

**COUNTRY REPORT
and
BARRIER MODEL
for
GERMANY**

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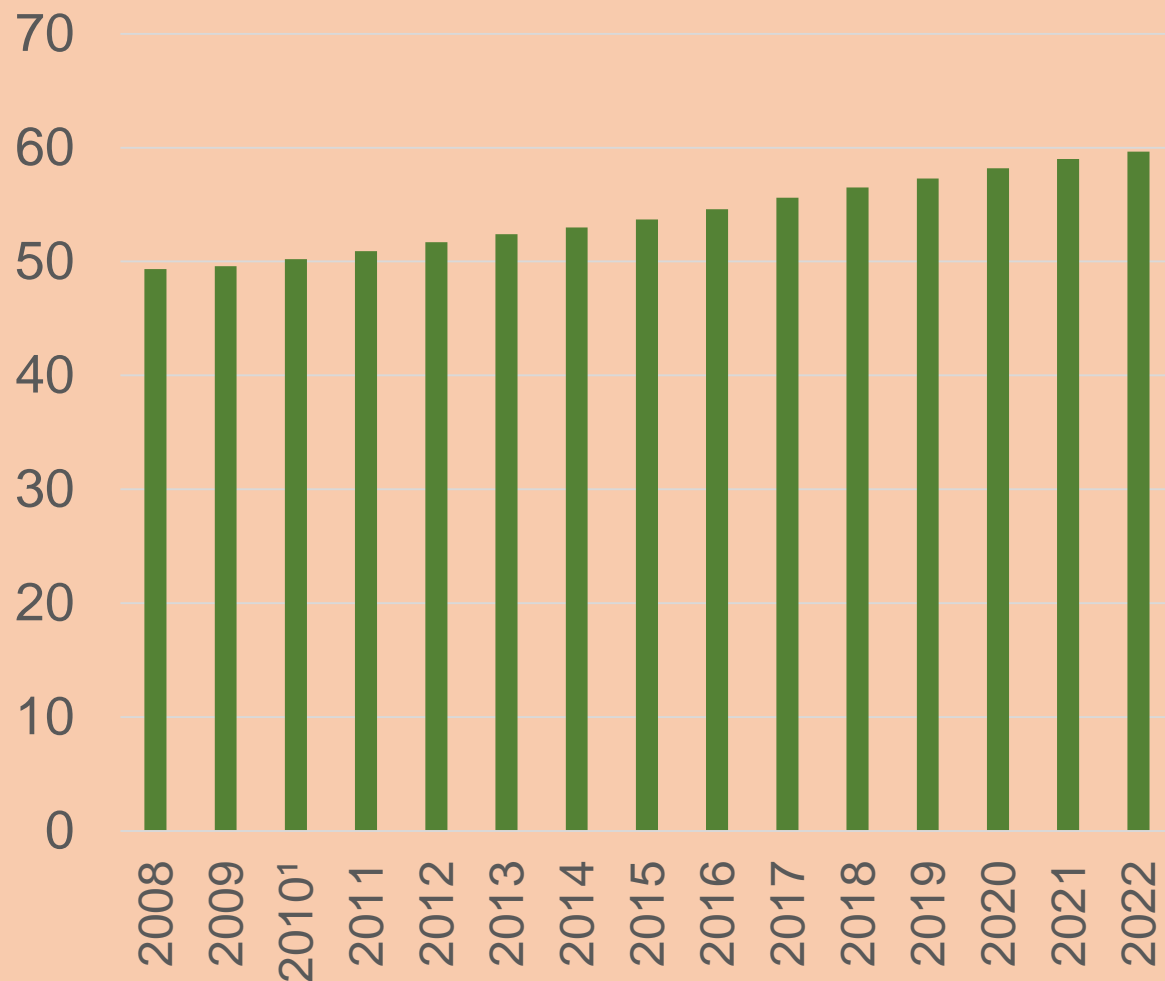


