

Policing and enforcement approaches in Spain

Targeted policing in Barakaldo, Spain

In 2009, in response to high levels of night-time crime relating to drinking venues, the local government in Barakaldo, Spain, increased enforcement activity in nightlife areas. The council adopted a zero tolerance attitude towards drinking establishments, giving police the authority to permanently close any venue that did not adhere to the control measures.



Targeted police operations were implemented both inside and outside drinking venues. Premises were inspected by authorities, to check venues' compliance with legislation (e.g. capacity limits, age legislation), and to encourage and monitor measures to prevent alcohol-related problems, such as ensuring staff implement age verification checks. Outside drinking establishments, high profile policing operations were implemented including crowd control, weapons searches and breathalyser tests.

Over the enforcement period, a number of premises were closed, at least temporarily, until they improved their practice, with reasons for closures including selling alcohol to minors and uncontrolled noise levels (with the venue required to install a limiter and pay a large fine prior to reopening).

Data showed that the number of crimes recorded in the first half of 2009 had decreased by 38% compared with the same period in 2008. Recorded crimes involving some type of injury (including violence) had decreased by 64%. This was coupled with reports that the number of dangerous items confiscated over the period had reduced, attributed to the constant presence of police in the area. The operations were also reported to have led to an overall reduction in the number of youth in the area, and a reduction in the number of police officers that were required to police the streets. Authorities have committed to maintaining surveillance and control in the nightlife areas to prevent alcohol-related problems.¹

1. El Correo Digital. El control policial reduce un 38% los delitos en la zona de copas de Barakaldo. Available from: <http://www.elcorreo.com/vizcaya/20090822/vizcaya/control-policial-reduce-delitos-20090822.html>