



FOLKETINGET
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RIGSREVISIONEN

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The performance of the Danish police in relation to charging burglars

1. Introduction and conclusion

1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. This report concerns the performance of the Danish police in relation to charging burglars in Denmark.

2. When compared to similar countries, Denmark stands out by having a high burglary rate. Although the number of burglaries dropped by 25% from 2010 to 2015, the level of burglaries at the beginning of 2016 was considered unacceptably high by the political parties behind a multi-annual agreement on policing, covering the years from 2016 to 2019. Moreover, the percentage of charges and the detection rate concerning burglaries are relatively low in Denmark – and have not increased – despite the fact that the police have prioritised burglaries in private homes since 2010. Altogether, the percentage of burglary charges, which, for the past ten years has been between 10% and 15%, is considerably lower than for other types of criminality.

One way of increasing the percentage of charges is systematic improvement of the efficiency in order to enable the police to make more charges without investing more resources, which will contribute to increasing the detection rate. However, the police are not measuring and monitoring efficiency. We have therefore decided to measure the overall efficiency of the police in relation to making charges for burglary in the period from 2016 to 2019 and the efficiency of the individual police districts.

We have decided to examine the period from 2016 to 2019, because it coincides with the period covered by the multi-annual agreement which means that the political framework set will remain the same during this period. The study does not provide an overall evaluation of whether the authorities have realised the intentions of the agreement.

3. The purpose of the study is to assess whether the Ministry of Justice, to a satisfactory degree, has ensured that the police have improved their performance in relation to making charges for burglary from 2016 to 2019. The report answers the following questions:

- Have the police improved their performance in relation to burglaries?
- Have the police improved their efficiency in relation to making charges for burglary?
- Have the police improved certain aspects of their investigations into burglary?

Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in December 2019.

Burglary and detection rates

According to Eurostat's statistics on burglaries from 2012, Greece topped the list of police-recorded burglaries followed by Denmark. Denmark recorded 6.5 times as many burglaries as Norway, 4.5 times as many as Germany and 3.5 times as many as Sweden.

Since 2005, the detection rate in Denmark has been between 6% and 8%, whereas it in Germany and England/Wales was approx. 15% in 2012 and 2015, respectively.



Main conclusion

The Ministry of Justice has not to a satisfactory extent ensured that the police have improved their performance in relation to making charges for burglary. The consequence is that fewer citizens experience that burglaries in their homes are solved.

The police have to some extent improved their performance in relation to burglaries

The police have achieved the target set for reducing the number of burglaries in private homes, as the number of reported burglaries has dropped by 23.4% from 2016 to 2019. The number of charges has, however, dropped relatively more which means that the percentage of charges concerning burglaries in private homes has dropped from 12.4% to 11.0%. Additionally, case processing time has increased from 89.5 days in 2016 to 95.8 days in 2019, which corresponds to an increase of 7.1%. For burglaries in general, the percentage of charges has increased by 5.8%, and the case processing time has been reduced by 11.3%. The police districts located west of the Great Belt have generally performed better than the districts located east of the Great Belt in regard to progress in the percentage of charges as well as case processing time.

The police have not improved their efficiency in relation to making more charges for burglary

In 2019, wage costs were 6.9% higher per burglary charge than in 2016. At the same time, the study found that the police spent fewer hours per charge in 2019 than in 2016. The declining efficiency measured in wage costs is therefore caused by the fact that the number of charges made has dropped while, at the same time, the police have involved more expensive resources in the investigations of burglary in 2019 than in 2016. The total efficiency in the period is lower for the districts located east of the Great Belt, and our calculations show that if the police districts located east of the Great Belt had been as efficient as the districts west of the Great Belt, they could have made approx. 5% more charges.

The Danish National Police has informed Rigsrevisionen that the differences in the efficiency of the districts, among other things, reflect that they are not all facing the same challenges due to variations in geography, the number of cases involving several offences and the way in which the districts have organised their efforts concerning burglaries. However, the study indicates that there is no connection between the five districts with the highest wage costs per charge and the possible reasons for the variations referred to by the National Police. Rigsrevisionen finds that the National Police should look into the reasons why the wage costs of making a single charge for burglary are much higher in some districts. This would allow the National Police to assess whether the variations should result in a re-allocation of resources, or whether some of the districts need to reorganize their efforts in the area.

The police have improved certain aspects of their investigations into burglary, but the data available indicate that the police have not achieved their objectives

The data available indicate that the police responded to more burglaries in private homes in 2019, i.e. 85%, against just under 64% in 2016. However, the police have not yet achieved its objective of responding to all reports of burglaries in private homes. Additionally, the police districts have not taken more useful fingerprints, but the collection of DNA evidence has increased by 21.5% from 2017 to 2019. This in spite of the fact that the National Police in this period encouraged the districts to prioritise collection of fingerprints over DNA evidence in order to reduce waste of resources. The police districts are increasingly using the burglary app, but have not yet realised their original ambitions to achieve a usage rate of 90%.

Last, the effort made by the two regional investigation units (SEV and SEØ) to reduce burglary crime has so far been moderately successful. In particular SEV has only made very few charges against transnational organised criminal groups and burglaries in private homes, both of which were prioritised areas for SEV and SEØ. Nor are there any indications that the establishment of SEV and SEØ has had a positive impact on the number of legal actions taken against transnational organised criminal groups. The total number of convictions and the conviction rate in cases against transnational organised criminal groups has not increased in the period examined, and the conviction rates of SEV and SEØ are lower than those achieved by the former task force on burglary (TFI), and SEØ's conviction rate is lower than the rate achieved by the districts east of the Great Belt.

Burglary app

This app was developed in 2015. It makes it possible for the police officers to start registration of the incident at the scene. The purpose of the app is to improve the quality of the handling of burglaries, shorten the case processing time and improve the registration of evidence.

SEV and SEØ

SEV (Special Investigations West) and SEØ (Special Investigations East) are regional investigation units that were established in 2017. SEV and SEØ replaced the national burglary unit TFI, but they also investigate drug and gang-related crime which was previously investigated by other special units.