisons and exit from crime

- Prison wards with extra protection, stricter discipline, restrictions on communication and stricter conditions for leave have improved prison security and reduced the number of gang conflicts.
- The coordination of measures to exit crime has become more efficient.
- Supporting the exit of those more loosely involved in the gangs has helped to prevent the formation of firm affiliations with gangs.

Other initiatives

- Prohibiting the activities of a criminal group by a court decision may prevent the publicity and local visibility of the activities.
- Cooperation between the police, tax authorities and other authorities can help detect and prevent economic crime and misuse of benefits.

6. About the implementation of measures against organized crime in Sweden

This chapter presents some of the measures taken against organized crime in Sweden and their impacts. In Sweden, no comprehensive report on the implementation of measures against organized crime and gang crime had been prepared, as in Denmark. Therefore, the following review is based on several documents. They describe the authorities' cooperation model and selected measures to combat the recruitment of children and young people into organized crime and the spread of the criminal economy.

6.1 Diverse cooperation between the authorities

In Sweden, efforts have been made to combat organized crime through cross-administrative and multidisciplinary cooperation. The most important structure of multi-authority action against organized crime is the initiative for cooperation between the authorities, that has been in place since 2009, and that has later been supplemented by new organizational members. It is also known in brief as "OB-satsningen". Twelve authorities, supported by a network of nine other organizations, are responsible for the core activities. The Operational Council (operativa rådet), the national intelligence center (Nuc) and its steering group as well as seven regional cooperation councils and seven regional intelligence centers (Ruc) are responsible for the practical operations.^[103]

In Sweden, strategic coordination is carried out by the Council against Organized Crime, established in 2022. Its aim is to strengthen and streamline the overall work against organized crime.^[104] Several smaller expert groups are also involved in the work against serious and organized crime. These include, for example, an advisory cooperation group of the authorities and businesses to promote the prevention of economic crime and cooperation between the authorities to prevent misuse of public benefits. The latter cooperation, referred to with the abbreviation "Mur" (Motståndskraft hos utbetalande och rättsvårdande myndigheter), has been carried out in five sub-working groups. These have considered, among other things,

103. Regeringens skrivelse 2020/21:63. The co-operation involves the Swedish Police Authority, the Customs, the Coast Guard, the Security Service, the Prosecution Authority, the Tax Agency, the Enforcement Authority, the Public Employment Service, the Migration Agency, the Economic Crime Authority (Ekobrottsmyndigheten), the Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) and the Prison and Probation Service.

104. Regeringskansliet 2024b. In addition to the Minister of Justice, serving as the Chairman of the Council, members include the State Secretaries of the Ministries of Justice and Finance, the National Police Commissioner, the Head of the National Operational Department of the police authority, the Prosecutor General and the Director General of Customs, the Economic Crime Authority and the Tax Agency.

the development of information exchange between the authorities, influencing people's attitudes and improving the reliability of population register data.^[105]

The Swedish Police annually submits a report to the Government on multi-authority cooperation against serious and organized crime (OB-satsningen) and its impacts. According to the report published in 2024, the measures have focused particularly on combating serious violence, breaking the criminal economy and preventive work. Property obtained through crime has been successfully confiscated and unjustified benefits have been recovered. In 2023, the measures were particularly targeted at ports, health care companies, educational institutions, currency exchange companies and companies responsible for waste processing. The report reveals, for example, the following measures that have been successful in significantly weakening the operating conditions of organized crime:

- The joint proactive situational picture function can be considered as one significant achievement of multi-authority cooperation. Every two years, it produces a comprehensive public report on the operating models of organized crime and future vulnerabilities. The National Intelligence Center Nuc is responsible for preparing the report.
- The exploitation of legal business has been prevented by removing several dozen companies from the employer and/or prepayment of tax register and the register of VAT payers.
- The need has been identified to make it punishable for a company to provide an incorrect address as its place of business. Incorrect information makes it significantly more difficult for the authorities to carry out monitoring.
- The cooperation groups of the police, the prosecution authority and the Prison and Probation Service have engaged in long-term efforts to capture persons in strategically responsible positions in criminal networks. In recent years, the selection of targeted persons has become increasingly successful. It is estimated that approximately one half of the former target persons of organized crime no longer play an equally strong strategic role in crime later on.
- For some time now, activities have been targeted at geographical areas where the influence of organized crime is significant. The selection of targets is based on geographical boundaries defined by the police, targeting vulnerable areas (utsatta områden) and risk areas (riskområden). The results of the work are monitored in a separate situational picture report.
- Misuse of social and unemployment security benefits has been better identified, and a significant number of unjustified benefits have been recovered, or their payment suspended. For example, in 2023, there were a total of 287 cases related to the clarification of uncertainties related to

105. Statens servicecenter, 2023.

social security, and the amount of social security benefits recovered came to approximately EUR 5.7 million (SEK 66 million).

- The residence information in the Population Register has been checked and the errors found have revealed misuse related to various benefits and persons involved in organized crime, among other things.
- Inspections have been carried out on the corporate activities of child welfare and care services, which have identified links between their activities and organized crime. The most common cases are related to hiring of personal assistants.^[106]

6.2 New ways to prevent the recruitment of children and young people

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention Brå's research report from 2023 describes the participation of children and young teenagers in criminal networks that commit serious crimes. This form of criminality is different from other juvenile delinquency. The operations are led violently and hierarchically, but still loosely. Children and juveniles also recruit each other to these networks. Children who join the network are often tasked with committing serious crimes as soon as they join the network. They engage in trading of narcotics, they store and use weapons, and participate in extortion, fraud and money laundering.^[107]

Partly due to the issues highlighted in Brå's report, it was decided to create nationwide multi-authority cooperation structures in Sweden to prevent children and juveniles from becoming involved in serious crime. In 2023, an initiative called Bob – barn och unga i organiserad brottslighet (Bob – children and young people in organized crime) was launched. Work is carried out in national, regional and local councils and working groups. The highest national council is headed by the police and also includes the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), the National Board of Institutional Care (Statens institutionsstyrelse SiS), the Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Prosecution Agency and the county governments. In addition, the umbrella organization of municipalities and regions participates in the Council's activities as necessary. Individual municipalities, academic researchers, lawyers and representatives of business and NGOs are also involved in the work of the national working group.^[108]

The operations are based on the situational analysis of local police departments and the so-called cylinder model of criminal networks formed by children and young people created on the basis of the analysis. In the model, young people affiliated

