

## **Thefts of motor vehicles - crime pattern analysis**

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In the period November 1999 - September 2000 two motor vehicles were stolen per day in Slovenia. Most of these vehicles are less expensive private vehicles of the type Volkswagen Golf and Renault Clio, but among them there were also some other, much more expensive cars of different categories, such as combined vehicles Peugeot Boxer, personal vehicles AUDI 6 as well as MAN trucks and buses. Most cars are stolen in larger cities, among which the capital area seems the most exposed. Particularly dangerous are parking places within neighbourhoods with blocks of flats, such as Nove Jarše, where most private vehicles were stolen in the evening or at night during the week. Occasional thefts and insufficient technical protection, enabling perpetrators drive off a car without great effort, indicate the low level of security awareness of people regarding auto thefts.

In addition to occasional thefts, when perpetrators manage to get keys accidentally, the most typical methods of thefts are breaking the lock (especially in vehicles of heavier categories), pulling the inserted key mechanism and falsification of contact keys (especially in combined vehicles) and highly professional methods (especially in higher rank private vehicles), where a perpetrator systematically and in advance obtains car keys or uses a special electronic devices. What is particularly concerning is the robbery modus operandi, used in thefts of better private vehicles. Private vehicles of lower price rank are stolen also for spare parts, while vehicles of a medium price rank for transformation and legalisation through documents of destroyed cars of the same type.

Less expensive motor vehicles are basically stolen by individuals and local gangs, personal vehicles of medium price rank and vehicles of heavier categories by criminal groups, while private vehicles of higher price rank are stolen by collaborators and/or members of international criminal organisations. More expensive vehicles of different categories are most often taken abroad, mostly illegally to the north-west of Croatia. One of the international smuggling routes goes also across Slovenia, particularly for cars stolen in Italy. It begins in Goriška brda and continues through central Slovenia towards Hungary and Croatia.

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