

# Analysing nuisance at 'Het Bollendak'

## Groups, behaviour and efforts to tackle the issue

Summary

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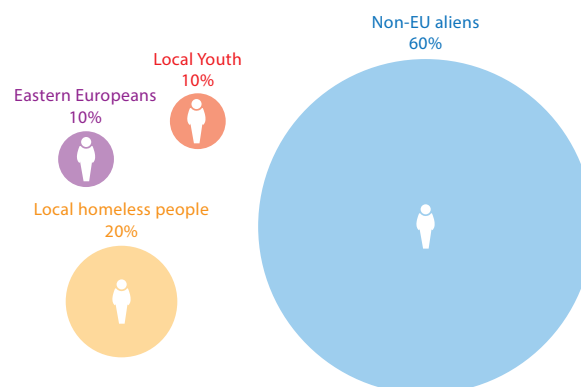
Due to increased nuisance at the Utrecht Central Station square 'Het Bollendak', we conducted a study to investigate the issue and ways to tackle them. In this study, we provide an overview of the incidents and characteristics of the groups causing nuisance. Our findings are based on open sources, police data and interviews with street-level professionals. Furthermore, we offer the municipality of Utrecht tools for structural and sustainable solutions to tackle this issue.

The Bollendak square appears to be an attractive meeting and operating place for various groups causing nuisance. The square is adjacent to the central bus and train station, a mall, various restaurants and supermarkets. The square is an open area covered by a roof and can be exited via several roads and exits. We concluded that the location and design of the square offer numerous opportunities for the groups to congregate, stage many kinds of illegal events, commit crime and afterwards quickly disappear from the sight of law enforcement.

We distinguish four groups responsible for the nuisance at 'Het Bollendak': local homeless people, local youth, Eastern Europeans and non-EU aliens. The type and severity of incidents vary by group, ranging from 'harmless' mischief to shoplifting and harassment. As desired by the commissioning authority of this study, the focus of the study is on examining the group of nuisance-causing aliens from outside the EU.

For several months, the municipality and the police intensified surveillance and enforcement at Het Bollendak. This had a positive effect in reducing nuisance at the square, however, it also resulted in the nuisance shifting to other areas in Utrecht. An effective response to the non-EU aliens causing nuisance requires fundamental long term solutions. To do so, one can think of a person-centred approach to those causing nuisance and using the arrest as a momentum to enhance the possibilities for action. Finally, European cooperation is necessary to avoid the displacement of nuisance.

*Figure 1: Approximate ratio of the groups causing nuisance at Het Bollendak, based on interviews with frontliners*



### Original title

#### **Overlast onder het Bollendak in Utrecht.**

*Een analyse van de problematiek en de aanpak*

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