



CO-SECUR BOOKLET

Inspirational use-cases on Social Innovation in Security



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Authors

Michal Woch, Aleksandra Kamińska, Beata Dec, Dariusz Tuchowski, Laura Llop PhD, Maria Mekri, Meike Hecker, Anna Rau, Harm op den Akker PhD, Paola Bello, Natália Machado, Carina Dantas, Lucia Cristea, Liliانا Denisa Andrei, Marga Marin, Konstantinos Nikolaidis-Konstas, Ilias Trochidis, Ieva Girdvainienė, Emilija Venskūnaitė, Alper Tanriverdi, Ginevra Santini, Alberto Hylander, Gloria Monge, Noemí García-Lepetit and Maite Ferrando, PhD.

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Project consortium

The CO-SECUR consortium, led by Kveloce, brings together 10 multidisciplinary partners with expertise in participatory research, public engagement, and mixed methods. The selection of partners from 9 European countries – Spain, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Romania, Poland, Greece, and Lithuania reflects the project's goal to address the complex diversity of laws, security measures, politics, and social realities of different European regions.

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01 Introduction





1.1 CO-SECUR and the need for new Approaches to Security in Public Spaces

Across Europe, public spaces are changing. Cities are becoming denser, more diverse and more dynamic. Festivals attract thousands of participants, nightlife districts grow, mobility systems become more complex, and new social tensions emerge in neighbourhoods.

Security challenges in these environments are no longer limited to traditional crime prevention. They increasingly include issues such as youth vulnerability, harassment, substance abuse, social conflict, security perception, crowd behaviour, and the protection of vulnerable groups. In this context, purely technical or enforcement-based responses are often not sufficient. Cameras, policing and regulations remain important, but they cannot alone build trust, reduce fear or strengthen community resilience. Public security today also depends on cooperation, communication, inclusion and shared responsibility.

CO-SECUR (www.cosecur.eu) is a Horizon Europe research project that responds to this need. The project explores how social innovation and participatory approaches can complement traditional security measures and improve both actual security and the perception of security in public spaces.

The project brings together public authorities, researchers, civil society organisations and practitioners from several European countries. Its goal is to identify, analyse and promote practices that help cities manage security challenges in a more collaborative, inclusive and sustainable way.

1.2 What this booklet is and why it is created

This booklet presents a selection of real-life initiatives from across Europe that illustrate how social innovation can contribute to security in public spaces.

This booklet is meant to inspire you, as a professional working in the field of urban security. It is a practical and accessible collection of cases that show how different actors – municipalities, police, NGOs, schools, community groups, event organisers and others – are addressing security challenges in new and collaborative ways.

The booklet is primarily addressed to:

- local and regional authorities,
- security practitioners,
- civil society organisations,
- event organisers,
- mobility and transport actors,
- and other stakeholders involved in public space security management.

Its purpose is:

- To inform – by presenting concrete examples of initiatives already implemented in different European contexts.
- To inspire – by highlighting working mechanisms and practical solutions that can potentially be adapted elsewhere.

This booklet is the product of almost two years of research by partners spread across 9 European countries, and presents a glimpse of the knowledge collected so far, while also forming the basis for future analysis and ultimately policy guidelines that will be published on www.cosecur.eu.

Note on AI use

Artificial intelligence tools have been used to support the translation and editorial refinement of the text. All outputs have been carefully reviewed, validated, and, where necessary, adapted by the authors to ensure accuracy, clarity, and consistency with the intended meaning.

The images used to illustrate social innovation cases in this booklet are generated using artificial intelligence (AI) tools rather than by human illustrators or photographers.

All AI-generated images have been reviewed and selected by the authors to ensure their relevance and appropriateness. They are included for illustrative purposes only and may not represent real people, places, or events.

1.3 Priority Areas: Public Spaces, Mobility and Mass Events

The cases presented in this booklet relate to three core priority areas of the CO-SECUR project:

Public Spaces

This includes neighbourhoods, parks, squares, streets and other open or semi-open urban environments where people meet, move and interact. These spaces are central to social life but may also face challenges such as antisocial behaviour, harassment, conflicts, vandalism or low perceived security.

Many of the cases show how community engagement, trust-building and inclusive approaches can strengthen security at the local level.

Mobility and Transport

Urban mobility systems – including public transport, shared spaces, pedestrian areas and multimodal hubs – are essential for city life. At the same time, they can become sites of tension, unsafe behaviour, discrimination or conflict.

The booklet includes cases that address security in movement, conflicts between different user groups, and the protection of both passengers and frontline staff.

Mass events and Crowded Areas

Festivals, concerts, sports events and large gatherings create specific security challenges related to crowd management, emergency response, substance abuse, harassment and the protection of vulnerable participants.