106. Polismyndigheten, 2024.

107. Brå, 2023b.

108. Brå et al., 2024a.

with organized crime are grouped on four levels according to how deeply they are already involved in the structures and operations of the local crime network. According to the model, children as young as 7–12 years of age are included in the risk groups.^[109]

The most financial resources and personnel have been invested in this activity by the police, county governments, the National Board of Institutional Care (Statens institutionsstyrelse) and the Prison and Probation Service, each annually 18–27 person-years and EUR 100,000–300,000. According to the interim and final assessment, the new Bob cooperation is necessary, but many obstacles have been encountered in its launch. Effective operations are hampered by the following factors, among others:

- Uniform methods and tools are not yet used to identify children and young people belonging to the risk group. Coordination at the regional level was seen as a key factor in improving the situation.
- Specifying the target group of the Bob cooperation is necessary as the situation of individual customers and the need for support must be assessed consistently. In addition, monitoring of longer-term development requires a shared understanding of the phenomenon.
- The geographical and administrative boundaries of different authorities differ, which makes it difficult to plan and organize support services.
- At the local level, it takes a lot of time and resources to ensure that all relevant actors are aware of the joint solutions.
- Not all actors involved have a legally prescribed role or task in crime prevention. This makes it difficult for them to organize their activities as part of the Bob cooperation. This applies, for example, to social welfare and health care authorities.
- The confidentiality requirements of official data and barriers to the sharing of personal data complicate practical work. Examples include obstacles to the exchange of information related to criminal sanctions and social security.
- Children's and young people's criminality is already extensively prevented in various cooperation structures, including cooperation between the police and municipalities. The new cooperation structure must be coordinated with the existing ones.^[110]

109. Polisen, Socialstyrelsen, Statens institutions Styrelse SiS, 2023.

110. Brå et al., 2024a; 2024b.

6.3 Measures related to the criminal economy

It is difficult to assess the scope of criminal economy. According to Sweden's national risk assessment on money laundering and terrorist financing (2020/2021), the financial benefits of organized crime have been derived in particular from various types of economic and tax crimes as well as fraud, misuse of benefits and benefit fraud and narcotics offenses. Fraud is the most common predicate offense both among suspects of money laundering and those convicted in court. According to the risk assessment matrix, the risks of money laundering and the societal consequences of money laundering are highest in the financial sector, financial administration services and real estate brokerage. The risk assessment presents 11 different ways to reduce risks. Most of them are related to registering the information of businesses subject to compulsory registration under the Money Laundering Act and to enabling more effective supervision by increasing the powers of supervisors. In addition, the means of verifying the customer's actual identity more reliably must be improved.^[111]

The latest way found useful in recovering the proceeds of crime is through cooperation between the police and the Enforcement Authority. Since August 2022, the police have been able to check a person's possible enforcement debt in a database on their own initiative alongside surveillance and emergency response operations. The police can then arrange for the seizure of the corresponding valuables by telephone with the Enforcement Authority, so that a civil servant working for the authority picks up the seized property from the police station. The property will later be auctioned to cover the enforcement debt. In 2023, the value of confiscated cars, cash, jewelry and other property was estimated to total SEK 93.3 million, or approximately EUR 8 million. The majority of the sum comes from people belonging to criminal networks. The Swedish Government has investigated whether, in addition to the police, other law enforcement authorities, such as Customs, the Coast Guard and the Swedish Economic Crime Authority (Ekobrottsmyndigheten), could be given the opportunity to assist enforcement authorities in remote surveillance.^[112]

The legislative amendment that entered into force in November 2024 allows for the forfeiture of property that seems disproportionately valuable in relation to a person's legal income. The police can use coercive measures to secure the removal of such property. The legislative amendment was supplemented in such a way that it is also possible to enforce more efficiently a judgment that does not concern property but the obligation to pay to the state. The aforementioned measures can contribute to making a seemingly prosperous criminal life less attractive, especially among young people.^[113]

111. Polismyndigheten, 2021; Samordningsfunktionen mot penningtvätt och finansiering av terrorism, 2020.

112. Kronofogden, 2024.

113. Kronofogden, 2024; Sveriges riksdag, 2024; Regeringskansliet, 2024a.

The latest organized crime prevention strategy also emphasizes the importance of administrative means in dismantling the criminal economy and preventing its growth. The Government's report on the implementation of Sweden's national crime prevention program (2020) mentions cooperation between the police, Customs and Border Guard authorities to reduce organized property crime from abroad as one successful example. According to the assessment, the cooperation has been close-knit and effective. Criminals' illegal hotel operations have been successfully intervened in and vehicles used by criminals have been confiscated. Another example of success is the closure of ten companies used by criminals in 2019. These were identified in the authorities' joint monitoring operation based on a risk analysis.^[114]

6.4 Key findings

The reviews concerning Sweden described the authorities' cooperation against organized crime, measures aimed at preventing the recruitment of children and young people, and measures targeted at the criminal economy. Based on them, the following examples of promising methods can be highlighted.

Diverse cooperation between the authorities

- Long-term multi-authority work against organized crime has produced good results in combating serious violence and reducing the criminal economy.
- The authorities' joint proactive situational picture function regularly produces diverse information on organized crime and the related threats and vulnerabilities.
- Verification of the accuracy of companies and natural persons' register data have prevented the exploitation of legitimate business for criminal purposes.
- The successful selection of targets has helped to catch the key persons of criminal groups.
- The checks have revealed child protection and care companies' connections with organized crime and identified the need to protect vulnerable persons.

Preventing the recruitment of children and young people

- The Bob initiative and the related cooperation between the authorities are expected to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in serious crime. The authorities' powers and the exchange of information between them could be developed.
- Cooperation between the authorities regarding children and young people is necessary, even though it involves many challenges (e.g. inconsistent methods, barriers to information exchange).

114. Regeringens skriftelse, 2020/21:63.

Measures related to criminal economy

- The police have recently been given the opportunity to investigate enforcement debts and seize property on their own initiative, which has promoted the recovery of the proceeds of crime.
- Criminal activities can also be made more difficult through various administrative means (e.g. closing down the operations of businesses).

Sweden's measures against organized crime are diverse and cover a wide range of sectors. They have helped to successfully weaken the operating conditions of organized crime and reduce its negative impacts on society. Major challenges still remain in the fight against organized crime, as criminal networks have extended their activities to infiltrate the Swedish society on a broad scale.

