

# Perspective on electronic monitoring

**Delphine Vanhaelemeesch**

t. +32 9 264 97 03

f. +32 9 264 69 71

e. [Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be](mailto:Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be)

December, 2014

# Content

---

December, 2014

- A. EM in Belgium
- B. The importance of experiences
- C. Method
- D. Results
- E. General conclusion

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# A. EM in Belgium

December, 2014

- Electronic monitoring (EM) in Belgium
  - Definition
  - Use
    - Front door
    - Back door
    - Pre-trial detention
    - Future: stand alone
  - Technology
    - Voice recognition
    - RF
    - GPS

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

## B. The importance of experiences

December, 2014

### Assumptions about EM...

- Policy: EM as a humane alternative to prison sentences
- Public opinion: EM is 'soft'

### ... but few attention to those involved:

- Policy and practice
- Academic world

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# C. Method PhD

December, 2014

## Qualitative design based on “experience research”

- Literature review
- Qualitative interviews

## Four parts

1. In-depth interview with offenders under EM (N = 59)
2. In-depth interview with their co-residents (N = 30)
3. In-depth interview with offenders with recalled EM (back in prison) (N = 14)
4. Own (scholarly) experience with EM

## Characteristics in-depth interviews:

- First contact: voluntary and independent research + informed consent
- Face-to-face and semi-structured
- Setting: At home or in prison
- Question
- Sample: offenders EM: male (60); Belgian (58); age between 22 – 64  
co-residents: female (24); Belgian (26); age between 17 – 74; partner, family member or close friend

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

# D. Results

---

December, 2014

D1. The experience of **offenders**

D2. The experience of **co-residents**

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1. The experience of offenders

---

December, 2014

D1a. General

D1b. Daily life

D1c. Social life

D1d. Emotional effects

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1a. The experience of offenders: General

December, 2014

An experience is unique

## General view

- Preference: EM (sometimes prison)

*“You must be stupid to sit in jail if you can choose EM” (R11)*

- Penalty AND favor
- Advantages > disadvantages

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1b. The experience of offenders: Daily life

December, 2014

## Work

- Ability to work: flexible system
- Hard to find work

## Finances

- Work = income
- Gain: save money because of limited freedom
- Costs because of EM (telephone charges, relocation costs)

## Privacy

- No influence (compared to imprisonment)
- Some: feeling of being watched

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

# D1b. The experience of offenders: Daily life

December, 2014

Spare time: important to being busy (hobbies are important)

## Freedom

They feel free because they aren't confined

- Freedom of choice; living their own life
- At some moments, they may go outside

*Of course yes... it is no complete freedom that you get. But at certain times, you can do your own things.  
(R20)*

## Difficulties: limited freedom

- Geographical restriction

*There is a certain environment where you can stay in, you understand? You cannot go further than that or you need to have a car, but then you always have to be calculating so that you surely have no traffic-jam or something. (R10)*

- Keep regular hours to go outside

*In the beginning, it is hard to become used to live on the hour... just go outside on certain hours .... I was used to go outside whenever I wanted. (R26)*

- Result: temptation

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1c. The experience of offenders: Social life

December, 2014

## Biggest advantage: being at home

*For me, a family man, this [bracelet] does not interest me. The only thing that interests me, is being with the people who are waiting for me and those who waited for me at home. This [bracelet] does not interest me. I am surrounded with my family and that is my happiness... (R18)*

## Family: being together with partner and children

- But: ↑ discussions because of EM

## Relatives and friends

- Maintain relations with relatives and friends
- Sometimes: interruption of contact

*They gave me more hours to be with my family, because formerly, then I went to friends or something, but now I spend a lot of hours together with my family. (R4)*

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1d. The experience of **offenders**: Emotional effects

December, 2014

## Harder than expected

### Stress

*“Sometimes it is a bit... they push you. You are nervous, you have to sprint here and there” (R6)*

### Fear (Sword of Damocles)

### Visibility of EM

*“When the weather is fine, I want to wear a dress, but I also want to hide it [bracelet]. In a dress, people see it and they look at it. Like yesterday, I noticed that people were looking and I went back home and I put on a pair of trousers...” (R25)*

