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One of the main difficulties in reviewing recent developments in crime and justice in Europe is that we do not have as yet - as **Ian Taylor** points out in his introductory article - a body of systematic data about crime, victimisation or patterns of social control across Europe. Consequently we have to rely on a mixture of official statistics collected by various agencies operating with different definitions and employing different methods of selecting appropriate information or a variety of selective research studies. In fact Taylor argues that it is a measure of the priorities of 'market Europe' rather than 'social Europe' that no such resource currently exists.

The information which is available presents a variable but generally gloomy picture. Crime rates and victimisation rates are increasing in many countries. Prisons are becoming overcrowded and prison conditions are reported to be deteriorating in a number of countries including Italy, France and Greece, according to **Vivien Stern**. The situation in Eastern Europe is no better and in some cases considerably worse. **Roy King** describes the processes of penal reform in Eastern European countries as slow and uneven while severe overcrowding remains a serious problem, particularly in Russian prisons.

Increased economic integration throughout Europe has also impacted upon policing. **James Sheptycki** suggests, however, that current policing policies across Europe tend to focus too much on the dangers posed by drugs and continental forms of crime and underplay the problems posed by fraud and white collar crime.

Developing this line of enquiry **Patricia Rawlinson** examines the problems associated with organised crime in Russia and examines its impact upon surrounding countries.

One area where **Frances Heidensohn** finds a semblance of equality is in the recruitment patterns of female police officers across Europe. However she points out that female police officers still tend to be deployed in particular types of policing such as working with juveniles, with female victims, and prevention work. Very few women are promoted to the top jobs.

Roger Matthews examines the growth of crime in EU countries and reports that England and Wales has the highest increase in recorded crime over the past eight years. **Sandra Walklate**, on the other hand, examines the patterns of victimisation in a number of European countries and find significant differences in the ways in which victimisation is conceived and responded to.

Youth Justice is viewed very differently across Europe, and **Rob Allen**, NACRO's Policy, Research and Development Officer, explores some of these variations. He also notes a growing dissatisfaction with the punishment/welfare dichotomy resulting in a growth of interest in restorative approaches.

Exploring differences in the conceptions and responses to social issues is the main theme of **Vincenzo Ruggiero's** article on drugs in Italy. He notes that whereas in Britain drug taking tends to be linked to unemployment, deprivation and marginalisation, in Italy it is largely associated with wealth,

editorial

hyperactivity and overwork in the minds of the public.

A central theme which underpins many of the articles is human rights. In an informative interview **Anne Owers** who is the director of the organisation JUSTICE talks about the problems of human rights in Europe and notes that there are not the structures at the European level, or sometimes at the national level, properly to scrutinise the passing of legislation or the operation of the European Court of Justice. JUSTICE is one of the few organisations in this country which focuses upon the protection of human rights and on ways of developing forms of democratic accountability which has become increasingly important as agencies become more international and diverse. She argues that there is also a considerable amount of work to be done within the European community to tackle racism and to protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees.

Michael Zander points out, in the concluding contribution to this issue, that the European Court of Human Rights while responsible for a number of important and in some cases surprising judgements is subject to a number of significant limitations: principally that only a small percentage of cases actually get as far as the court, while all cases are subject to considerable delay. These delays, he suggests, are likely to continue and the most important potential for reform in this country is the Labour Party's promise to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into our law. Whether this promise materialises or not we shall just have to wait and see.

**Roger Matthews and
Julia Braggins**

For much of the past year, crime has been very high on the agenda of European Commission officials in Brussels and European parliamentarians in Strasbourg. But the crimes on which the institutions of Europe are currently focusing are very largely those kinds of activities - various kinds of fraud and, particularly smuggling - which are parasitic upon the Community itself (in this instance, its budget) and also on the utopian idea of a pure free market to which many European conservatives and market liberals are committed.

In November 1996, for example, a report to the

September-2 October 1996). The release of this report added fuel to the already-existing widespread concern about the scale of the fraudulent appropriation of European Community funds, estimated for 1995 by the Commission itself at about 1.4 per cent of the overall EU budget of Ecu82 billion (European Parliament News 2 (May 1996)).

In March 1997, the release of a further report from a committee chaired by John Tomlinson the Labour MEP for the West Midlands, into the exploitation of loopholes in VAT and customs duties and specifically focusing on cigarette smuggling, concluded that these kinds of frauds were costing the Commission and also the budgets of national governments some £10 billion a year in lost revenue. The report argues that the creation of the single European market ten years ago was not accompanied by any effective, cross-border system for monitoring transit fraud, and that this has created a massive and irresistible opportunity for organised professional crime (The Guardian 13 March 1997).

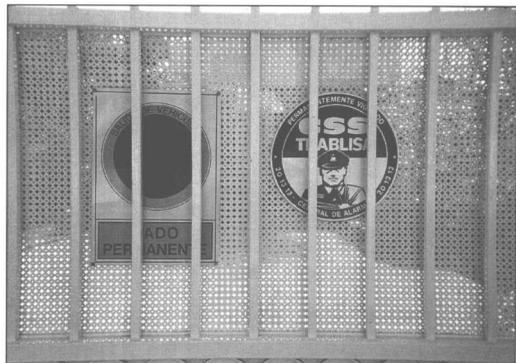
Counting the 'bad apples'

The regular release of these stories about the prevalence of fraud 'in Europe' will no doubt be manna from heaven for the Referendum Party and for other nationalists in different parts of Europe. Industrial and commercial people, however, will probably react to these press reports rather more cautiously - pointing, on the one hand, to the difficulties that do sometimes arise in identifying the distinction between fraud and sharp business practice in dynamic and growing market situations, whilst insisting, on the other, that commerce and industry are at

Crime and social insecurity

Ian Taylor looks at some of the unintended outcomes of 'free market Europe', 40 years on from the signing of the Treaty of Rome.

European Commission by its own financial auditors in Luxembourg, catalogued a series of about 7,000 preventable frauds and swindles, committed largely by farmers, within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (The European, 30



David Kidd-Hewitt