1. Summary and main findings
2. Barrier model highlights
3. Discussion
4. Conclusion
5. Difficulties (or good practices)

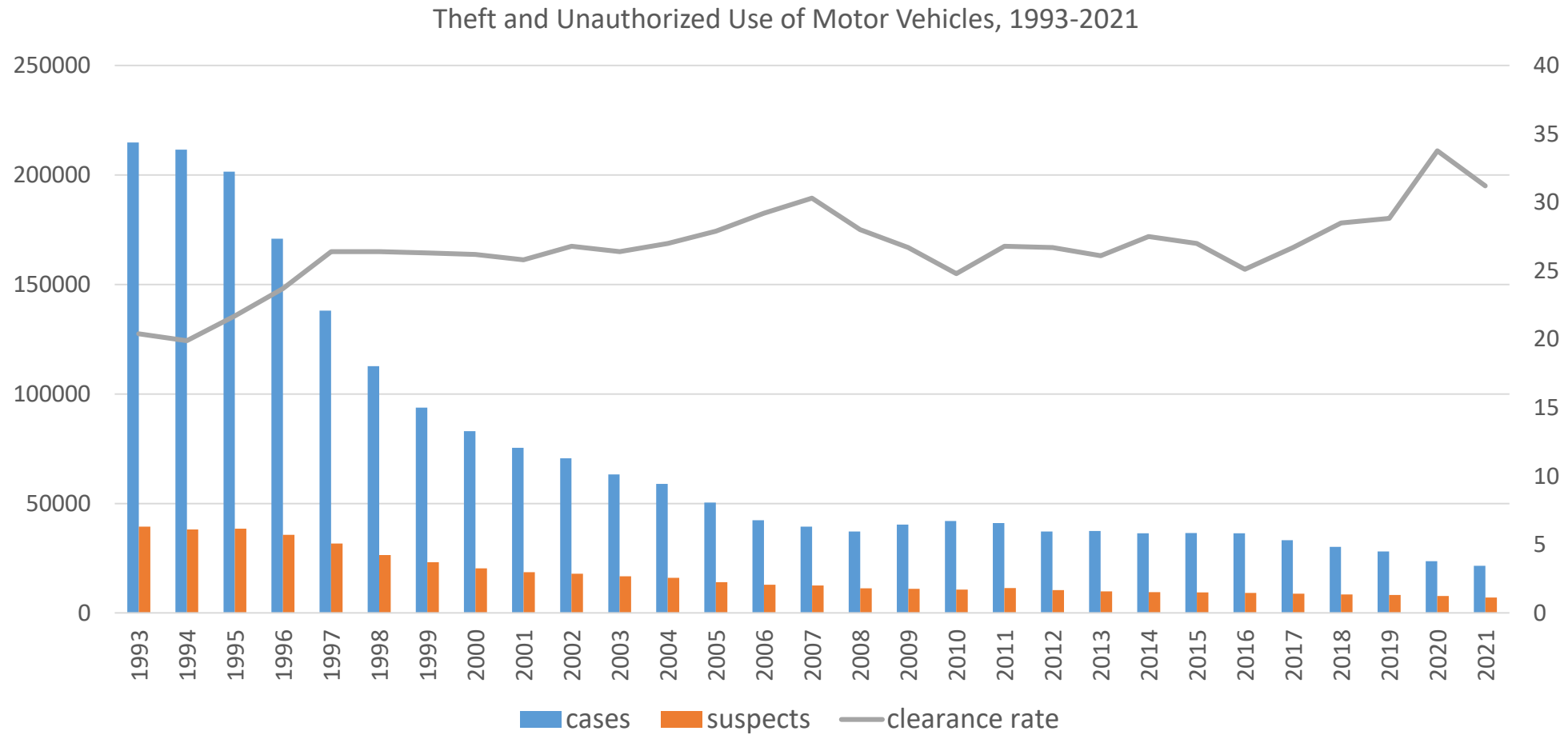


1. Summary and main findings

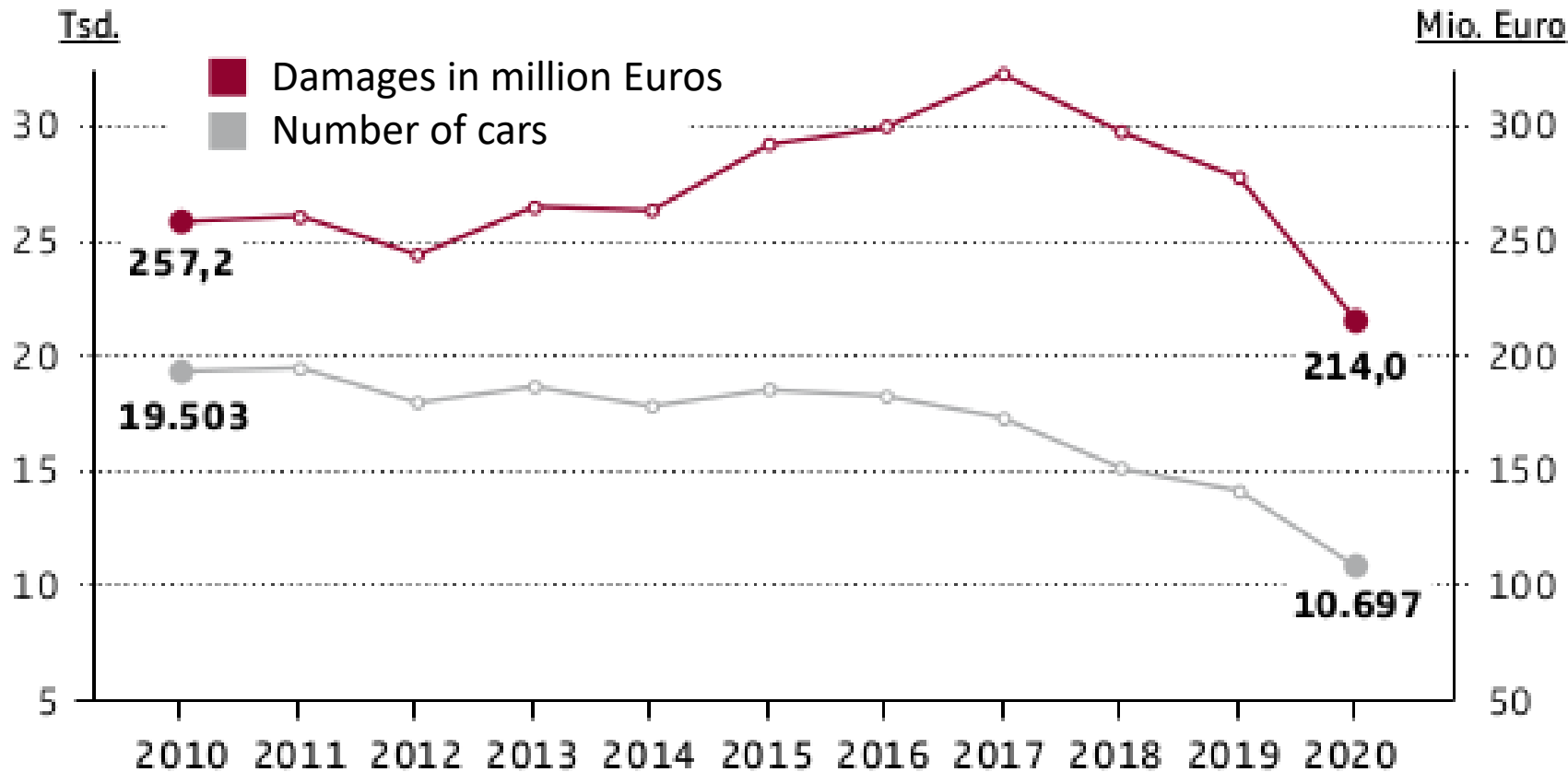
Motor Vehicles in Germany
(million)



- Large and increasing number of motor vehicles
(total: 59,6 million; cars: 48,5 million)
- High share of premium brand cars
(23,2% Audi/BMW/Mercedes of 2,6 million new cars in 2021)
- High share of SUVs/all-terrain vehicles
(36,1% of 2,6 million new cars in 2021)
- Low but rapidly increasing share of electric cars
(total: ca. 687.000 – 1,4%)



Source: Bundeskriminalamt, Police Crime Statistics from various years.

