



RIEC-LIEC

The Regional and National Information and Expertise Centres

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Regionaal Informatie en Expertise Centrum (RIEC)
Landelijk Informatie en Expertise Centrum (LIEC)

The Regional and National Information and Expertise Centres

Tackling organised crime requires a concerted, integrated strategy combining criminal justice, administrative law and tax law measures. The Regional Information and Expertise Centres (RIECs) and the National Information and Expertise Centre (LIEC) reinforce the administrative approach and support the overall integrated strategy.

Criminals often form organisations in which they work together, divide responsibilities and take advantage of all sorts of services and products that aid their activities. Because criminal organisations tend to operate across a wide area, individual government partners are not in a position to monitor the whole picture. Without access to information, public authorities could unwittingly facilitate illegal practices, for example by granting a licence to a company serving as a front for a money-laundering operation. By sharing information, government bodies can gain a fuller understanding of the scope, methods and composition of criminal organisations and improve the overall strategy for addressing organised crime.

The Regional Centres and the National Centre reinforce the administrative approach and support the integrated strategy. They assist public administration bodies throughout the Netherlands by:

- raising awareness of the existence of organised crime;
- expanding knowledge and expertise about the administrative approach to criminal activity;
- assisting municipalities and provinces in their efforts to:
 - devise and implement policy in the context of the administrative approach;
 - improve the availability of and access to information;
 - enhance regional cooperation.

The Regional Centres and the National Centre facilitate and support collaboration between the following partners:

- the municipalities
- the Public Prosecution Service
- the National Police
- the Tax Administration
- the Customs Administration
- the Fiscal Information and Investigation Service (FIOD)
- the Social Affairs and Employment Inspectorate (SZW)
- the provinces

- the Royal Military and Border Police (KMar)
- the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND).

The RIECs and LIEC are directly involved in specific cases, make recommendations to the partners and advise on the administrative approach to organised crime, including the application of the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act.

The Regional Centres operate 'in the field', in close proximity to and typically at the request of the municipalities dealing directly with criminal activity and its effects. In recent years, municipalities have been given more options for countering organised crime and implementing administrative measures effectively. Because the Regional Centres work with their partners according to the 'integrated, unless' principle, this strategy is coordinated at the regional level. The National Centre facilitates and merges the Regional Centres' efforts, acting as a shared service centre and knowledge hub for the Regional Centres and their partners, i.e. public administration bodies, tax and customs authorities, the police and the criminal justice authorities. At the request of the Regional Centres (or their partners), the Ministry of Security and Justice, mayors and/or national partners, the National Centre also performs a variety of nationwide, supra-regional tasks. The National Centre is also the national desk for administrative and cross-border matters.

Themes

The Regional Centres and the National Centre ensure that the instruments the partners have for addressing crime are used coherently. The Centres focus on the national priority themes determined by the Ministry of Security and Justice on the basis of the 2012 National Threat Assessment on Organised Crime:

- human trafficking and smuggling
- organised cannabis cultivation
- real estate fraud
- abuses within the real estate sector
- money laundering and related forms of financial and economic crime
- outlaw motorcycle gangs
- enforcement problems.

The cooperating partners in the region can also add their own themes, provided these lend themselves to an integrated approach. Each year, the RIEC regional steering

committee picks out themes meriting extra attention. Such themes may pertain to groups, locations or activities involving potential or actual organised crime.

The Regional Centres and the National Centre generally focus their efforts in individual regions. The Regional Centres also frequently address phenomena occurring across several regions, such as outlaw motorcycle gangs and cannabis cultivation. Good coordination between the different Regional Centres bolsters the approach to these problems, which also often call for coordination with the initiatives of national partners like the National Crime Squad, the Tax and Customs Administration and the Public Prosecution Service.

Administrative approach

Organised crime arises whenever the opportunity presents itself. Criminal activities and legitimate business operations are often intermingled at a specific location in a municipality. Permits, licences, subsidies, public contracts and ordinary third-party services may be misused for fraud, money laundering or other unlawful practices. Municipalities and provinces have to make sure they do not facilitate this conduct. They can combat this by erecting administrative barriers, for example by taking enforcement action, denying permits, licences and/or subsidies and applying the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act (BIBOB Act) as a last resort.

The Regional Centres and the Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act

The Public Administration (Probity Screening) Act furnishes municipalities with an additional basis for denying or withdrawing licences, permits or subsidies. The Act applies as well to a municipality's engagement of a company for a public construction, environmental or IT contract and to real estate transactions with the government. To successfully utilise the Act, the government must convincingly demonstrate that there are risks. Was the licence or permit applicant previously a party to fraudulent practices? Is this a sensitive industry? The municipality obtains the necessary personal data and other information and the Regional Centre can assist the municipality in initiating a procedure under the BIBOB Act. The municipality can then request advice from the Public Administration Probity Screening Agency. Employing stringent criteria, this agency analyses the degree of risk of criminal activity in a particular situation. Ultimately, the municipality itself decides whether to follow this advice and whether, say, to grant or deny a licence or permit.

Administrative crime pattern analyses

Several Regional Centres and the National Centre worked closely together to develop a system for pooling, streamlining and aligning information in the form of an administrative crime pattern analysis. The identification and administrative analysis of crime patterns is in keeping with integrated public safety and security policy, encourages closer cooperation and improves administrative resilience.

Crime pattern analyses specify the ways in which organised crime could undermine public administration and local security. The Regional Centres gather knowledge and information that is already available in the system, combining it with information from community police officers, special investigating officers, residents and businesses. When all this information is combined and analysed, the alliances, criminal activities and underlying structures become visible. The Regional Centres not only share this information with their partners within the framework of the integrated public safety and security policy, but also make proposals for an effective strategy.

Administrative Vulnerabilities Register

The National Administrative Vulnerabilities Register is located at the National Information and Expertise Centre. This register is an important source of information for all administrative authorities active in the fight against organised crime. The information on systemic vulnerabilities that offer opportunities for criminal activity is usually compiled by the police in cooperation with the Public Prosecution Service, the Royal Military and Border Police or a municipality and helps address structural bottlenecks in combating crime.

As the shared service centre for the Regional Centres, the National Centre is the logical place from which to provide centralised access to the files on administrative vulnerabilities composed locally and regionally. In addition, the National Centre – together with the Ministry of Security and Justice, the police and the Public Prosecution Service – analyses, evaluates and addresses these vulnerabilities. All of this is in keeping with the National Centre's position as a hub of knowledge for the administrative approach to organised crime. The National Centre compiles existing knowledge and expertise, which would otherwise only be available in piecemeal fashion and therefore difficult to access.

Subversive Organised Crime Guidelines

To fight organised crime, the government itself must be organised. The police and criminal justice authorities already work together regionally on major cases. For each region, they agree on the deployment of capacity and on their approach to the problems in the regions. The national steering committee on Subversive Organised Crime has drawn up guidelines for embedding an integrated approach in all the regions. The parties do what they can by themselves, and seek assistance from each other as necessary. The Regional Centres and their partners are represented in the regional steering teams. These teams jointly decide which cases to take up. The 10 Regional Centres currently operating in the Netherlands support the teams in the decision-making process. The Regional Centres help their partners to take prompt, effective action in combating this type of crime, with the right knowledge and resources.

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