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ESC Executive Secretariat Annual Report 2019

European Criminology Award Acceptance Speech

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Cover picture: Protest against a new bill that would increase police powers in banning demonstrations, March 2021, London (image detail), https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:London_May_Day_Kill_The_Bill_2021_(51151763277).jpg, Socialist Appeal, CC BY 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

→ MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Aleksandras Dobryninas

CRIMINOLOGY OF THE DAMNED QUESTIONS

Dear Colleagues! Unfortunately, the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected every aspect of our lives, including academia. The first wave of pandemic upended our plans to organize the annual 20th conference in Bucharest as a traditional face-to-face conference. Many other similar events around the world had been postponed for the better days. However, with the assistance of the ESC Board and Secretariat, our Romanian colleagues made it possible to organize the online conference. These efforts turned out to be a resounding success: over 700 participants made it clear that the ESC could effectively react to unexpected challenges and mobilize their members for academic activities despite the critical circumstances.

While the pandemic threat and lockdown policy have a lot of negative consequences and make our life unpredictable, unsafe, vulnerable and upset, in the current situation one can observe at least some positive impact—the compulsory isolation became not only a reliable remedy against the spread of disease but also a proper stimulus for philosophical inquiries and existential reflections. The isolation or alienation can provoke us to "forget" socially objectivised truths, and even start challenging them, asking questions, which in human intellectual tradition has the highest rank of "damned questions". What is the nature of human being, what is good and evil, what is freedom and are we free, what is the life, and why there is so much injustice, pain, and deaths on the Earth? All these and similar questions are damned. They come from the depth of the human soul; they torture us and provide no final answers. Their primary sense is to be damned, and they usually arise when previous answers confront the current state of reality, or, in other words, when previous solutions become invalid. These questions arise at times like these.

Criminology, at first sight, is far away from the area of damned questions. Despite its metaphysical origin, criminology started rather as a rational economic project, elaborated abstract principles of free choice and utilitarian vision of social contract. Under C. Beccaria approach (1764), crime is understood as a selfish and poorly calculated enterprise, which could be effectively tackled by the better calculated and socially responsible punitive policy. However, this vision was strongly challenged by F. Dostoevsky, whose 200th anniversary will be celebrated this year. In his book, which title "Crime and Punishment" (1866) was copied from the classic Beccaria's work, the perpetrator's existential appeal for absolute freedom and unlimited willpower opposes the rational choice in wrongdoing, while the transgressor's confession and religious salvation substitute the legally grounded proportional punishment. In the 19th century, which was the age of science and progress, criminologists entirely neglected this existential approach. However, in the next politically turbulent and tragic 20th century, these and similar ideas became more visible in criminological texts. Their traces can be easily recognized in D. Matza's appeal (1969) to understand the inner drives and motives in "becoming deviant", or in N. Cristie's sad irony on seeking the "limits to pain" in criminal justice (1981) and prophetic vision of current penal policy as driving "toward Gulag, western style" (2000).

As an intellectual product of the 18–19th centuries, criminology had inherited not only its metaphysical "damned questions", but also its naïve belief that advanced scientific knowledge could help create more just and less conflicted societies. Today we probably are more experienced and knowledgeable about social, economic, political, and biological crime roots than our predecessors. However, precisely because of this very knowledge, we are also more critical towards popular enthusiasm to create a crimeless society. Damned, unanswered questions still lead us, and the pandemic makes these questions even more acute. Crime is not a mere social fact; crime is also a social construct expressing the dynamic of social conflicts and consensuses in society. On the one hand, we have a good chance and duty to discover how crime patterns, human behaviours and criminal justice operation change in pandemics and after the pandemic situation. On the other hand, we need to turn our attention to the changing landscape of social control, where new players like transnational and national public health institutions, IT and Biotech corporations are going to change drastically our previous understanding of what should be acceptable and unacceptable in a new post-pandemic world.

How criminologists could react to these challenges in the time of "weak states" and "inefficient government"? Will criminology play the role of "boring" intellectual tool in the hands of invisible power? Or should it occupy an uncompromising position against attempts to seek and implement the "new normalization" of society? My predecessor Prof. Lesley McAra in her presidential address (2020), devoted to the new challenges and role of criminology and ESC in the time of the pandemic, formulated her vision in the following passage: "I believe we need to re-engage with a number of normative questions: what are the conditions of a just social order; what promotes social solidarity; what are the structural conditions which support human flourishing; how can human rights discourse come to infuse and transform institutional cultural practices?" One could agree or disagree with this agenda, but I hope this proposal will be a matter of further academic discussions and practical policy-making initiatives. However, for the time being, I would like to stress a more general issue—old "damned questions" today require new criminological insights and answers.

Dear Colleagues, despite all the troubles and obstacles our society and its members' academic activity have never been stopped generating new projects, publications, educational programs and expertise. Recently, in my alma mater, Vilnius University, we had a remarkable event—48 graduates have received their Bachelor diplomas in Criminology—the first Bachelor Program in Criminology nationwide. Another small 'evidence-based' proof that our criminological communities are alive and thriving. On this positive note, I would like to wish all of us good health, optimistic thoughts, and express my hope to meet you soon at the online 21st Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology!

