

## Summary

# Organized crime in the Netherlands

## Report of the WODC-monitor on organized crime

In 1994 the Dutch Parliamentary Inquiry Committee into Criminal Investigation Methods concluded that an accurate description of organized crime in the Netherlands was lacking. Therefore, the Inquiry Committee appointed an external research group chaired by professor Cyrille Fijnaut to make enquiries into the nature, seriousness and scale of organized crime in the Netherlands. After the publication of the report of the Fijnaut research group in 1996, the Minister of Justice promised the Dutch Parliament to report biennially on the nature of organized crime in the Netherlands. Consequently, the Research and Documentation Centre started the 'WODC-monitor on organized crime', a two-yearly systematic analysis of closed investigations of criminal groups. The aim of the research project was to increase the learning capacity of the criminal justice system and to construct a sound basis for preventive and repressive policy.

Chapter 1 of this first report of the WODC-monitor deals with the background, the research questions and the research methods of this study. For this study data have been collected on closed investigations of criminal groups in the period 1996-1997. Furthermore, use has been made of public and confidential reports on organized crime, crime analysis reports and interviews with key figures and experts on organized crime.

Chapter 2 elaborates upon the theoretical basis of the report and the nature of criminal groups: the way they are organized; the role of social relations; ethnic homogeneity; the dynamics of criminal groups; and the degree of specialization in certain criminal activities. The central issues of chapter 3 and 4 are the interactions between criminal groups and their social environment. The environment has a Janus face: on the one hand society facilitates organized crime in various ways, on the other it threatens the existence of criminal groups. Chapter 3 deals with the opportunities for criminal groups and the way in which criminal groups take advantage of these opportunities ('the environment as an ally'). Chapter 4 highlights the risks for criminal groups and the way in which these groups cope with these risks ('the environment as a risk factor'). Chapter 5 summarizes the most important findings of this study and explores the implications for public policy.

