



IRCP

Institute for International Research on Criminal Policy
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Delphine Vanhaelemeesch – ESC - 23 September 2011

The impact of electronic monitoring compared to prison sentence. An experience research.

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Rethinking crime and punishment in Europe*

Panel session: Alternatives to imprisonment

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Content

- A. Introduction
- B. Assumptions concerning EM
- C. Methodology
- D. Results
- E. Conclusion



A. Introduction

- > Electronic monitoring (= EM)

- > Research on EM
 - > General research
 - > Experience research: two tracks

- > Gaps in existing academic experience research about EM

- > Aim of this presentation



B. Assumptions concerning EM

- > Policy: EM is a more humane alternative for imprisonment that generates less harmful side-effects

- > Public: convict bogey syndrome:
EM is a 'soft' alternative for imprisonment



C. Methodology

- > Population
 - > Convicts living in Flanders, punished with EM
- > Sample selection
 - > Criteria: Flanders, region, gender, stage of EM
- > Contact and setting
 - > House of Justice
- > Qualitative interviews
 - > 27 open interviews about their experience with EM



D. Results

- > D1. General
- > D2. Social life
- > D3. Work and finances
- > D4. Freedom
- > D5. Emotional and physical effects



D1. General

- > ET vs imprisonment
- > An experience is unique
- > General view
 - > Punishment AND favour
 - > Advantages > disadvantages
 - > Preference: EM (sometimes prison)



D2. Social life

- > Biggest advantage: being at home
- > Family: being together with partner and children
 - > But: ↑ discussions because of EM
- > Relatives and friends
 - > Maintain relations with relatives and friends
 - > Contact new persons: difficult
 - > Sometimes: interruption of contact



D3. Work and finances

- > Work:
 - > Ability to work
 - > Hard to find work

- > Finances
 - > Income
 - > By working
 - > By Justice
 - > Costs because of EM
 - > Telephone charges
 - > Relocation costs



D4. Freedom

- > They feel freedom because they aren't confined
 - > Freedom of choice
 - > At some moments, they may go outside

- > Difficulties: limited freedom
 - > Geographical restriction
 - > Keep regular hours to go outside
 - > Result: temptation



D5. Emotional effects

- > The feeling of being watched
- > Stress
- > Fear
- > Visibility of EM



E. Conclusion

- › Soft alternative?
 - ET > imprisonment
 - Advantages BUT also disadvantages
 - Pay attention to both
 - Now: no attention to the disadvantages

- › Assumptions need to be refined



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