Aleksandras Dobryninas
Institute of Sociology and Social Work,
Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University

ESC Executive Secretariat Annual Report 2019

IN BRIEF

In 2019, the European Society of Criminology (ESC) reached new all-time records in terms of membership and participants to its annual conference. The number of members reached 1386, and 1433 criminologists attended the 19th Annual Meeting of the ESC, which took place in Ghent, Belgium, from 18 to 21 September 2019. During the conference, Tapio Lappi-Seppälä received the 2019 European Criminology Award, Kjersti Lohne the 2019 ESC Young Criminologist Award, and Maria Libak Pedersen the European Journal of Criminology Best Article of the Year 2018 Award. Six fellowships to attend the conference were awarded to young criminologists from Eastern Europe. The General Assembly elected Aleksandras Dobryninas as President-Elect, Olga Petintseva as At-large Board member, and Uberto Gatti as Auditor. The day following the General Assembly, Lesley McAra took office as President of the ESC, replacing Tom Vander Beken until the end of the next conference.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION AND ESC MEMBERSHIP

The 19th Annual Meeting of the ESC took place in Ghent, Belgium, from 18 to 21 September 2019. Figure 1 shows the evolution of the number of participants in ESC conferences from 2004 to 2019, as well as the number of members of the ESC during the same period. It can be seen that Ghent, with 1433 registered participants, has been the most successful conference of the ESC. Among the participants in Ghent, there were 371 students (26% of the total) as well as 385 participants (27% of the total) that were not members of the ESC. These two percentages overlap because, among the non-members, 113 were students.

In terms of affiliation, in 2019 the ESC had 1386 members, which is the highest number of members since the creation of the Society. In addition, the fact that roughly one fourth (27%) of the participants in the 2019 Ghent conference were not members of the ESC, means that, in 2019, there were 1777 criminologists linked to the ESC in one way or another (1386 members, 385 non-members that attended the conference, plus 6 participants in the conference with fellowships).

Among the 2019 ESC members, there were 337 students, which represent 24% of the total. Figure 2 presents the evolution of that percentage from 2014 to 2019. It can be seen that, since 2005, between one fifth and fourth of the ESC members are students. The percentage observed in 2019 gives further support to the hypothesis proposed in previous reports suggesting that part of the growth of the membership of the ESC since its creation is explained by the transformation of former member students in full members. The stability of the percentage of students is also a powerful indicator of the constant renewal of European criminology.

In 2019, ESC Members came from 54 countries (57 if figures for the United Kingdom are breakdown by nations), covering the five continents. The United Kingdom remained the most well represented country with 299 members, followed by Belgium (137 members), the Netherlands (130), Germany (124), the United States of America (96), Spain (83), Switzerland (58), Italy (55), Poland (39), Israel (33), Australia (29), Norway (25), Ireland (24), Canada and Sweden (21), Portugal (19), Finland (16), France and Hungary (13), Austria, Denmark, Greece and Japan (12), Slovenia (11), Croatia (10), the Czech Republic (8), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland and Turkey (6), Lithuania and Russia (5), China and Romania (4), Indonesia, Malta, Mexico, Serbia and the Slovak Republic (3), Cyprus, Kosovo, Latvia, New