Several cases in this booklet focus on how organisers, authorities and communities work together to ensure safer events through prevention, communication, coordination and shared responsibility.

Together, these three priority areas reflect the environments where public security challenges are most visible and socially complex. The cases included in this booklet demonstrate that improving security in such contexts requires not only technical measures, but also cooperation, dialogue and innovation in the way actors work together.

02

Definitions and conceptual background

2.1 What do we mean by Social Innovation?

The term social innovation is used in many ways. In general, it refers to new ideas, practices or ways of working that solve social problems more effectively than traditional approaches.

Social innovation is not only about creating new services or tools. It is also about changing how people cooperate, how decisions are made, and how institutions interact with communities.

In other words, it focuses on improving society through new relationships, new forms of participation and new ways of organising action.

In CO-SECUR, we focus on social innovation in the area of public-space security.

What do we mean by Social Innovation in Security (SIS)?

In CO-SECUR, we use the term SIS (Social Innovation in Security) to describe initiatives that improve safety and security of people in public spaces by combining different types of innovation (social, organisational, technological, administrative or policy-related).

For CO-SECUR, SIS cases should have three important features:

- they respond to real security-related needs in public spaces,
- they involve participation and co-creation (citizens and stakeholders are not only “recipients”, but also contributors),
- and they have potential for transfer, scaling or adaptation in other contexts.

In simple terms: SIS is about improving security in public spaces by engaging people and institutions to co-create solutions that work in real life and can be reused elsewhere.

2.2 What is the difference between "security" and "safety"

In everyday language, security and safety are often used as if they mean the same thing.

In CO-SECUR, we make a distinction between them, because both dimensions matter in public spaces.

Security usually refers to protection against intentional threats. This includes crime, violence, harassment, terrorism, or other harmful acts caused by people.

Safety usually refers to protection against unintentional harm. This includes accidents, crowd incidents, infrastructure failures, health-related risks, or environmental hazards.

In public spaces, these two dimensions are often connected. For example, a crowded festival may require both:

- security measures (preventing violence, harassment, theft), and
- safety measures (preventing crushing, managing evacuation, responding to medical emergencies).

While CO-SECUR focuses on security, we recognise that in real-life public spaces security and safety are closely linked. Many socially innovative initiatives address both, so we integrate both perspectives in this booklet.

2.3 Why does terminology matter for CO-SECUR?

We explain these terms because they shape how we understand the cases in this booklet. Many initiatives presented here do not focus only on “hard security” (such as policing or surveillance). Instead, they often work through softer but very important processes such as trust-building, inclusion, prevention, communication and community engagement.

The concepts are especially relevant for CO-SECUR because the project looks at security not only as a technical challenge, but also as a social one. Public security depends on how people behave, how they cooperate, and whether they trust institutions and each other.

Using clear definitions helps us:

- describe cases in a consistent way across different countries,
- compare very different initiatives (e.g., festivals, neighbourhood programmes, mobility projects),
- and identify how social innovation contributes to security outcomes in practice.

Clear definitions also prepare the ground for later CO-SECUR work, where we will analyse the cases more deeply, validate lessons learned with stakeholders, and develop the project’s key output: the Societal Development Plan (SDP).

03

**From 150+ cases
to this selection:
how we chose them**

3.1 Selection criteria and the CO-SECUR approach

This booklet is based on a much wider mapping effort carried out in CO-SECUR. In the first phase of the project, the consortium identified 159 social innovation initiatives related to public-space safety and security across nine European countries.

Because the mapping included many different types of initiatives (from small community projects to large city programmes), we needed a structured way to narrow the list down for deeper work.

The selection process was designed to ensure both quality and representativeness. It followed a step-by-step approach:

First, we removed cases that were only loosely linked to public-space security.

Second, we excluded initiatives that did not fit any of the project's three priority areas:

- public spaces,
- mobility-related security,
- mass events and crowded places.

The remaining initiatives were then ranked using the CO-SCORE, a composite indicator developed in CO-SECUR. The CO-SCORE reflects how strongly a case includes elements of:

- social innovation,
- participatory and co-creative approaches,
- or a combination of both.

To avoid arbitrary decisions, the selection also followed balancing rules. For each country, the highest-ranked cases were included (at least eight per partner country). When multiple cases had the same score, they were included together to avoid artificial cut-offs.

Additional balancing criteria were applied to ensure diversity across the portfolio, including:

- presence of technological elements,
- inclusion of vulnerable groups,
- and potential for social impact.

3.2 From extended case studies to the booklet selection

From the long list, the consortium selected over 80 initiatives for extended case analysis. These extended case studies form the core evidence base.

For the booklet, we then selected a smaller set of 20 cases. The purpose of this step was not to re-rank the initiatives again, but to ensure that the final booklet selection:

- reflects the practical scope of CO-SECUR (see section 1.1),
- covers all three project's priority areas (see section 1.3),
- includes five main thematic areas (see section 5.2),
- represents best practices for each of five main working mechanisms (see section 4.1)
- and presents a diverse mix of countries, actors and approaches.