7. Perspectives from study visits regarding combating of organized crime

The purpose of study visits during the project was to supplement and deepen the conclusions drawn on the basis of scientific research and self-assessments by authorities on the special features and impacts of the fight against organized crime in Sweden and Denmark. The visits took place in October–November 2024. The project team and the chairperson of the project's steering group met with experts from the Swedish and Danish Ministries of Justice and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) in different configurations. The discussion with the Swedish police's experts on organized crime took place by remote means.

The roles of the experts included the prevention of serious crime and the related strategic planning or research. Many of the experts met had been involved in the preparation of national strategic programs against organized crime and gang crime, and the measures included in the programs. At Brå, the focus was on armed violence by criminal networks and the involvement of children and young people in criminal networks.

The following observations on the situation and future prospects in Denmark and Sweden are based on notes taken during study visits. The observations describe the situation and development characteristics in general, not the comments by individual persons.

7.1 About the situation in Denmark

Organized crime in Denmark

Approximately 1,200 people in Denmark have been identified as belonging to organized criminal groups, i.e. motorcycle gangs or other criminal gangs. Of these people, 360 individuals on average are in prison each month serving a criminal sanction. The most significant challenges now and in the future are the infiltration of criminal networks and gangs into the legitimate economy, the increased participation of children and young people in criminal networks and the increasing digitalization and internationalization of crime.

Currently, Swedish criminal gangs have not established themselves a position in Denmark, but they still operate actively between the two countries. A particularly topical concern is the recruitment of children living in Sweden to commit serious crimes and even homicides in Denmark. Connections between organized crime and critical infrastructure services and structures, such as ports, also give cause to growing concern. In August 2024, the Swedish and Danish governments agreed on closer cooperation in crime prevention, to address, among other things, criminal activities directed from abroad.

Since the first decade of the 2000s, there has been a strong political consensus in Denmark on the need to combat organized crime as effectively as possible. The strategic agreements between the parties have been compiled into so-called gang packages.^[115] According to expert assessments, the fact that the gangs' acts of violence have been communicated in the media, and the so-called general public has been interested in following this discussion, has contributed to the political will being sustained. In other words, the political priorities are linked to the broader societal debate on the impact and significance of organized crime.

The gang packages have included 125 different action initiatives and numerous proposals for amendments to legislation. However, the large number of measures is not seen as a particular challenge. The measures are not separate but form broader entities together. The initiatives of the previous gang packages have been supplemented later as necessary.

The latest gang package aims, for example, to improve the powers of law enforcement authorities online, on social media platforms and in encrypted communication media. Among other things, this aims to prevent communication between prisoners more effectively and give the police better opportunities to follow the discussion in encrypted communication channels.

In addition, the need to develop international crime prevention cooperation, particularly within the framework of Europol and between the Nordic countries, has been identified. Monitoring the development of the activities of criminal groups operating from Sweden in particular is important in Denmark. Criminals operate across borders and the gangs have networks in several Nordic countries. This is why Nordic cooperation between police forces has been increased.

As result of gang package IV, in addition to firearms, possession of edged weapons now carries a stricter punishment. A new method is the use of civilians, for example, in online intelligence and otherwise to support police work. However, this has become possible only recently, so there is no practical experience of this yet.

115. The contents of gang packages I–IV were reviewed in Chapter 3.

Experts' views on crime prevention in Denmark

The Danish gang packages I–III focused in particular on preventing criminal gangs' armed violence and spirals of vengeance and combating drug crime. Thanks to these gang packages more severe criminal penalties could be imposed in cases related to criminal gangs. The need for stricter criminal sanctions has been emphasized in Danish criminal policy for a long time. In addition, the possibilities for the pre-trial investigation authorities to use coercive measures were improved.

Gang package IV is based on the authorities' self-assessment of the functionality of the three previous packages.^[116] In order to identify key needs, various authorities, organizations, academic researchers and also experts by experience, who had exited the world of crime, were widely consulted during the preparation. The police have played a key role in the preparation.

Several authorities in Denmark feel that the measures of the previous gang packages have made a significant contribution, particularly to preventing violent conflicts between criminals. Harsher penalties have been used to get criminals out of the "market" for a longer period of time. This seems to have reduced the use of weapons in conflicts between criminals.

According to the police, restrictions on release on parole as well as area and residence bans have achieved some promising results. These have been considered to prevent conflicts between criminal gangs from escalating to violence. By court decisions, persons convicted of crimes have been issued with long-term residence bans, mainly in the Copenhagen metropolitan area. Residence bans have been assessed to constitute an effective means of getting gang members out of their usual environment. Short-term area bans imposed by the police have served to prevent the continuing circle of conflicts between gangs.

By administrative decisions, municipalities have banned criminal groups from using premises on the grounds of disturbance caused by their operations, for example. The ban has been considered to hamper criminal activities. Similarly, temporary inspection rights granted to the police to a certain area (visitation zones) have been found to prevent armed violence by criminal groups.

With gang package IV, more attention has been paid to the business activities of criminal groups and to preventing the growth of the criminal economy and the misuse of public benefits. Economic crime in its various forms has become an increasingly important part of gangs' criminal behavior and income generation. The internal organization of the Ministry of Justice has also attempted to respond to this by breaking down the boundaries between units and bringing together different expert teams. In addition, the scope of cross-administrative Al Capone

116. Serviceeftersyn af bandepakkerne, 2022. See also Chapter 5.

cooperation will be expanded from preventing the misuse of benefits to preventing other economic crime. Gangs' economic crime is also prevented with double penalties.

Denmark has begun to build a center of competence type unit under the Ministry of Justice in order to better address the international "criminal market". The duties of the national special unit for crime prevention (National enhed for Særlig Kriminalitet, NSK) include monitoring organized crime, combating human trafficking and economic crime, preventing money laundering and international crime prevention cooperation with Europol, for example. The unit has extensive expertise in crime prevention. Cooperation and information exchange have also been improved with companies and, in particular, the financial sector.

Denmark strives to reduce the recruitment of children and young people for serious crime in many ways. Examples include the multidisciplinary SSP cooperation (Skole, Socialforvaltning og Politi), which has already proven to be effective, and its more effective utilization in preventing the attraction of gangs. The knock-knock method and offering small-scale paid work to young people were mentioned as more recent methods.