FIGURE 1. PARTICIPANTS IN THE ESC ANNUAL MEETINGS AND MEMBERS OF THE ESC FROM 2004 TO 2019

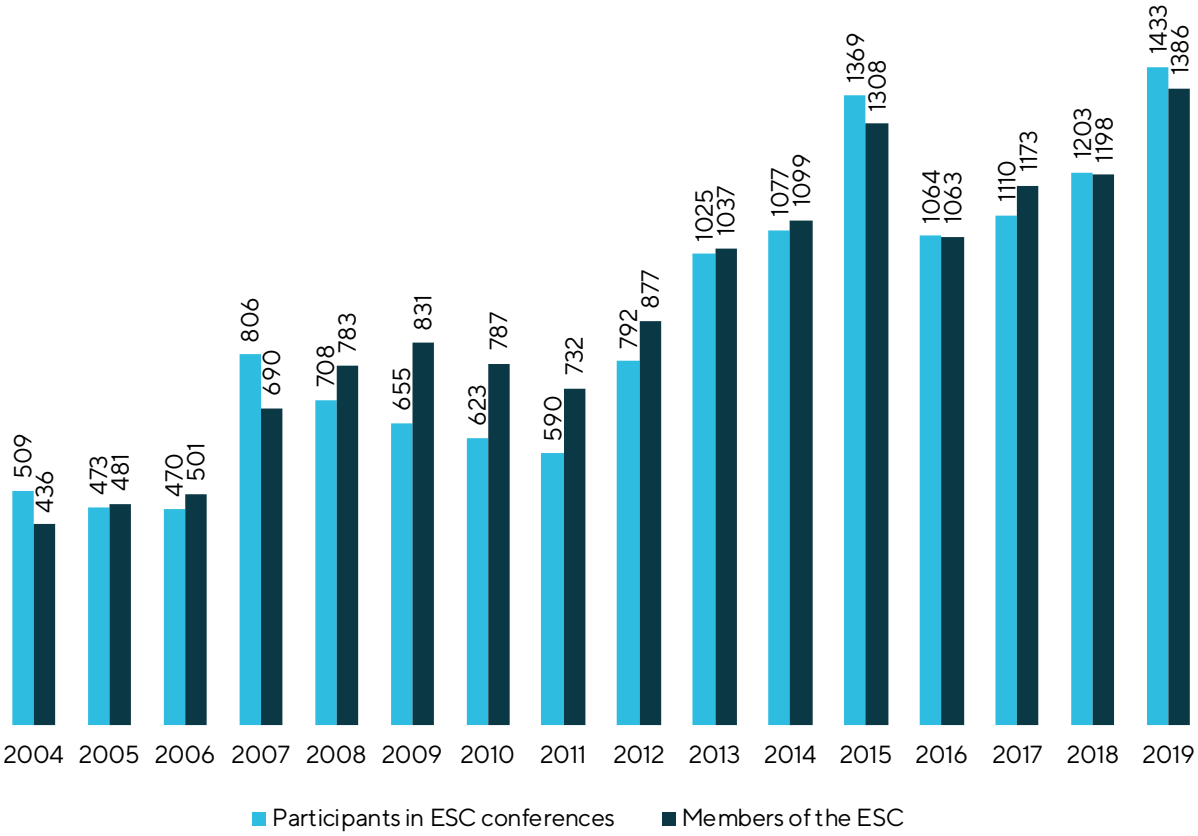


FIGURE 2. MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY FROM 2004 TO 2019, BY STATUS, IN PERCENTAGES

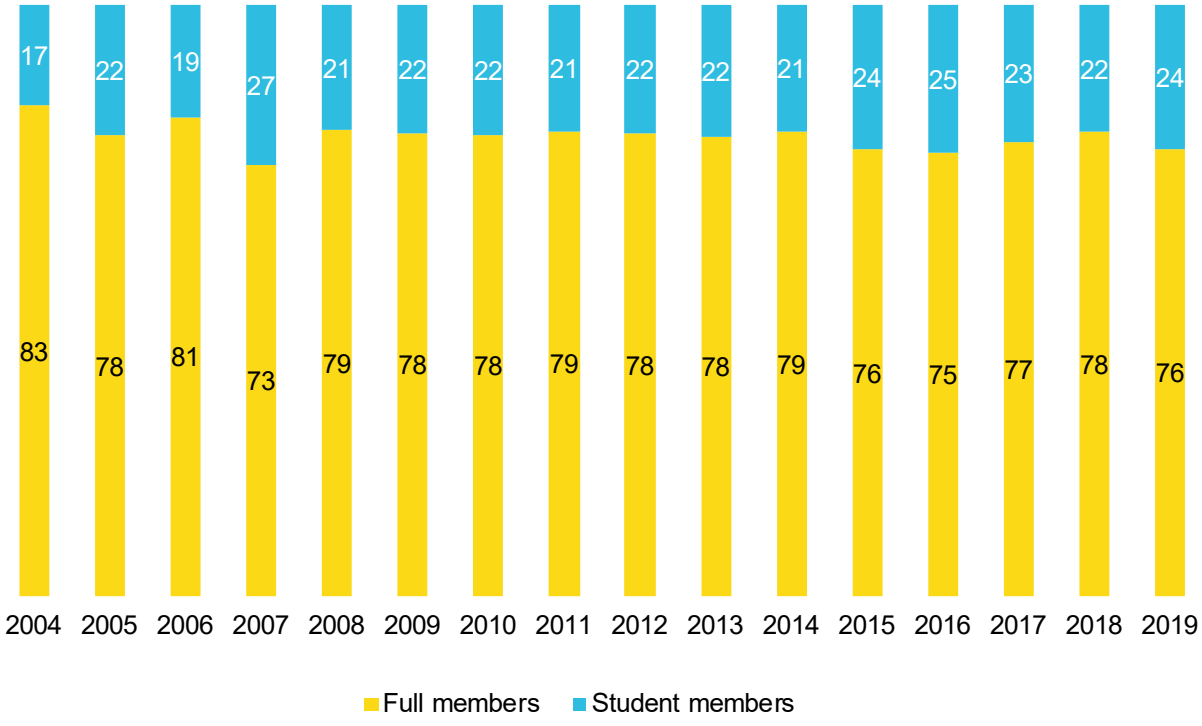
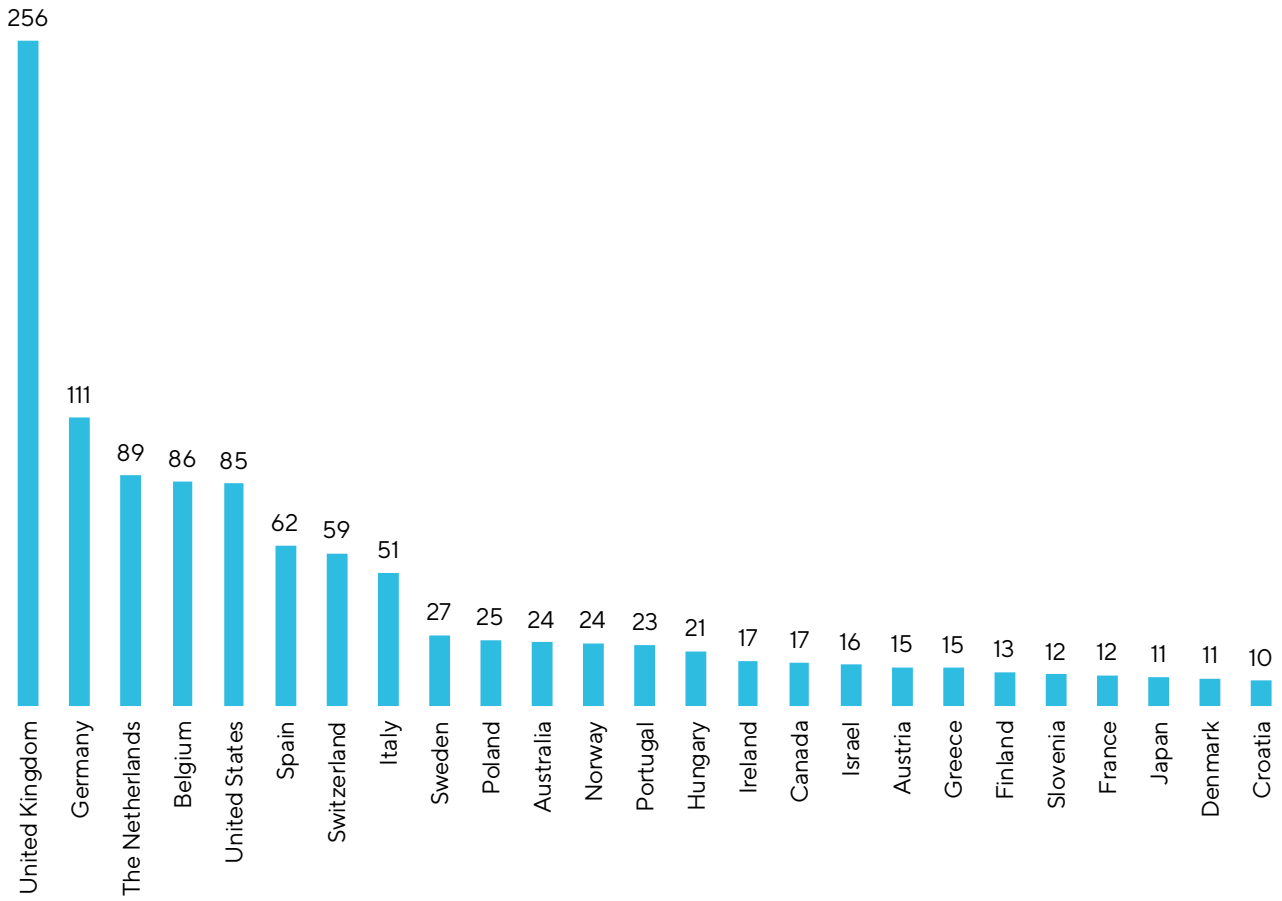


