



Press release April 2012

Safe Communities Algarve – Crime Analysis 2011

Safe Communities Algarve has published the following analysis of crime in the Algarve, based on figures released by Sistema de Segurança Interna. David Thomas Founder of Safe Communities Algarve said he had seen many national crime reports from all corners of the world and in his opinion the quality and depth of information of the SSI report was one of the best he had seen.

David added he was encouraged by the -2% decrease in reported overall crime for Portugal compared to 2010 and in particular the decrease of -5.6% in the Algarve for the same period. It was notable that there had also been a decrease of some -4.7% in violent crime in the Region compared with the national average decrease of -1.2%. This was the third year in succession overall reported crime has decreased in the region taking the reduction to -11% since 2008. The most notable decreases were in Olhão -19%; Loulé -14% and Albufeira -9.2%. In fact crime in Albufeira has decreased by -39% since 2004.

In the broad category of Crimes against Patrimony, which included thefts, burglaries, snatchings, thefts from vehicles, and other thefts, the crime level had decreased by - 6.8% in the Algarve compared to 2010. Most notable decreases had been achieved in Loulé and Olhão, -14.2% and -28.5% respectively. Although nationally within this group Thefts from Residences (Burglaries) had increased by 6.2%, in the Algarve the number of burglaries decreased. David considered that the general overall downward trend in Crimes against Patrimony in the Region showed that the work of the police, both through pro-active law enforcement measures and programs such as the Safe Residence Program appeared to be having a positive effect. He was also aware that a number of crimes had been solved through members of the public coming forward with information. Also through programs such as Safe Communities Algarve, the public have a greater awareness of crime prevention measures and this clearly helps, he added.

Against this however there is clearly concern about the current trend in indoor residential robberies which had increased in Portugal by 7.3% last year. These also increased in the Algarve and were higher in the Central Algarve compared with the remainder of the Region. Of concern was the fact that throughout Portugal some 88% of all cases involved culprits carrying firearms. Given that in some 80% of all cases the culprits escaped by car, it was particularly important that residents were on the look out for suspicious activities in their areas and in particular should note car registration numbers and report this to the GNR or PSP asap. Some 35.4% of such robberies occurred between 20.00 to 23.59 hrs.

He further added that although the report showed reported crime there was always, as in all countries, an element that was not reported, for various reasons. There was no indication however, that the level of unreported crime was greater today than say 5 or 10 years ago. Indeed people were more likely to report crimes such as Domestic Violence then previously.

What is important is that victims should report crime as well as suspicious activities as this leads to better intelligence gathering by police and hence improved detection rates. Likewise the police need to ensure that residents are able to report these efficiently and easily which is something that is being examined by the GNR at present.

In conclusion he added that 2012 will be a challenging year and clearly the economic situation may result in upwards trends in various cash and property crimes. So the message is be aware, be vigilant and as a community lets all pull together to keep the Algarve a safe place to live and visit.

Addendum August 2012

During the first 3 months of 2012 overall crime in the Algarve is reported to have decreased by 5% compared with the same period last year. Although Burglaries in the first half of 2012 for the whole of Portugal increased by 14% compared to the same period last year, in the Algarve they decreased by a moderate - 9%. Note 2012 figures are for areas covered only by the GNR.

Main crime concerns at the present are the relatively high seizure of drugs in the region (some involving the arrest of foreign nationals) the recent upward trend in the snatching of gold necklaces in public places. The current spate of theft of copper wiring appears to be continuing disrupting communications.