

Impact of metal theft across the EU

Metal theft is having a devastating impact on businesses, communities and individuals throughout Europe.

This includes the loss of key services such as telecommunications and power, disruption of rail networks and the desecration of religious buildings and memorials.

In most cases the economic damage caused by metal theft far exceeds the value of the stolen metal. Often this impact is not considered during sentencing of metal thieves.

In the UK, it is estimated that metal theft costs the national economy £770 million (approximately €950 million) per year. In addition, UK insurers reportedly pay out £1 million (approximately €1.25 million) a week to victims of metal theft.

The Greek National Railway Company (OSE) suffered €12 million of damage in two years due to thieves stealing metal from the railways.

In the Czech Republic, an organised crime group stole a ten tonne bridge and 650 feet of railway track from the south west town of Slavkov.

However, in some cases metal theft causes more than just financial loss.

Cemeteries in Italy are attacked by thieves stealing commemorative copper vases. In the UK, plaques and memorials dedicated to war victims and family members are being stolen and sold as scrap metal. These thefts are extremely distressing to the victims and have a major social impact.

In Belgium, a man died after disturbing a high voltage transformer whilst attempting to steal cable from a railway. Metal thieves have also lost their lives in Italy, Portugal and the UK.

David Ransom, Director of Pol-PRIMETT said "The fact that the number of countries involved in Pol-PRIMETT has doubled in the past two years shows the devastating impact metal theft has across the EU.

Pol-PRIMETT provides a platform for organisations to share good practice, knowledge and intelligence in order to tackle metal theft and reduce the impact on businesses, communities and individuals."



Plaques, memorials and commemorative copper vases are frequently targeted by metal thieves across the EU

Pol-PRIMETT is an EU co-funded project tackling metal theft via a transnational public - private sector partnership.

Pol-PRIMETT began in September 2010 and will operate for three years.

The Pol-PRIMETT EUG membership includes representatives from ten EU Member States.

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Transnational partnership working

The PoI-PRIMETT partnership includes ten public and private sector organisations from five EU Member States.

The PoI-PRIMETT Expert User Group (EUG) membership includes ten EU Member States.

PoI-PRIMETT has an open door policy and welcomes stakeholders from across the EU to share solutions and good practice to reduce the impact of metal theft.



EU Good Practice Guide

At the 4th PoI-PRIMETT EUG meeting in 2011, British Transport Police agreed to lead the development of an EU Good Practice Guide.

EUG members were requested to submit examples of good practice on an ongoing basis. Examples are uploaded to the stakeholder area of the PoI-PRIMETT website ensuring that the EU Good Practice Guide is constantly evolving and remains up to date.

The EU Good Practice Guide includes:

- A range of **metal theft toolkits** from various sectors and Member States providing advice and guidance on how to tackle, prevent and deter metal theft
- **Railpol's Copper e-book** which helps identify cable from across the EU and alerts law enforcement agencies and scrap metal dealers to cable which may be stolen
- An **impact statement template** enabling victims to describe the impact an incident of metal theft has to ensure this is considered during the sentencing of metal thieves
- The **UK's Crown Prosecution Service's legal guide on metal theft** which provides advice and guidance to prosecutors on how to present a case of metal theft to the judiciary to ensure the wider impact of metal theft is considered during sentencing



To contribute to the **PoI-PRIMETT EU Good Practice Guide** please send examples to pol-primett@people-united.org

PoI-PRIMETT partners



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The impact of legislative change

In 2010, France became the first EU Member State to change legislation to tackle the increase of metal theft.

The Gendarmerie Nationale has provided an overview of the changes to legislation and the impact they had on tackling metal theft.



The lead agency for tackling metal theft in France is the Gendarmerie Nationale's Central Office for Combating Mobile Criminality (OCLDI). This role is part of a global approach to prevent and repress the activities of organised mobile crime groups and improve the traceability of financial transactions.

An overview of legislation changes in France

Record keeping

Scrap metal dealers are required to maintain a register of all scrap materials purchased. Each record must include a description of the items, the type of transaction and a copy of the sellers identification. All entries must be kept for at least five years. The penalty for failing to maintain an accurate record is six months in prison and a fine of €30,000.

Cashless system

In July 2010, the sale of metal by cash was limited to a maximum of €500. In July 2011, the law was amended so that all transactions regarding scrap metal in France were 'cashless'.



Tax reporting

Scrap metal dealers are required to declare all financial transactions to the Direction Générale des Finances Publiques (DGFIP) for tax purposes. This ensures that all scrap metal transactions are traceable by the authorities.

Impact of legislative change in France



In 2012, OCLDI reported that the number of metal theft incidents in France had significantly reduced. It is believed that this reduction is a result of legislation changes.

OCLDI stated that the majority of scrap metal dealers complied with the changes making implementation of legislation much easier. Businesses which complied also saw reputational gain as they were deemed to be more professional and had a more credible clientele.

OCLDI received positive feedback from metal theft victims on the legislation changes as they felt action was being taken to address the phenomenon of metal theft.

Legislative change across the EU

Since the introduction of legislation to tackle metal theft in France a number of EU Member States have adopted a similar approach. Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the UK are all at varying stages of legislative change in order to stem the rise of metal theft.

Calls have been made to the European Commission to introduce EU wide legislation to tackle metal theft. This may help to tackle the borderless nature of metal theft and send a message to criminals that metal theft is no longer a 'low risk - high reward' crime.

PoI-PRIMETT activities in 2012

In 2012, PoI-PRIMETT held three Expert User Group (EUG) meetings to enable public and private sectors to share learning and good practice to tackle metal theft.



The 5th EUG meeting held in London, UK in March 2012 attracted 77 delegates from nine EU Member States.

Topics included the role of serious and organised crime, involvement of tax authorities, improving detection at ports and environmental legislation.

The 6th EUG meeting held in Athens, Greece in July 2012 attracted 78 delegates from nine EU Member States.

Topics included prevention and deterrence, influencing the judiciary, utilising existing legislation and media training.



The 7th EUG meeting held in Valencia, Spain in November 2012 attracted 67 delegates from ten EU Member States.

Topics included DNA solutions, benefits of multi-agency working, impact of legislative change and identifying information gaps.

Future PoI-PRIMETT events

March 2013

8th EUG meeting

Valencia, Spain

June 2013

**9th EUG meeting and
Final Conference**

London, UK

For more information, or to keep updated with PoI-PRIMETT events and activities please visit

www.pol-primett.org

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