FIGURE 3. AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF ESC MEMBERS BY COUNTRY FROM 2013 TO 2019 (TOP TWENTY-FIVE COUNTRIES)



Zealand and Nigeria (2), Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Chile, Estonia, Korea, Luxembourg, Moldova, North Macedonia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Uganda and Ukraine with one member each.

Figure 3 presents the average annual number of ESC members by country from 2013 (i.e. the year in which the ESC started having more than 1000 members per year) to 2019. The Figure includes only the 25 countries that had an annual average of at least 10 members for that seven years period. It can be seen that the United Kingdom provided the largest number of members (more than 250 per year), followed by Germany (roughly 110). Then, several groups can be identified: one with three countries that provided between 80 and 90 members per year and country (the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States of America), another one with three countries that provided roughly from 50 to 60 members per year (Spain, Switzerland and Italy), a third one with six countries that provided from 20 to 30 members per year (Sweden, Poland, Australia, Norway, Portugal, and Hungary), and a fourth one with the 11 countries that provided between 10 and 20 members per year (Ireland, Canada, Israel, Austria, Greece, Finland, Slovenia, France, Japan, Denmark and Croatia). The distribution is similar to the one for 2018 included in the previous report. The only exception is that the Czech Republic has an average number of 9 members from 2013 to 2019. As stated last year, the aim of the Figure is not to establish direct comparisons between countries because that would require weighting the number of members by the population of the country, or by a relevant indicator of the development of criminology in the country, such as the number of programs in criminology or the number of publications in criminology journals.