The knock-knock method means early intervention in serious crimes committed by young people. The young people's nearest and dearest are informed of the situation and solutions are sought together with them. However, a careful analysis of a young person's life situation takes a lot of time. During the experimental phase of the method, a cost-benefit analysis was carried out, according to which it is profitable to allocate resources to this activity. The activity has not yet been implemented extensively, but it seems to be a promising method.

Closing down of criminal organizations bearing insignia is seen as a promising new tool. The Loyal to Familia organization was permanently terminated in 2021 by a court decision, and the legal proceedings for the termination of the Bandidos organization are ongoing. Even though political decision-makers recognize the fact that the decision to terminate is only a partial solution to a difficult problem, it is expected to weaken the organizations' ability to strengthen their brand and attract particularly young people to join their ranks. One of the challenges is the international nature of criminal organizations' activities, which is why discontinued activities may continue elsewhere.

Although it has not been considered possible to reliably determine the effectiveness of all measures in Denmark, monitoring the implementation of the measures outlined in gang package IV is an important part of the whole. Targets and deadlines have been defined for individual measures. The actual situation is monitored regularly, and the responsible agencies report on the progress to the Ministry of Justice. In Denmark, the implementation of the measures has also been supported by the fact that many of the necessary regulatory changes have come into force quite quickly. A new overall assessment of the success of gang packages, based on the authorities' self-assessment, is being planned.

7.2 About the situation in Sweden

Organized crime in Sweden

Based on the study visits, the societal impact of organized crime appears to be greater in Sweden than in Denmark. Benefit fraud in particular is a major economic and social problem. More criminal networks and gangs have been identified in Sweden than in Denmark, and their operational structures are also more diverse. Partly for these reasons, the situational picture of organized crime in Denmark has been based on somewhat more reliable information than in Sweden. The removal of barriers to information exchange has also improved the up-to-date nature of the situational picture in Sweden.

Mobility and international cooperation of criminals have increased. According to the authorities' assessment, criminal networks operating in Sweden are managed from nearly 60 different countries, e.g. Turkey, the Balkan countries, and Southern European, North African and South American countries. The aim is to bring criminal leaders working from abroad to criminal liability more effectively, why Sweden is engaging in increasingly close bilateral cooperation with countries such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and other Nordic countries. Sweden works also actively with the authorities of other Nordic countries and within the framework of Europol's EMPACT cooperation to dismantle international criminal networks.^[117]

The age structure of criminal groups and networks has changed, and even very young children are involved in armed violence. Also, young people in a particularly vulnerable position, such as juveniles having absconded from child welfare units, are involved in criminal activities. Children and adolescents are also commissioned to commit aggravated offenses, such as drug trafficking and crimes against life and health. For example, they distribute narcotics or lure people into a violent trap. Criminal networks also include actors who are not connected to the conflict at hand, and who do not necessarily know the other members of the network or its management structure. So far, the majority of young people involved in serious crime have been men and boys, but the proportion of women and girls is increasing.

A criminal youth gang can slowly develop into an organized criminal group. On the other hand, youth gangs or parts of them can be included in existing organized crime networks. Sometimes children or young people are quickly placed in a position similar to that of child soldiers in criminal networks. Intervening in this phenomenon is made more difficult by the fact that children and young people have voluntarily started to choose a criminal lifestyle themselves and regard it attractive. The persons responsible for recruiting and managing the activities are often minors

117. EMPACT, or European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats, is the EU Member States' security initiative to combat organized and serious international crime. (https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/law-enforcement-cooperation/EMPACT-fighting-crime-together_en)

themselves. Recruitment can take place either online or locally in the neighborhood. The geographical ties of criminal groups are often still strong.

Previously, armed contacts took place between a few smaller groups, but recently the ties between criminal groups seem to have increased in these respects. The growth of violence is not necessarily cyclical, but continuous spirals of vengeance can feed it. Actors from an increasingly wide area are involved, and criminals move from one place to another. Violence has become more brutal and is also targeted at those close to the criminals. In addition, the exploitation of children and adolescents, who have no experience in the use of weapons in violent crime and homicides also poses a risk to bystanders.

Experts' views on crime prevention in Sweden

The political will towards organized crime is seen as similar in Sweden and Denmark. This is a very serious societal problem, and a wide range of measures are needed to tackle it. The cooperation structures of the authorities were considered successful. However, if the same experts are involved in a wide range of cooperation groups, they might have challenges to engage fully in all activities.

The fight against organized crime in Sweden is closely linked to other strategies and action programs that promote security in society. It intersects with, among other things, strengthening national security, combating violent extremism and terrorism, and promoting various forms of social support. For example, the impacts of armed conflicts between criminals are broadly reflected in different functions of society.

The latest strategic program against organized crime from 2024 is based on a broad political consensus.^[118] According to experts' estimates, it would probably not have been possible to build a similar program at the start of the 2020s. In Sweden, in addition to the authorities, many other actors have considered the measures mentioned in the strategy necessary and justified.

Stakeholders from different sectors of society were widely consulted during the preparation of the strategy. Approximately 150 people were involved in the process in some way. In addition, various surveys and reports by the authorities were used. The implementation of the strategy is monitored and reported for the Parliament. However, demonstrating genuine societal impact has been identified as challenging.

The deterioration of trust in society is considered to be a particularly worrying development. The links of criminal gangs, groups and networks to the structures of the welfare state in Sweden are so extensive that it is challenging to stop the development. Both the misuse of benefits and improper influence at different levels

118. Sweden's key strategic programs against organized crime were reviewed in Chapter 4.

and sectors of society are related to this. The fight against organized crime is also linked to anti-corruption measures. As a result of this development, Sweden has begun to look for new means of crime prevention in countries where organized crime acts like a mafia that has infiltrated all areas of society and threatens the democratic rule of law.

In Sweden, immigration policy has only in recent years been seen to have a stronger connection with the fight against organized crime, unlike in Denmark. Sweden has adopted some of the criminal policy emphases that have been prevailing in Denmark, such as the grounds for making certain penalties harsher. In both countries, armed violence by criminals and the use of explosives as a deterrent have been key factors behind stricter criminal policy. The number of fatalities and those injured due to armed violence in Sweden increased significantly from the beginning of the 2010s to the first years of the 2020s. However, there have been signs of more positive development over the past couple of years, which may be an indication of the effectiveness of various measures.

In Sweden, more resources have been allocated to the police and other authorities, but they have not always been able to make full use of their potential in crime prevention and investigation. Experts estimate that citizens may assume the authorities' powers to be broader than they actually are. Recently, it has also proven possible to advance regulation, which intervenes even more in citizens' rights.