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D1. The experience of offenders: Conclusion

December, 2014

Importance of motivation and self-discipline

Importance individualized program

(Potential) contribution to three goals:

Risk-limiting

Recidivism-limiting

Reintegration promoting

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D2. The experience of co-residents

---

December, 2014

D2a. General

D2b. Co-punishment

D2c. Co-punisher

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D2a. The experience of co-residents: general

December, 2014

## General conclusion

Benefits of EM outweighed the disadvantages

Punished indirectly

## Two main themes

Co-punishment: the influence of EM on co-residents' life

Co-punisher: the co-resident's roles

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

## D2b. Co-punishment: the influence of EM on co-residents' life

December, 2014

- Not isolated from the application of EM
- Daily life disrupted by and adjusted to fit the time schedule

A planned and structured lifestyle

Whishes and needs of offender = central

*[If the person under EM] is not outside, I am not outside. I can't say, "I will go there and you have to stay in." This is something you should not do. We are punished as well. (63c, partner)*

- Social life

Staying at home just like the offender

*My sister lives in [Y] and she complains that I never visit her. But if you have one day on a Sunday, you prefer to spend it with your family, rather than with others. [...] But she keeps asking us. I told her that if he has only 15 hours' free time in a week, you cannot expect him to take a bus for more than an hour. He would already have lost two hours then just for a visit. (53c, partner)*

- Relationship with the offender

*We had a very good relationship. They always said we are like twins. I feel that we have become even closer now and have more respect for each other. I also feel this respect from his side. He has always had respect for me, but now he says more often that he loves me or thanks me for what I am doing. This was good for our relationship ... I don't think this is the case with everybody, but it is with us. (60c, partner)*

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D2c. Co-punisher: the co-resident's roles

December, 2014

- **Extra roles**

*You don't have the chance to be a real partner. You constantly have to try to set rules and see that they are observed. [...] I have to be strong for him, have a hold on him. He wants that too, but it makes it really hard for me. I have my own life too ... and I just want to get some love and tenderness as well. I don't want to be tough all the time... (32c, partner).*

- **Assistant**

*Household activities are sometimes difficult. Putting the garbage cans outside is hard for me. This is usually his [person under EM] job, but now it is mine. Or shopping ... that has become something I do alone, while previously we did it together. Now he hasn't much free time, it would be sad if he needed to do shopping then. I have a lot on my shoulders and it's sometimes hard. (26c, partner)*

- **Social worker**

*I know him. I know that when he gets up and forgets something important he gets very nervous and does not make it. I therefore ask him in the evening what he has to do on the following day and figure out what shouldn't be forgotten. In other situations (than EM), forgetting something is not such a problem. If you forget, you can do it later. Now this isn't possible. It all needs to be done on time. (19c, partner)*

- **Controller**

*Perhaps it's not very nice of me, but I often asked my son to check whether his [the offender's] car really is at his work place. I want to know at what time he is there and at what time he has finished working. (63c, partner)*

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# D2. The experience of co-residents: Conclusion

December, 2014

Important but no exclusive role

Make EM easier and harder

Often neglected by the criminal justice system, despite expectations of care and supervision.

=> Little additional emotional and practical support

research

publications

conferences

consultancy



Institute for  
International Research on Criminal Policy  
Ghent University

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch  
+32 9 264 97 03  
Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be

# E. Conclusion

December, 2014

EM = pretty certain future in the judicial world

New and other kind of punishment : ↑ responsibility and self-discipline

Central element:

Social network (especially co-resident) to achieve some of its objectives

Human rights and EM?

- Free movement?
- Free association?
- Private or family life?
- Freedom?
- Equity?
- Unlawful punishment?

research

publications

conferences

consultancy

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

[www.ircp.org](http://www.ircp.org)

## Contact Speaker

Delphine Vanhaelemeesch

t. +32 9 264 97 03

f. +32 9 264 69 71

e. [Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be](mailto:Delphine.Vanhaelemeesch@Ugent.be)

## IRCP

Ghent University  
Universiteitstraat 4  
B – 9000 Ghent