2019 EUROPEAN CRIMINOLOGY AWARD

Tapio Lappi-Seppälä, Professor of criminal law and criminology and Director of the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy at the University of Helsinki, received the 2019 ESC European Criminology Award in recognition of his lifetime contribution to criminology. The award committee—composed by former ESC presidents Frieder Dünkel (Chair, University of Greifswald, Germany), Rossella Selmini (University of Minnesota, United States of America), and Gorazd Meško (University of Maribor, Slovenia)—considered that:

"Tapio Lappi-Seppälä is the leading researcher and research organiser in Scandinavia. His main interest is in penology and sentencing research; but his studies on crime and victimization and other studies he organized in the Finnish Research Institute of Legal Policy are outstanding, too. His influence on European criminology, particularly by explaining the so-called Scandinavian exceptionalism with regards to prison population rates and sentencing policies, is outstanding as well. He is asked world-wide as an expert for criminal policy reform issues and his reputation is excellent. His research is empirically based, but also grounded on normative and comparative legal aspects. His profile of a researcher strongly involved in international comparisons by using empirical data and bringing them in a sociological and political theory as well as a human rights-based crime policy context qualifies him as a really interdisciplinary high-profile criminologist".

The Awards Ceremony took place during the ESC conference in Ghent, and the laudatio of the awardee was delivered by Frieder Dünkel. The acceptance speech of Tapio Lappi-Seppälä, entitled "The ingredients of penal moderation" was published in issue 2019/3 of the Newsletter of the ESC, *Criminology in Europe*.

2019 ESC YOUNG CRIMINOLOGIST AWARD

Kjersti Lohne (Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo) received the 2019 ESC Young Criminologist Award in recognition of her article "Penal humanitarianism beyond the nation state: An analysis of international criminal justice", published online first in 2018 in *Theoretical Criminology*.

The award committee—composed by Janne Kivivuori (Chair, University of Helsinki, Finland), Anna-Maria Getoš Kalac (University of Zagreb, Croatia), and Catrien Bijleveld (NSCR and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands)—considered that: "In this article, Kjersti Lohne examines the field of international criminal justice as a product of situated relations of power as well as an example of emerging novel geographies of penal power. The article shows how international criminal justice raises important questions for criminological understanding of punishment, particularly its epistemological foundations and legitimacy, on the international as well as the national level. The committee particularly emphasizes the comparative strengths of the paper regarding originality of its research question, innovativeness, clarity of thought through excellent expression.

The Awards Ceremony took place during the ESC conference in Ghent, and the laudatio of the awardee was delivered by Anna-Maria Getoš Kalac. An acceptance text by Kjersti Lohne was published in issue 2019/3 of the Newsletter of the ESC, *Criminology in Europe*, under the title "Inspirations, inclinations and thanks from a young European criminologist".

EJC BEST ARTICLE OF THE YEAR 2018 AWARD

In 2019, the ESC delivered for the first time the European Journal of Criminology (EJC) Best Article of the Year Award. It was awarded to Maria Libak Pedersen in recognition of her article "Do offenders have distinct offending patterns before they join adult gang criminal groups? Analyses of crime specialization and escalation in offence seriousness" published, in 2018, in issue 15/6 of the EJC (pp 680–701).

The award committee—composed by Dario Melossi (University of Bologna and EJC Editor-in-Chief), Tom Vander Beken (University of Ghent and ESC President), and Lesley McAra (University of Edinburgh aZnd ESC President-Elect)—considered that:

"This article reports on a study about a very hard to reach population (adult gang criminal groups and outlaw bikers) focusing on crime specialization and escalation/de-escalation in offence seriousness prior to gang initiation. The article is very well-written and composed and builds on extremely rich Danish data that allow to

make analyses about similarities and differences that are unique to the field. The methods used are state of the art. This article takes the traditional Eurogang research to a new level".

The Awards Ceremony took place during the ESC conference in Ghent, and the laudatio of the awardee was delivered by Tom Vander Beken.

FELLOWSHIPS TO ATTEND THE 19TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ESC

In 2019, the ESC granted six fellowships to attend the ESC conference in Ghent. The fellowships were granted to Mirza Buljubašić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ayhan Erbay (Turkey), Julija Jurtoska (Republic of North Macedonia), Sandra Kobajica (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Angelina Stanojoska (Republic of North Macedonia), and Nejra Veljan, (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The increase to 6 fellowships—instead of 5 as in the regulation of the ESC—is explained by the fact that in 2018 and 2017 there were less than 5 fellowships granted.

The panel that awarded the fellowships was composed by composed by Helmut Kury (Chair, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law, Freiburg, Germany, chair), Eva Inzelt (ELTE Faculty of Law, Budapest, Hungary), and José Angel Brandariz (University of A Coruna, Spain).