The operations of the police have undergone significant reforms in recent years. For example, the police have begun to act more proactively, and in a data-driven manner. Instead of performance monitoring, the importance of impact monitoring is emphasized. The focus has shifted from individual criminal actors and cases to connections between criminals and crime phenomena. New crime prevention methods are also tried out more boldly than before. In addition, the aim is to make the operational response more sustainable. For example, immediate follow-up measures are drawn up in connection with the release of a detained adolescent.

7.3 Estimates of future development in Sweden and Denmark

The strategic priorities for crime prevention are similar in Sweden and Denmark. The aim is to prevent the exploitation of children and young people in serious crime, to effectively tackle violent spirals of vengeance between criminal gangs, and to prevent criminals from infiltrating the legitimate economy. In addition, the aim is to increase the authorities' powers and means, particularly as concerns information exchange and data-driven operations. Various solutions such as competence centers and multidisciplinary cooperation groups have proven to be good practices.

However, according to experts, it is not easy to apply in Sweden directly the same methods that have been proven functional in Denmark. For example, the process of reforming regulation has been on average slower in Sweden than in Denmark. However, the number of regulatory initiatives related to crime has increased in both countries, and the aim is to reform the regulation more quickly than before.

The internationalization and adaptability of crime also require law enforcement authorities to reform their operations more agilely. Major steps have been taken in the development of technological solutions for law enforcement authorities in both Sweden and Denmark. Examples included communication systems and analytical tools that combine data from different systems. Both countries have seen the need to invest more heavily in operational capacity on various online platforms and in strongly encrypted communication channels used by criminals. In addition to technological solutions, the aim is to improve the integrity and reliability of data in official registers. In Sweden, particular attention has been paid to the verification of personal data concerning residence and family relations.

The complexity and rapid transformation of organized crime requires the authorities to be able to boldly experiment with measures on whose effectiveness there is no solid scientific evidence. In addition, it is important to monitor developments and change the course of action if the effects are not in line with expectations.

In both Sweden and Denmark, it has been considered necessary to increase the efficiency and speed up the removal of the proceeds of crime, for several reasons. One reason is to ensure that crime would not appear to be such an attractive "career option" for children and young people. In Sweden, the law that allows the recovery, even without a suspicion of crime, of assets whose legality cannot be justified has been considered particularly promising.

Experts in Sweden and Denmark agreed that it is important to prevent the exploitation of children and young people in crime. A significant amount of new information has been obtained about the participation of children and young people in criminal networks. The major challenge is to find the best ways for early intervention and for ending a criminal career at an early stage. The so-called "gate theory" that a criminal career begins with minor crimes no longer applies in all cases, as children and young people are even commissioned to commit homicides in criminal networks.

In both Sweden and Denmark, efforts have been made to find more effective ways to bring to justice criminals who live abroad. According to an estimate of the Swedish police, some 600 senior or middle management members of criminal groups are organizing activities from abroad. These operators have a strong connection to Sweden, either through citizenship or long-term residence in the country.^[119]

Measures to break the cycle of armed violence have begun to produce results and the annual growth in the number of homicides has been brought to a halt. Promising operating models include methods aimed at changing the attitudes of key actors, group-level interventions and mediation between communities. One example is the Group Violence Intervention, or "Sluta Skjut" operating model based on the GVI method, which has produced good results in the Malmö metropolitan area. Such methods can possibly also be used to protect relatives of criminal network members from violence and life-threatening situations. However, success requires the involvement of trusted intermediaries acting as cultural interpreters and peer mediators in communities. In addition to these activities, individual-focused support for exiting crime is also needed.

The infiltration of criminals into different sectors of society and the structures of the welfare state is a serious concern in Sweden. The aim is to respond to this, in particular through the cooperation of several authorities. Based on current information, the situation is better in other Nordic countries than in Sweden. However, there must be a determined focus on preventing corruption and inappropriate influence throughout the Nordic countries.

In both Denmark and Sweden, experts used the terms organized crime, criminal gang and criminal network in parallel. In practice, there was no significant difference in interpretation between these terms. However, in particular in connection with prevention of armed offenses and combating violence, they referred to gangs. The term street gang (gatugäng, gadebande) is not used much in official language. Swedish experts considered it too restrictive, as criminal networks that exploit minors can include very different groups, from loose groups of friends to gangs with insignia. There is no precise definition for organized crime in Swedish law, and some experts found this challenging in legal proceedings.

8. Conclusions and reflection

This report described the approaches against organized crime in Denmark and Sweden. It focused in particular on the impacts and effectiveness of selected programs, projects and measures.

The report was prepared in the "Tackling Organized Crime: Viewpoints on Nordic Policies and Practices (TOC24)" project, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The report was implemented by the Police University College in cooperation with the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy of the University of Helsinki.

The key materials were collected from open sources and consisted of research literature and official documents. In addition, observations made during study visits to the target countries and statistical data on organized crime were used.

The information serves the implementation of Finland's Government Program and the updating of the strategy against organized crime, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. The report also supports the development of the activities of the authorities and the public and scientific debate on the topic.

8.1 Strategic programs and range of means

Towards diverse strategic programs

Long-term work against organized crime and gang crime has been carried out in Denmark and Sweden. With its gang packages, Denmark has been ahead of Sweden in this work. The most recent strategic programs against organized crime in these countries from 2023 and 2024 include a diverse range of measures and different areas of society have been widely harnessed in the implementation.

Strategic priorities have traditionally been related to preventing the growth of organized crime and breaking the spirals of armed conflict and vengeance between criminal gangs. However, the strategic programs in Sweden and Denmark have also started to emphasize themes related more broadly and deeply to the societal impacts of organized crime. Such themes include:

- strengthening trust in society
- preventing the misuse of public benefits
- preventing money laundering, infiltration into business, corruption and improper influence
- influencing operations organized and managed from abroad through international cooperation and exchange of information
- protecting children and young people from exploitation by organized crime

Due to their fresh and diverse content, the new strategic programs of Denmark and Sweden against organized crime can be considered as good examples for other countries. In addition, measures to combat organized crime are widely available also in programs that are not specifically tailored against organized crime and gang crime.

Balancing between repressive methods and other methods

So-called hard or repressive measures, such as imposing substantially harsher penalties, have become more common in the toolkit against organized crime. The range of measures has also included a large number of stricter prohibitions, restrictions and control measures in various forms. The discussion on measures against organized crime has been strongly focused on these hard means.