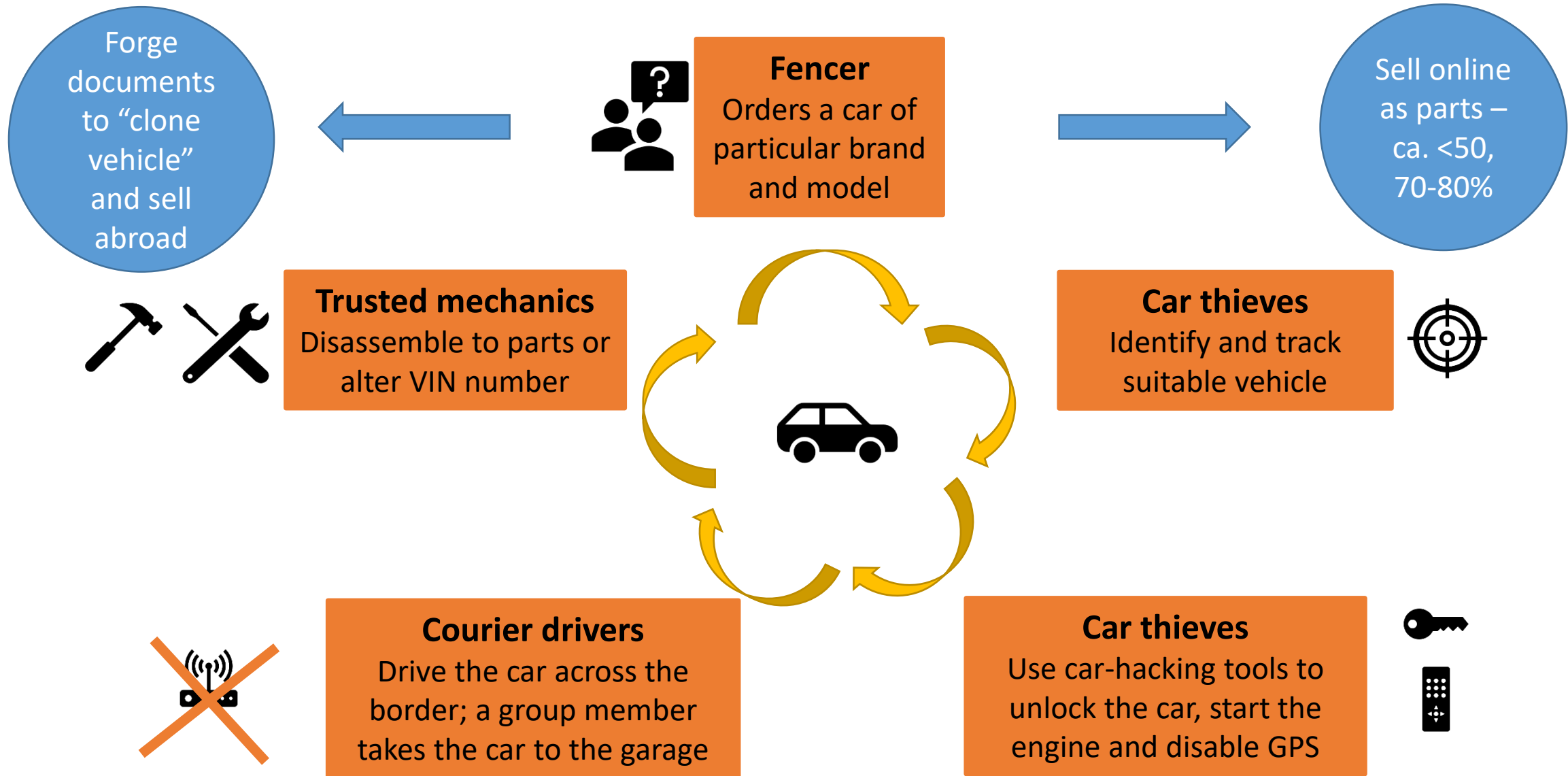


- Theft (mechanical, relay attack, 'gameboy')
- Embezzlement (rental cars)
- Fraud (leasing cars)

Criminal market and actors

- Motor vehicle crime continues to be committed in organized fashion.
- Motor vehicle crime is not perceived to be a major crime problem given that damage is largely socialized through insurance.
- The most important offender strategy is to exploit weaknesses in the keyless technology.
- Main hot-spot: Berlin – variety of (high-value) vehicles and proximity to the Eastern border
- Criminal actors: Criminal networks emerging around experienced car thieves





2. Barrier model highlights



ENAA. (2020). *3rd EU Handbook on the administrative approach in the European Union*. Brussels: ENAA

Some of the perpetrators are permanent legal residents in Germany, so that entry into Germany to commit crimes is not an issue.

Cross-border mobile offenders cannot be prevented from entering the country, since there is free movement of people between Germany and its neighboring countries within the Schengen area.

