

***Munich Declaration of the
17th German Congress on Crime Prevention***

by

**German Congress On Crime Prevention
and congress partners**

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German Congress on Crime Prevention and Congress Partners

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Security in Urban and Rural Society

“Security in Urban and Rural Society” refers to far more than domestic and national security. Equally vital is social and financial security, in which reliability and planning certainty are given. This is, however, something that can no longer be taken for granted in modern society. While fundamental social change brings opportunity, it also brings risk. This is a situation that must not be allowed to result in social inequality or the associated destabilisation of personal lives. Ensuring social security by ensuring social equality is not only a basic human need – it is also a complex state responsibility that must be tackled using holistic prevention measures.

This is why the 17th German Congress on Crime Prevention (GCOCP) shines the spotlight on security. In line with the findings of Dr. Wiebke Steffen’s expert report, “Sicherheit als Grundbedürfnis der Menschen und Staatliche Aufgabe” (Security as a Basic Human Need and as a State Responsibility), the GCOCP and its congress partners – DBH-Bildungswerk, the State of Bavaria, the City of Munich, the German Police Crime Prevention Programme (Pro PK), and the WEISSER RING victim support organisation – hereby publish this **Munich Declaration**:

1. The social state as the basis for social justice

*As a social and welfare state, the Federal Republic of Germany has created the necessary constitutional framework in which to alleviate the impact of social disintegration, even out social inequalities, provide social security and justice, and foster social cohesion. The **German Congress on Crime Prevention** therefore urges policymakers to adhere to the principle of the **social state** as enshrined in the German Basic Law. Socially just policy must provide opportunities for financial and social participation and achievement for all. Each and every individual should within the scope of their personal freedom be able to lead an independent life in which they participate broadly in society.*

*Effective **poverty prevention** plays a key role: Poverty is a barrier to social participation and independent living.*

*If social prevention is to be used to alleviate income, education and integration poverty, then greater focus must be placed on our **cities, towns and rural communities**, and they must be given all the support they need – all the more so given the large regional*

disparities along all dimensions of social justice. And to be effective, the prevention measures implemented must be tailored to local needs at local level.

2. Social security and domestic security: Social policy as opposed to crime policy

The **German Congress on Crime Prevention** urges policymakers to address social fears and anxieties, to define and communicate them in their own right, and to reject the ‘punitive turn’ seen in other countries. Instead, the CGOCP asks that policymakers continue to address economic and social policy-related uncertainties via social policy rather than exclusively by means of crime policy. Political discourse on this subject has been remarkably restrained to date; this should remain the case and serve as an example for both the media and some parts of the academic discourse.

While good social policy can reduce both crime and fear of crime, the **German Congress on Crime Prevention** expressly warns against calls for social policy to be used as crime prevention policy. The CGOCP reiterates its call for a narrow definition of crime prevention which defines as ‘crime preventive’ only those strategies, models and measures aimed directly or indirectly at preventing or reducing crime.

The **German Congress on Crime Prevention** points to the portion of crime prevention which has led neither to a ‘punitive turn’ in Germany nor to the creation of an ‘American-style’ security society, but which instead has remained and should remain a policy of domestic security which trusts in the mechanisms of integration and educationalisation integral to a social and welfare state. On the one hand, this can be done by ensuring that prevention receives priority over repression when preventing or reducing crime. On the other, where repression is necessary, it can be done by acknowledging education and resocialisation as important functions of punishment. Both underline the notion of and the need for inclusion and social participation.

3. Crime prevention must focus on local, social and cultural contexts

The **German Congress on Crime Prevention** calls for critical analysis of the risks of misconceived crime prevention. Crime prevention must be understood in a narrow sense in order to avoid social policy issues being addressed exclusively by means of crime policy. In all crime prevention programmes, projects and measures, careful problem and cause analysis at local level should be carried out to look at the local, social and cultural aspects of crime and then justify the need for and test the effectiveness of the crime prevention measures involved.

If crime prevention is both interpreted and implemented in this way, then the **German Congress on Crime Prevention** believes it can contribute to alleviating uncertainties and exclusion, and to fostering social participation, integration and solidarity.

With regard to what crime prevention means, what is required of it, what it can achieve, the 17th German Congress on Crime Prevention refers to the proceedings of the 12th,

13th, 14th, 15th and 16th German Congress on Crime Prevention, and to the calls and appeals contained in the Wiesbaden Declaration, the Leipzig Declaration, the Hanover Declaration, the Berlin Declaration, and the Oldenburg Declaration, whose validity and urgency remain in full force and effect.

Munich, 17 April 2012

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