- The Danish regulation on doubling penalties for gang crime was the starting point for imposing harsher penalties for crimes committed in connection with organized crime.
- Harsher penalties have been extended to apply to many other offenses, such as recruitment to criminal groups, new situations related to weapons, humiliating violence, providing false information to an authority, or obstructing the work of certain authorities.
- The features of harder criminal policy have also been adopted in Sweden and are becoming increasingly prominent in the recent initiatives presented in Finland.

On the other hand, both Denmark and Sweden have a long tradition of using numerous other methods to combat organized crime. These include measures that facilitate and develop the operations of the authorities and other bodies. Measures to combat organized crime also include a wide range of support and protection measures for different target groups.

- Development of the authorities' activities is diverse and concerns, for example, resources, powers, tools, situational picture, cooperation and information exchange. Measures have been targeted at various target groups, types of crime and investigation methods.
- Nordic countries have a long tradition of "protecting the weakest". In the fight against organized crime, special support is provided to children and young people, vulnerable areas and people who need protection in legal proceedings, in prisons and in exiting criminal groups.
- Various forms of social support and other measures supporting early intervention are of particular importance in preventing the recruitment of children and young people for crime and the creation of a parallel society.

8.2 Impacts and effectiveness of measures

Scarce research evidence on the effectiveness of measures

The effectiveness of measures against organized crime and gang crime in Denmark and Sweden was assessed using a systematic literature review. The review concerned outcome evaluations and process evaluations and the strength of the related research evidence. The review found little evidence of the effectiveness of different measures based on strong set-ups.

However, promising observations are related to the following measures:

- The Youth Crime Board intended for juveniles in Denmark: Results indicate, to some extent, a positive effect in terms of crime prevention. However, the system is complicated and extensive, and its implementation has generated a lot of debate in Denmark.
- The joint operation Tore 2, aimed by the authorities at counteracting the parallel structure: The level of reported crime as well as perceived fear and vulnerability decreased during the project.
- Increased police presence in vulnerable areas: More arrests for armed crimes and narcotics offenses and a reduction in the number of registered robberies and burglaries. Cooperation between property owners has also reduced the number of crimes in vulnerable areas.
- Use of surveillance cameras: In Sweden, it was related to a reduction in violence, but not to a significant change in property crime or crime investigation. In Denmark, it was not found to prevent crime, but it improved the solving of crimes.

The process evaluations have also revealed some important observations about the effectiveness of the measures:

- Allocating resources to a specific problem: Long-term regional police operations in vulnerable areas have shown good results, but temporary operations have a short-term effect.
- Measures against organized crime: Measures targeting a wide range of crime problems, including crime by criminal groups, are often more effective in combating less organized and less serious crime.
- Organizing exit work at the national level: Facilitating the organization of work, a multidisciplinary approach to work and the placement of those subject to serious threats.

Research data on the effectiveness of different measures presents challenges, although it can be considered more reliable than data based on the authorities' self-assessments. Research data describes some of the measures in a targeted manner, but there are also many gaps in the knowledge. Effectiveness is often difficult to verify due to many influencing factors. Stronger and more diverse research data is needed to support future strategic work against organized crime. Research-based evaluations should therefore be part of the development and implementation of the strategy against organized crime.

Positive assessments of the effectiveness of the measures by the authorities

The authorities gave a moderately positive assessment on the effectiveness of measures to combat organized crime. These assessments were mapped using official documents and supplemented with information from short study visits.

The Danish authorities have promising experiences of the following measures, among others:

- Harsher penalties: The gang provision on doubling penalties and, in part, imposing harsher penalties even in other respects are important tools for the police in particular.
- Restriction of criminal gangs' operations: Restrictions on assembly rooms, area and residence bans and the prohibition of criminal gangs hamper the operations of gangs.
- Multi-authority cooperation: Cross-administrative cooperation structures help prevent crime and misuse of benefits and in recovery of the proceeds of crime.
- Criminal investigation: Rapid hearings in legal proceedings, higher rewards for tip-offs, strengthened digital analysis and a technology pool have improved investigations.
- Witness protection: Remote interrogations and assault alarms issued to protect witnesses have helped protect witnesses involved in criminal groups.
- Improving prison safety: Protected wards and stricter restrictions have improved the safety of prisoners and staff alike.
- Support for exiting criminal groups: Multidisciplinary units and rehabilitation programs have reduced violent behavior and helped individuals in desisting from crime.

The Swedish authorities have promising experiences of the following measures, among others:

- Diverse cooperation with the authorities: The shared situational picture function has enabled more proactive operations. Long-term multi-authority work has produced good results in combating serious violence and the criminal economy.
- Enhanced monitoring and ensuring the integrity of register data: Verifications of the accuracy of the register data of companies and natural persons have prevented the exploitation of legitimate business for criminal purposes.
- Work targeted at key actors: Local, regional, national and international cooperation has enabled the detection and prevention of criminal activities organized from abroad.
- Protection of persons in a vulnerable position: When checked, connections of child protection and care companies to organized crime have been revealed and thus the need to protect vulnerable persons has been identified.
- Preventing the exploitation of children and young people in crime: It is implemented, for example, through the Bob initiative. The authorities' powers and the exchange of information between the authorities could be developed.
- Measures related to the criminal economy: The police have been given the opportunity to investigate enforcement debts and seize property on their own initiative, which has promoted the recovery of the proceeds of crime.

The authorities' information on the effectiveness of the measures involves various challenges. This information describes the measures extensively, but it is difficult to demonstrate the reliability and strength of the evidence. In principle, the information and assessments of the authorities should therefore be verified by means of an outcome evaluation. The information is often fragmented and does not include balanced views by different parties. Discussions with the authorities make it possible to specify the information in the documents and obtain information on matters not included in them, such as recent observations and future prospects. The information of the authorities has its own supplementary place in the monitoring of measures against organized crime. The authorities' assessments of good practices also provide a starting point for the actual outcome evaluation.

8.3 Key themes and cross-cutting perspectives

Based on the written material compiled for the report, and the study visits, key target areas and challenges in the fight against organized crime have been identified. Table 6 depicts the four target areas that focus on children and young people, weapons and violence, criminal economy and the international dimension. Cross-cutting perspectives in these target areas are related to the knowledge base, the prerequisites for the activities of the authorities, cooperation, the selection of means, technology, trust and key rights.