EUROPEAN CRIMINOLOGY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT (ECOH)

The fourth wave of interviews for the European Criminology Oral History Project (ECOH) took place during the ESC conference in Ghent. The following twenty-two interviews, which were conducted in Muenster (2016), Cardiff (2017) and Sarajevo (2018), are already available in the YouTube channel of the European Society of Criminology:
Christopher Birkbeck, interviewed by Gary LaFree;
Jiří Buriánek, interviewed by Eva Krulichová;
Gerben Bruinsma, interviewed by Lieven Pauwels;
José Luis Díez-Ripollés, interviewed by Anabel Cerezo-Domínguez;
Aleksandras Dobryninas, interviewed by Eglė Vileikienė;
Frieder Dünkel, interviewed by Ineke Pruin;
Yakov Gilinskiy, interviewed by Anna Gurinskaya
Ineke Haen-Marshall, interviewed by Dirk Enzmann;
Tim Hope, interviewed by Adam Edwards;
Mike Hough, interviewed by Ben Bradford;
Susanne Karstedt, interviewed by Alison Liebling;
Martin Killias, interviewed by Marcelo F. Aebi;
Krzysztof Krajewski, interviewed by Irena Rzeplinska;
Michael Levi, interviewed by Nicholas Lord;
Friedrich Lösel, interviewed by Caroline Lanskey;
Dario Melossi, interviewed by Màximo Sozzo;
David Nelken, interviewed by Stewart Field;
Paul Ponsaers, interviewed by Antoinette Verhage;
Sebastián Roché, interviewed by Jenny Fleming;
Ernesto Savona, interviewed by Stefano Caneppele
Joanna Shapland, interviewed by Matthew Hall;
Michael Tonry, interviewed by Manuel Eisner.

You can also reach that channel through the ESC Website: **http://esc-eurocrim.org/index.php/activities/ecoh.** Since 2019, the ECOH project is placed under the responsibility of José Angel Brandariz, former member of the ESC Executive Board.

Marcelo F. Aebi is Professor of Criminology at the School of Criminal Sciences, University of Lausanne, Switzerland, and Executive Secretary of the ESC

Grace Kronicz is the Secretary of the Executive Secretariat of the ESC

→ EUROPEAN CRIMINOLOGY AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Mike Hough

On Accepting the 2020 ESC Criminology Award

I really am delighted to accept this award, and I am very grateful indeed to the Society and those who nominated me. Awards for lifetime achievement carry the obvious implication that you have pretty much reached the end of the road. In fact, I am quite happy with that assessment. The pandemic has completely fractured my work ethic, probably beyond repair, and I welcome the added nudge from the ESC to start packing up my bags. As long as I can carry on gently gnawing on some of the bones that I have been worrying for most of my career.... Just a couple more articles I need to finish... (Old professors don't go willingly—they hang on by their fingernails until they are pushed off the cliff!)

What I would like to do in the 15 minutes or so that I have this evening is to reflect on the changes that have occurred in the policy environment for criminal justice over the last 25 years. It is a game of two halves—I'll start with an angry rant about the retreat from rationality and liberal values in countries seduced by right wing populism. After half time, I shall sketch out what I see as viable responses to this for criminologists keen to help shape policy. Inevitably, I will talk about the justice system I know best, covering England and Wales, but my analysis is, I hope, applicable more broadly across Europe.

I have been a policy researcher throughout my career, 20 years in the UK Home Office and a further 20 years running a research centre in academia. So I am well versed in the—slightly— dark arts of talking truth to power. I have always viewed my centre's research as applied or practical research, and I don't think I could be described as an academic's academic.

When I left the Home Office for academia, I obviously kept in close contact with my previous colleagues. My centre secured a large amount of government grants in the first ten years of its 25-year life. I engaged in policy advocacy (for example on drugs policy and on community safety) in ways that probably stretched the boundaries of the academic role. I met quite regularly met with senior political advisors, junior ministers and occasionally cabinet ministers. But from the mid-noughties onwards, my contact with the political centres of power fell away, and my centre did much less research for government departments.

This was the result of various factors. At a personal level, these were:

- My fading and ageing contacts within the Home Office and Ministry of Justice
- My disillusion with the quality and increasingly defensive style of research management by government officials (and possibly their disillusionment with me).
- My own preoccupation with participation in a large EU-funded research programme testing procedural justice theory, of which more later.

The landscape of criminal justice politics was also changing. The heat had been drawn out of criminal justice politics. First there was the crime drop; then came the global financial crisis in 2007/08. Then we lurched into the Brexit campaign that lead to the Brexit vote in 2016. Criminal justice was becoming a backwater in terms of UK political priorities, and government funding of criminology wasn't a priority.

But a further factor has become increasingly clear over the last decade. UK politicians have progressively tried—and often succeeded—in marginalising UK institutions that threatened to be critical of government policy, including the academic social sciences. This began with the conservative/liberal coalition in 2010, grew

Mike Hough

Professor at the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London

Professor Hough has been at the forefront of academic criminology and criminal justice in Europe and around the world for 40 years now. He is a leading world figure in the field and has made a singular and sustained contribution to the study and practice of criminal justice in Europe. He has authored, co-authored approximately 250 publications over the past 40 years.

He was one of the leading scholars on the important Handbook of European Criminology (Body-Gendrot, S., Hough, M., Levy, R. Kerezsi, K. and Snacken, S. (2013) *European Handbook of Criminology.* London: Routledge. Professor Hough's work encompasses quantitative and qualitative research in a wide variety of areas of criminology and criminal justice. In addition, he also writes widely for nonscholarly audiences, thereby bringing research findings from criminology to a much wider audience.

