

**12<sup>th</sup> European Regional Conference 2012**  
**‘Guns Gangs and Hooligans’**  
**The Hague, 1 -3 February 2012**

**Feedback on Discussion Points from Group 1**

**What are the parallels between ‘Guns, Gangs and Hooligans’?**

Group 1 identified the following parallels between ‘Gangs’ and ‘Hooligans’:

- Both gang members and hooligans seem to have a desire to belong to something – that perhaps they are missing a feeling of belonging from other areas of their lives.
- A strong leader seems to be a feature of both gangs and hooligan groups.

Group 1 felt that there were more differences than parallels between gangs and hooligans.

- Gangs would appear to be more organised.
- Hooligan groups attract a different sort of person, for example, members of hooligan groups would appear to be younger and more likely to be in conventional employment than would be the case for gang members.
- Gangs would appear to operate under a much more defined structure than hooligan groups.
- Hooligan groups would appear to have violence/rioting as an objective in itself whereas gangs would appear to engage in violence for the purpose of another objective, e.g. financial gain.
- Gangs do not necessarily want their criminality to be visible whereas hooligan groups would appear to want their actions to receive some kind of attention.

- Hooligan groups would not appear to use guns in their activities whereas guns would generally seem to be the weapon of choice of gangs.

### **What would be a universal definition for a ‘Gang’?**

Group 1 found it difficult to find a *universal* definition for a ‘Gang’ given that types of gangs can vary widely. The groups discussed the nature of gangs, their purposes and their use of motifs or symbols (such as those identified in Luz Nagle’s presentation) but, for the above reason, decided to keep the definition very broad. The group came up with the following definition:

*‘Two or more people who permanently align themselves to act against societal norms’*

### **What would be a universal definition for a ‘Hooligan’?**

Group 1 came up with the following definition for a ‘Hooligan’

“One person or, usually, more than one person who engage in random opportunistic acts of violence and rioting”

### **Is the inconsistency in laws, regulations and licensing authorities between countries/jurisdictions concerning possession of firearms relevant to the incidence of violent gun crimes?**

- Group 1 agreed that inconsistencies were relevant because it meant that, for example, firearms could be stored/obtained in countries where the regulation of firearms is more lenient and transported to and used in countries where the possession of firearms is more regulated, particularly where borders are open (as was apparent from the account of Dr. Kamran Aliyev about the attack in the Oil Academy, Baku)

- Furthermore, the group noted that inconsistencies could prevent successful extradition and consequent prosecution in relation to possession of firearms because if possession is not a crime in one jurisdiction, the absence of dual criminality could be a bar to extradition. This gives suspects scope to evade prosecution where illegal possession has occurred in one jurisdiction by fleeing to another, more lenient jurisdiction.

**What lessons have we learnt from the presentations, what are the main learning points to take back to my prosecution office?**

- Cross-border co-operation is essential particularly as much crime has now a multi-country dimension. The presentation from Mr Aled Williams of Eurojust illustrated how cooperation between various countries (facilitated by Eurojust) in a cross border child pornography ring was very effective in securing the arrest of a number of suspects in a number of different European countries.
- The presentation from Hans Halvorsen demonstrated the importance of being prepared for the occurrence of serious criminal incidents and showed that valuable lessons on how to deal with such crimes can be learnt from other countries that have already experienced these types of situations.
- Technology is playing an increasingly important role in the commission of crime. Bridget Chohan's presentation illustrated the role of BBM phones in enabling previously rival gangs to act together in the recent London riots.
- The issue of 'guns, gangs and hooligans' should be also viewed in a holistic way. Members of gangs and hooligan groups are often excluded from mainstream society and their involvement in gang culture is not surprising in these circumstances. An approach that includes dealing with these inclusion/exclusion issues is essential in attempting to tackle the problem.