Table 6. Key themes in combating organized crime in Denmark and Sweden

	Themes			
	Children and young people	Weapons and violence	Criminal economy	International dimension
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of participation in crime • Support for exiting from crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the use of weapons and explosives • Prevention of violent conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of affiliation with legal business • Prevention of money laundering • Effective retrieval of proceeds of crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure of cross-border crime • Reducing the influence of international crime
Example of a current phenomenon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of minors for purposes of serious crimes also abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence against criminals' relatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal exploitation of public funds and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal services in the preparation and execution of crimes
Cross-cutting perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information: statistics, reports, studies • Activities: powers, resources, tools • Cooperation: shared situational picture, cooperation forums, exchange of information • Means: preventive, repressive, administrative • Technology: communication platforms and technologies utilized by criminals and the authorities • Trust: mutual trust between different actors in society • Rights: fundamental and human rights, privacy, data protection 			

It is of paramount importance to protect children and young people from crime, because becoming involved in criminal networks' activities often has long-term negative social and economic consequences. The use of weapons and explosives as well as violence have traditionally been part of the core activities of organized crime, so that new measures targeting them are constantly needed. Money has been one of the key incentives for organized crime operations, and its significance has increased over time. Intervening in criminal cash flows and infiltration into corporate and public organizations curbs the criminal economy. The international perspective plays a key role in the management and operations of organized crime. Organized crime in Denmark and Sweden has links and competition both with each other and with foreign crime groups.

Current examples of organized crime phenomena show that the authorities must have flexibility to respond to the constantly changing operating environment. It should be noted that crime related to the themes presented does not take place only in physical environments, but increasingly also in cyber environments. Both environments must be taken into account in the resourcing and direction of official activities. In the future, crime in cyber environments will become more prominent.

Combating organized crime involves many cross-cutting perspectives, covering all or most thematic areas. The significance of diverse information to support decision-making and operations is becoming increasingly important. It is needed in various forms and for different purposes. However, very few outcome evaluations performed using strong research setups in particular are available.

In the fight against organized crime, it is essential to develop the framework for the authorities' own operations and cooperation between different actors. The prerequisites for operations are improved by many basic factors, such as authorizations, resources and tools, a situational picture and appropriate cooperation forums as well as opportunities for exchanging information. A diverse and balanced range of methods promotes successful work against organized crime. Increasingly, the authorities' selection of means also includes technological tools and related coercive measures to respond to increasingly technological organized crime.

Technology is developing rapidly, and new technologies are also spreading rapidly in use. In many respects, criminals use the same technology as the legitimate actors in society. For example, criminals use encrypted communications applications and software and dark webs to prepare and execute crimes. Therefore, the authorities must be prepared to keep pace with technological developments and make efficient use of the latest technology for purposes such as criminal intelligence or criminal investigation.

Trust between different actors in society supports the fight against organized crime on a widespread basis. Criminal groups and networks are increasingly seeking to infiltrate both legal business operations and public administration structures at

different levels. In addition, they make versatile use of purchased services in their criminal activities. Strengthening trust can be used to mitigate this development and prevent the emergence of a so-called parallel society.

In the target countries' work against organized crime, the frequency of regulation has increased due to the expanded range of measures. This may enhance the work against organized crime, but it may also include questionable features related to citizens' privacy, the protection of personal data, fundamental rights or human rights. Finding a balance between citizens' safety and effective crime prevention, on the one hand, and the rights and protection of the targets of the measures, on the other, requires careful weighing.

8.4 Notes concerning Finland

About the applicability of Denmark and Sweden's measures to Finland

Operating models applied in one country to prevent crime cannot be transferred to another country as they are. However, it can be estimated to be more successful in countries fairly similar with each other, such as the Nordic countries.

Denmark and Sweden's strategic programs against organized crime include many measures that have not been tried out in Finland. Therefore, it is possible to copy, for example, a basic idea of a measure to combat organized crime and tailor it to suit Finnish circumstances. However, due to the characteristics of the phenomenon, the organization of crime prevention, the crime situation or geographical location, Finland may have special characteristics due to which the Swedish and Danish models are not directly suitable for us.

If the measures to be tried out are to be based on strong research evidence, the range of possible measures is substantially narrowed, or they must also be sought outside the target countries of this report. For this reason, various agile experiments against organized crime, for example, also play an important role in the development of measures in the Finnish operating environment.

In Finland, it is important to ensure that the cooperation capacities and information sharing mechanisms of the authorities, which have been emphasized especially in Denmark and Sweden, are also sufficiently agile and facilitate the effective prevention of organized crime. A realistic and shared situational picture provides an essential basis for prevention measures, as do the planning and implementation of knowledge-based, targeted measures. In recent years, the importance of international crime prevention cooperation has been emphasized between Denmark and Sweden, but also more broadly. Finland must continue to ensure that it is actively involved in the relevant cross-border cooperation against organized crime.

Organized crime is a special form of crime that requires targeted measures. However, it is also linked to other forms of crime, criminal policy and security policy. Thus, also other measures than those described in this report could be essential elements in combating organized crime.

Update of Finland's strategy for the prevention of organized crime

The "Tackling Organized Crime – Nordic Policies and Practices" project is linked to the update of Finland's strategy for the prevention of organized crime. The information collected in the project has been made available to the working group preparing the update of the strategy since summer 2024. The strategy was mainly prepared in 2024, and the aim was to prepare a Government resolution on its content early 2025.

As the operating environment changes rapidly, up-to-date information on organized crime is constantly needed. This involves diverse information from the authorities and other actors as well as solid research data on organized crime and the related special phenomena. Such information is also needed to assess the implementation of the strategic measures and prepare for future updates of the strategy.

The data from this project, which has examined the operating models of Denmark and Sweden, provides a sound basis for monitoring organized crime and measures against it in Finland. At best, the practices created in Finland can support other countries in preparing, implementing and monitoring their strategies and measures against organized crime in the future.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Literature review search strategy

Search terms

Searches for the literature review were performed in international and national databases. The aim was to find measures that have been evaluated during the last decade and aimed at preventing organized crime or the harm it causes and supporting desistance from crime. The development of search terms was based on the assignment and a previous literature review (see Villman & Kaakinen, 2024). In the previous literature review, external gang crime experts from Denmark and Sweden were used in the validation of the search strategy. The search terms are presented in Table 7. The search terms were translated for searches in Swedish and Danish.