Victimization surveys are now a standard element of criminology and criminal justice around the world, but over 30 years ago they were an innovation, particularly in Europe. The largest, best-known, and oldest in Europe is the British Crime Survey (BCS, now the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW)). Hough was the principal architect of the BCS. He was a co-author of the first report on BCS findings (Hough and Mayhew, (1983) *The British Crime Survey: first report.* London: HMSO). Since that firstpublication on the survey he has published repeatedly on the subject, editing a leading review volume (Hough and Maxfield in 2007 (*Surveying Crime in the 21st Century*)). His most recent research into the CSEW was published in 2013 (Hough et al. (2013).

Public Attitudes to Crime and Criminal Justice is another area of vast importance for all jurisdictions in which Professor Hough has playeda key role. He co-authored the first significant empirical analysis of public knowledgeand attitudes in the 1980s, and he has contributed repeatedly to the field ever since. His publications include empirical analyses, texts, and research monographs. One of his leading publications is one of the most cited and influential volumes on public opinion and sentencing (Walker and Hough, 1988). He co-authored a text on public attitudes in 2005 ("*Understanding Public Attitudes to Sentencing*") as well as a series of peer-review publications since then (see list in CV). He has co-authored the chapteron public opinion in the *Oxford Handbook of Criminology* through several editions, including the most recent (2017).

One of Professor Hough's most active areas has been policing. His first book published in 1980 (with R. Clarke) addressed the issue of police effectiveness (*The Effectiveness of Policing*. Farnborough, England: Gower, 1980) and he has been active in the area eversince. He is a member of the *Policing and Society* Editorial board. Most recently he has headed the evaluation of Works being conducted at the College of Policing.

Professor Hough has also been an active leader in the field of sentencing policy in England and Europe. For example, he has appeared repeatedly before Parliamentary committees and has published on many aspects of sentencing policy (e.g., Hough & Jacobson (2008) *Creating a Sentencing Commission for England and Wales: an opportunity to address the prisons crisis.* London: Prison Reform Trust; Hough & Jacobson (2009) 'A Sentencing Council for England and Wales' in *Transforming Justice*. London: Criminal Justice Alliance. He has also been very active in the field of probation studies, heading a Probation Research Unit and publishing many articles including co-editing one of the leading international collections of essays on the subject ("*Probation Around the World*").

Professor Hough was the principal architect of two of the largest EU criminal justice research grants awarded in recent years: the Fiducia project (2008—FP7) and the EuroJustice (2012; EU-FP7) project. These multi-million Euro projects have partners across the union and have collected data and issued important publications on legitimacy and criminal justice. This subject has become one of the fastest-growing in Europe and around the world. Professor Hough and his colleagues have adopted a European approach to the concepts originally discussed by Tyler in the context of American criminal justice. The latest EU-funded project has given rise to many seminars across Europe, including of course a plenary at the most recent annual meeting of the ESC in Budapest.

throughout the decade and became sharply amplified when Boris Johnson became Prime Minister in 2019. Over the decade, UK politics have become driven increasingly by ideology; they are become increasingly less informed by careful and reasoned analysis of evidence, and increasingly less informed by liberal or enlightenment values. Since 2015 there has been scant regard for truth and honesty. The current administration is distrustful of:

- the BBC, seen as hostile towards them and politically biased against them
- the UK judiciary, seen as politically obstructive, for example in judicial reviews
- the international human rights institutions
- their own civil servants, who they see as incompetent experts ("people in this country have had enough of them").

Doors that were open to criminologists in the corridors of power before the turn of the century are increasingly being shut.

You'll have gathered that I am a bit pessimistic about the current scope for 'public criminologists' in Britain to make a significant contribution of criminal policy. Should other Europeans be worried? There is surely cause for concern across the Europe about the threats posed by right wing populist governments because there are structural factors at work which make it increasingly likely that politicians like Donald Trump and Boris Johnson get elected. I imagine that this is shared ground for most of us, but in brief,

- New social media are allowing the proliferation and normalisation of ideologies of all sorts, but including extremist nationalism, including racist and anti-migrant ideologies of hate
- Increasing globalisation has accelerated income inequality
- This can transform traditional blue-collar workers into people who are 'left behind', becoming understandably resentful and angry
- Populist politicians can choose to exploit this, using both traditional and social media to reach these disaffected groups, with promises of national resurgence and revived prosperity
- This can catapult populist right-wing governments into power, and once in power, they can then chip away at the conventional protections to the democratic process.

The paradigmatic example is to be found in the US, of course, but the same process is happening before our eyes in the UK. The government has announced plans to set up a commission to review the 1998 Human Rights Act, which adopted the European Convention of Human Rights. The commission would also examine how more political control could be made over appointment of members to the senior judiciary and how the role of the judiciary could be limited in carrying out judicial review of political decisions. The government has floated plans to part-privatise or shrink the BBC, a move seen as a threat that can be avoided only if the broadcasting service becomes more positive in its treatment of government policy. There are plans to overhaul the civil service, and six of the most senior civil servants have resigned after disagreements with politicians in 2020—an unprecedented tally in the history of the UK civil service. There are similar trends in other European countries. A temporary blip? I hope so, but I fear not.