Knowledge of the entry of certain perpetrators is usually only gained through international police cooperation.

**Processstep
01**

Entry

International

Offenders stay legally in Germany short term and long term.

Offenders who come to Germany for short periods of time can usually rely on a support infrastructure in Germany or they operate independently (e.g. sleeping in their own vehicle).

Barriers erected to prevent people from staying in Germany could violate fundamental and human rights and are also not desired by the police.

Processtep

02

Housing

National

EV-BAR 2. Barrier model highlights: Infrastructure

Motorways largely determine the selection of areas of operation and transport routes for bringing stolen motor vehicles abroad.

Ports – Hamburg in particular – are used to export stolen vehicles because there is a low probability of detection, as there are hardly any export controls relative to the volume of trade.

Surveillance and controls on highways and at ports could act as infrastructural barriers.

Processstep

03

**Use of
infrastructur**

International

Motor vehicle crime is cross-border crime, in which the theft of the vehicles takes place in Germany, but the vehicles are modified, dismantled and marketed elsewhere.

Sophisticated technology is used to overcome mechanical and electronic anti-theft protection.

German law enforcement agencies rely heavily on international cooperation to develop leads and to successfully bring charges against perpetrators.

Processtep

04

**Commit
crime**

National

The majority of offender groups are not dependent on storage facilities in Germany because they quickly bring stolen motor vehicles abroad and only handle a few vehicles at a time.

When cars are not immediately brought abroad they are mostly parked in public and only in a few cases in garages or other storage facilities.

Pattern recognition based on typical parking locations, e.g. industrial areas, and surveillance of locations that have been identified as preferred parking locations for specific groups of perpetrators can serve as barriers to the storage of stolen vehicles.

Processstep

05

Storage

National

Most permanently stolen cars in Germany are transported eastwards by land and to a lesser extent by ship to different parts of the world.

Improving the tracking of vehicles and the more comprehensive identification of vehicle parts with serial numbers can make it more difficult to export stolen vehicles and to sell them.

Intensive and routine interregional and international cooperation is required.

**Processtep
06**

**Transport
and trade**

International

Due to the high demand for vehicles and vehicle parts, motor vehicle crime remains profitable.

Illegal trade is difficult to distinguish from legal trade.

Vehicles and vehicle parts could more extensively be marked and included in a networked system in such a way that they can no longer be used when stolen, thus reducing, if not eliminating their marketability.

**Processstep
07**

**Use of
profits**

International

Effective disagreement about the expected trend in the theft of motor vehicles:

- prevalence of theft will stabilize at the current relatively low levels
- significant increase given the continued existence of vulnerable keyless systems

Nationality:

- The majority (57.1%) of the suspects involved in vehicle theft are German nationals (BKA 2022, 11)
- The discussion about organized motor vehicle theft emphasizes foreign actors

Calls for more extensive electronic surveillance of mobile phones:

- may be futile, if legal(ized)
- maybe useless when perpetrators consistently switch off their phones once they enter Germany

Increased persecution pressure and punishments:

- May deter some
- Will probably not deter economically marginalized courier drivers

The proposed barrier model for the prevention of organized vehicle theft and stolen vehicle parts in Germany consists of:

- technological barriers for the tracking of stolen motor vehicles and the identification of stolen vehicle parts
- improved factory-fitted anti-theft technology
- administrative and legal barriers to reduce opportunities for registering stolen cars through 'car cloning'
- barriers in the form of intersectional and international information exchange and cooperation

These stakeholders could prevent organized vehicle crime to some extent:

Manufacturers:

- improve product lifetime
- offer affordable original car parts

Society:

- more global social-economic equality
- more opportunities in the formal economy

Difficulties

- **Lack of data due to low rate of stolen vehicle recovery**
- **Process steps are not separate but connected/overlap/overstep**

Good practices/experience:

- **Reports available from police organizations and insurers**
- **Experts willing to share their insights and some contacts**

Thank you for your attention!

For references please see the V-BAR Country Report Germany.

V-BAR seeks to analyse the dynamics of the criminal markets of motor vehicle theft and stolen vehicle parts in the EU. Based on logistical analyses of these markets in 6 EU Member States, V-BAR will develop a European barrier model of organised vehicle theft and stolen vehicle parts.

For more information visit www.vehiclecrimebarrier.eu or our [LinkedIn page](#).

