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Beccaria Book on Quality in Crime Prevention

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BECCARIA project (see EUCPN newsletter 5/2005) published a book "Quality in Crime Prevention", edited by Erich Marks, Anja Meyer and Ruth Linssen (Landespräventionsrat Niedersachsen, Hanover, December 2005, ISBN 3-83334-4194-1).

The publication is based on lectures and discussion held at the First European Beccaria conference "Vision of a Better Quality in crime prevention", (Hanover, Germany, January 2005) but it goes well beyond the conference in order to present crime prevention work of other Beccaria partners. First there is a presentation of objectives and outcomes of past and present Beccaria project. "7 Steps to a successful crime prevention project" are introduced including the way of its practical use. The concept of on-line evaluation agency, based on matching needs and interests both of providers and users of crime prevention knowledge, is also presented. More substantively "The Beccaria Standards for Ensuring Quality in Crime Prevention Projects" was introduced by Erich Marks, Anja Mayer et al. Professor Lawrence Sherman from Pennsylvania University, well known for his study "Preventing crime: what works, what doesn't, what's promising" gives a bright view on criminological history on building evidence based crime prevention and a human/enlightened approach to crime. His considerations can be summarized on two mottos: "the sin (offence) should be condemned but not the sinner" and "do not just believe in crime prevention, prove crime prevention through evaluation". Professor Paul Ekblom not only presents his well known 5Is Framework for project description but even more importantly exemplifies this approach on a case study on "Operation Moonshine", one of UK successful projects. Professor Ron Clark presents his "Seven Principles of Quality Crime Prevention". While it corresponds with Beccaria 7 steps Clark's principles are developed and argued on the basis of situation prevention research. Quite inspiring is his appeal that it is crucial to put oneself into the offender's mind and to adopt the offender's perspective. Clark's study ends in his well structured table of "Twenty Five techniques of Situational Prevention". Professor Britta Bannenberg from University of Bielefeld presents some results of a survey study on empirical studies "Düsseldorfer Guttachten" (similar to one done by Lawrence Sherman). In more detail she elaborates on conditions of successful socialization and early intervention to the development of delinquent behavior. Dr. Lars Rand Jensen, Chairman of the National SSP Committee under Danish Crime Prevention Council, presented in depth the information on the SSP. "SSP" stands for a form of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral co-operation involving schools and after-school programs (S), social services and health care services (S) and the police (P). He also argued about the needs of further development of crime prevention on the European landscape, including consideration on the role of EUCPN. Michel Marcuse, Executive Director of the European Forum for Urban Safety – EFUS contemplates about the role of evaluation in present crime related policies. He argues that

public policy needs evaluation and that decision makers should be influenced and convinced about the benefits of evaluation. Harold Becker from California State University presents methodological consideration on the use of impact evaluation as a way to answer a fundamental question: Do the individual components of crime prevention produce the impact on crime they were intended to make?

The book also contains several studies not actually presented in Hanover conference: Gorazd Mesko and all on "Cooperation of Police and Private Security Officers in Crime Prevention in Slovenia; Harold Becker on "Impact Analysis for Crime Evaluation";, Jim and Anu Leps on "Crime Prevention Policy in Estonia 1991 – 2005";, Radim Bureš on "Crime Prevention System and Activities in the Czech republic", Jorg Bässmann on "Evaluation as an element of systematic crime prevention projects".

What is the main added value of this publication? First it provides balance between theory and its implementation. While bringing together best minds in crime prevention it keeps its practical orientation. Secondly it presents so much needed indiscriminate mixture of European and US research outcomes. And what is also important - papers presented at the First Beccaria conference - which make a good part of the book can be downloaded on www.beccaria.de.