Let me turn to the implications for European criminology, and in particular for policy-focussed criminolo-

gy. In the short run in the UK, it will be an exceptional criminologist who captures the imagination of our current bunch of politicians. We don't trust them, and they don't trust us. But all is not lost. Those who actually run government services, such as the police, the prison and probation services and the courts and prosecutors, still value and need reliable policy research. So too do the agencies that hold these services accountable—inspectorates, auditors, professional bodies and complaint handlers.

Whilst in the 1990s and early noughties I saw government as the primary audience for justice policy research—and the primary source of research funding—I now see the criminal justice agencies as a better bet. This is the route my centre has followed since the turn of the century. We have worked closely with several bodies at the heart of the criminal justice system: the College of Policing, for example, several police forces, the Independent Police Complaints Commission, the National Audit Office, the Police Inspectorate and the Sentencing Council. Our sentencing work has been facilitated by four successive Lord Chief Justices. It is still possible to speak truth to power, even if the range of audiences changes over time.

One of the sources of greatest satisfaction for me over the last decade of my career has been the degree of purchase that our work on procedural justice theory has had in the UK and beyond. In particular the work that Jon Jackson, Ben Bradford and I have done using the European Social Survey, and my own work with colleagues using the International Self-report Delinquency Study has achieved a degree of visibility well beyond academia. For example, police leaders in the UK are very comfortable with concepts of procedural justice, even if these ideas have been hard to find in the pronouncements of the last three Home Secretaries.

I remain very enthusiastic about the promise of international comparative research. This can shed a bright light onto the factors that shape and consolidate countries' commitment to the rule of law. Comparative work has explanatory power and helps us see more clearly how trends in governance are evolving in our own countries. A continuing research focus on the sources of legitimacy—whether of government or their agencies that exercise power over citizens—will continue to be of importance especially in those countries where right-wing populism gain a foothold. The language of legitimacy and procedural fairness may even help to contain some of their excesses. I have also been very gratified at the way that my centre's work on court work has evolved and developed from the sentencing process to embrace concepts of legitimacy in assessing court users' experience. The work of Jessica Jacobson, my successor as director of ICPR, and her colleagues has been really well received.

Another reason for optimism is to be found in the 'evidence based policy' movement, and the commitment to establish and maintain 'what works' centres that warehouse evaluative research on programme effectiveness. In the UK the College of Policing and academic partners have made good progress on the police evidence warehouse (WWCRC), with Research Council funding. On the assumption that these take root and develop, they may well help offset a tendency for politicians to be guided by ideology rather than evidence.

It is time for me to stop talking. I apologise for my pessimism about the political classes, and I hope that it is simply the product of five years of Brexit gloom in the UK, compounded by government mismanagement of the pandemic crisis. But this is one of those situations where I would warmly welcome being proved wrong. I hope that this pessimism is offset about my more upbeat take on working closer to the coalface of criminal justice, with police, courts and other justice agencies. I should say that I have greatly valued working with them, and in particular with a wide range of academic colleagues in the UK and further afield. Working with international networks of criminologists has been one of the most satisfying and rewarding aspects of much of my career. My advice for anyone who aspires to securing an ESC Criminology award in the future is to choose colleagues who are smarter than yourself!

Let me end by thanking the ESC again for its 2020 Criminology Award. I am very flattered, very honoured, and chuffed to bits. Thank you so much.

Mike Hough is Professor at the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London

→ NOTE OF THE EDITOR

ESC Newsletter Renewed

After a hiatus for the better part of 2020, the ESC Newsletter is back, renewed. The hiatus was for refurbishment and redesign, and longer than initially planned, due to COVID-related pressures in academic life. The renewal is intentional. After careful deliberations, the ESC Board has decided last year to abandon the print version of the Newsletter (the conference issue, once the physical conferences resume, will still be printed and distributed at the conference). This was a proposal that I, as the editor, had long resisted—I thought that the print Newsletter and its content, especially the essays, was an important part of the ESC brand. But I am also convinced now that it was the right decision.

When I became the editor in 2010, ESC membership hovered around 700. Now we have members twice as many. This brought a very significant increase in shipping costs—more than double increase, actually, mostly due to the rising number of overseas members. But readership habits also changed. Our internal statistics show that 75% of the Newsletter recipients visit the website after they get the Newsletter in the email. The time has thus indeed arrived to move online.

And the decision offered the opportunity to have a fresh look at the Newsletter. Here is what has changed:

1. The website now has a blog. A full online presence has to be more dynamic. The ESC Newsletter now has a blog, with contributions on current issues of crime and crime control. This part of the website is not connected to the issues, and we will plan to post new content at least once a month.

2. The issues are still available on the website, and you will also get an email with them. They will, however, be more devoted to ESC matters: with a few exceptions, substantial articles will move to the blog. You will still also be able to download the pdf version, which also has a new design.

3. The jobs site is now to a great extent automated and pulls criminology job ads from all over Europe. We will, of course, still manually add your job calls free of charge if you ask us to do it.

4. There will now also be a news site which will collect criminology-related news. If you have a call for papers, a report on a workshop, or anything similar, please let us know and we will post it.

Wish you a lot of fun on the new site!

Csaba Győry is editor of the ESC Newsletter