Table 7. Literature review search terms

Group	AND	Intervention	AND	Country
"gang*" OR "clan*" OR "crim* network*" OR "crim* group*" OR "crim* organization*" OR "crim* organisation*" OR "organized crim*" OR "organised crim*" OR "cartel*" OR "syndicate*" OR "criminal association*" OR "criminal business*" OR "outlaw group*" OR "motorcycle gang"	AND	"intervention*" OR "preventi*" OR "policing" OR "action*" OR "approach*" OR "initiati*" OR "cooperat*" OR "program*" OR "support"	AND	"denmark" OR "danish" OR "swed"

Search strategy and results

Systematic database searches were carried out in four different databases: Web of Science, Scopus, SwePub and Research Portal Denmark. In addition to these searches, exploratory searches were carried out in relevant databases and on organizations' websites. Information on the matches during the different phases of the searches can be found in the flowchart (Figure 3). The first screening based on headings and summaries yielded 166 hits. After the second screening, a total of 76 reports and articles remained, which formed the material of this literature review.

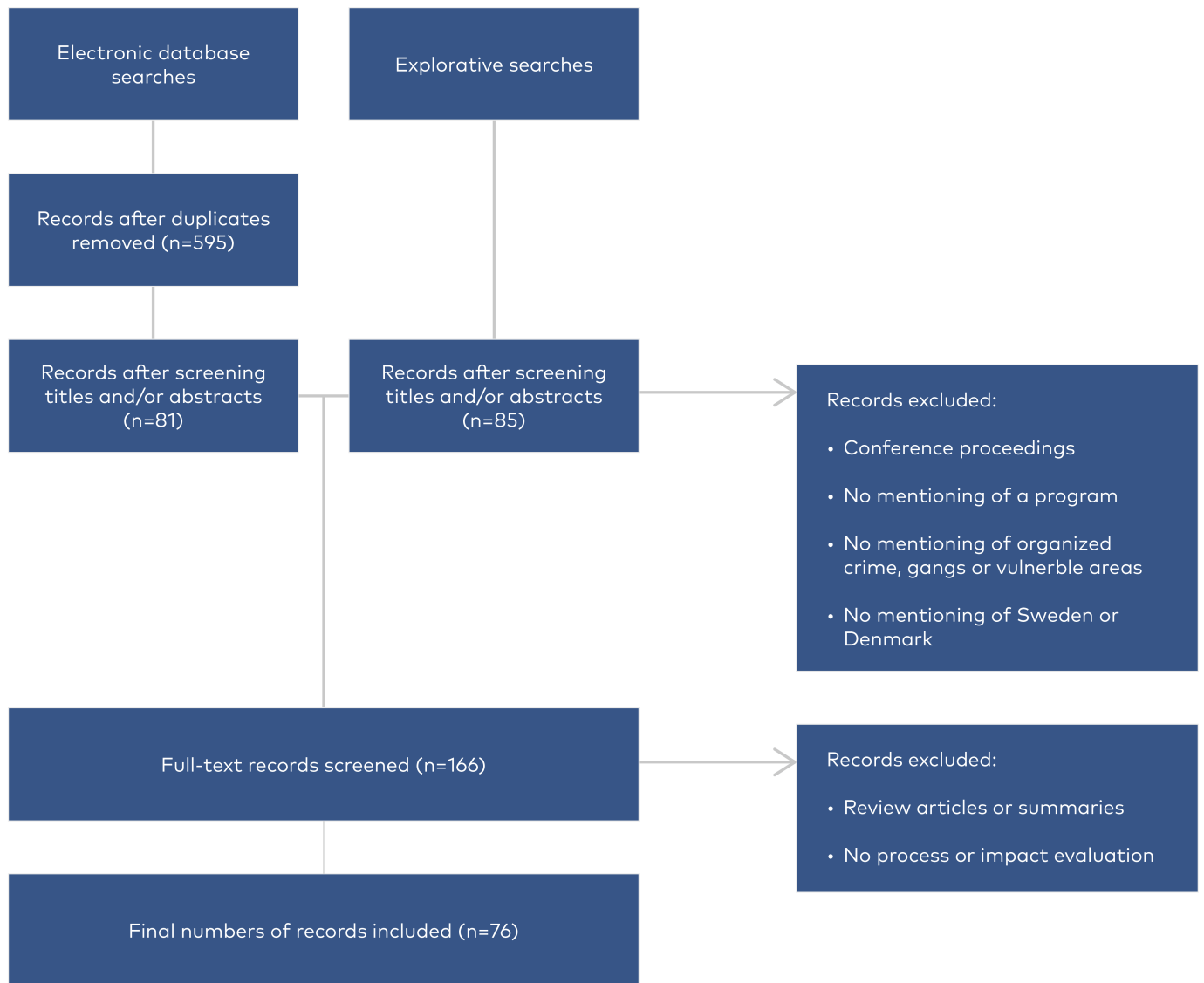


Figure 3. Flow chart of literature review

* Database searches: Web of Science, Scopus, SwePub, and Research Portal Denmark.

** Explorative searches: Google scholar, Socialstyrelsen (Swe), Social- og boligstyrelsen (Den), Justisministeriets forskningskontor (Den), VIVE, The Danish Centre for Social Science Research, BRÅ (Swe), Det Kriminalpræventive Råd, Riksrevisionen and Rigsrevisionen.

Appendix 2: Display level classification

A key challenge in outcome evaluations is that the target groups of the measures are quite select (e.g. high risk of crime). As consequence, it is not meaningful to directly compare the changes that take place in them to other groups or regions, for example (Farrington, 2003). For this review, we have included outcome evaluation studies that measure changes in the target group of the measure before and after its implementation, and the change is compared to a control group that is as similar as possible (excluding descriptive studies). The plausibility of the comparison is reflected directly in the evidence level of the study. Randomized trial setup at the highest level of evidence facilitates the most reliable causal conclusions. Randomity is used in the selection of the targets of the measure (e.g. the selection of areas), in which case the target group does not otherwise differ from the control group. In the second-highest level of evidence, quasi-experimental setups, on the other hand, statistical methods aimed at incorporating randomness characteristic of the experimental setup, and reducing the potential impact of factors unrelated to the procedure on the results, are used. In correlative arrangements at the lowest level of evidence, the subject of the procedure is compared to one of the control subjects. The comparability of the target and control group is strengthened by statistical methods such as multivariate modeling, standardization or matching.

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