In other words, this booklet is a curated sample of the broader CO-SECUR portfolio: it shows a variety of strong, well-documented SIS initiatives, but it does not define the limits of the project's overall research and analysis.

Readers interested in the full mapping database can access it in Deliverable D1.2, available on the CO-SECUR project website (www.cosecur.eu).

04

Working mechanism

4.1 What do we mean by working mechanisms?

In this booklet, we use the term working mechanisms to describe how an initiative operates in practice.

A working mechanism is not a slogan, a goal, or a policy label. It refers to the real processes inside an initiative – how people cooperate, how decisions are made, how support is organised, how information flows, and how behaviour changes.

In simple terms, working mechanisms answer the question: "What does actually happen inside this initiative that makes it function?"

A few simple examples of what a "working mechanism" can look like in real life:

- residents meeting regularly with local authorities,
- different institutions sharing real-time data,
- volunteers supporting vulnerable groups,
- awareness campaigns changing behaviour in public spaces,
- or urban design solutions that reduce opportunities for harm.

Importantly, working mechanisms are not presented here as proven success factors. The booklet does not claim that these mechanisms automatically lead to better outcomes everywhere.

Instead, they are presented as:

- observable patterns of action,
- structured descriptions of how initiatives operate,
- and analytical tools that help us compare different cases.

They help us move from "what the project is about" to "how it works in reality."

4.2 Why do working mechanisms matter for social innovation in security?

Social innovation in security is not only about new ideas. It is about new ways of organising cooperation, responsibility and problem-solving in public spaces.

In many traditional security approaches, solutions are designed and implemented mainly by authorities. Social innovation, in contrast, often involves:

- co-production with citizens,
- collaboration across sectors,
- behavioural and cultural change,
- and adaptive, context-sensitive responses.

Working mechanisms allow us to see these dynamics clearly.

They matter because they:

1. Make complex initiatives understandable

Public-space security projects often involve many actors and activities. By identifying working mechanisms, we break down complexity into concrete processes.

2. Support transferability

Stakeholders from other cities or organisations can ask:

“Could we apply a similar mechanism in our context?”

Even if the full project cannot be copied, specific mechanisms might be adapted.

3. Bridge practice and analysis

The mechanisms identified in the case studies provide a structured basis for the analytical work for next phases of our project. They help us compare cases across countries and identify recurring patterns.

4. Encourage reflection

During participatory workshops, stakeholders can react not only to the cases themselves, but also to the mechanisms behind them confirming, challenging or refining them.

In this way, working mechanisms function as a practical and analytical lens through which social innovation in security becomes more visible and discussable.

4.3 Main categories of working mechanisms analysed in the case studies

Within the project we identified five main categories of working mechanisms. These categories help organise the analysis, but in practice many initiatives combine several of them.

Participatory governance mechanisms

These mechanisms involve citizens and local stakeholders directly in shaping security solutions.

They include formats such as:

- neighbourhood forums,
- participatory budgeting initiatives,
- co-design workshops,
- community-based reporting systems.

In simple terms:

People are not only recipients of security measures – they help design and shape them.

Effects often include stronger trust, shared responsibility and better alignment with local needs.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms

These mechanisms focus on cooperation between different types of actors: public authorities, police, NGOs, schools, social services, businesses, researchers and community groups.

They may involve:

- joint crisis teams,
- shared protocols,
- coordinated intervention models,
- long-term partnership platforms.

In simple terms:

Different institutions work together instead of acting separately.

This can improve coordination, reduce duplication, and create more coherent responses to complex problems.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

These mechanisms aim to influence behaviour, norms and perceptions through information, education and public messaging.

They include:

- prevention campaigns,
- training sessions,
- behavioural nudges in public spaces,
- storytelling and narrative interventions,
- clear guidance before and during events.

In simple terms:

Clear messages help people understand risks and know what to do.

Such mechanisms can increase preparedness, reduce stigma around seeking help, and encourage prosocial behaviour.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

These mechanisms relate to how public spaces are designed and organised in ways that influence behaviour and security.

They may involve:

- improved lighting and visibility,
- natural surveillance,
- inclusive and accessible layouts,
- symbolic or emotional elements that encourage positive behaviour.

In simple terms:

Well-designed spaces can reduce risks and make people feel more secure.

These approaches often build on principles such as CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) but are adapted to local contexts.

Technological integration mechanisms

These mechanisms use digital tools and technologies to support prevention, coordination and response.

They include:

- data-sharing platforms,
- digital reporting tools,
- real-time monitoring systems,
- mobile applications,
- analytical tools supporting decision-making.

In simple terms:

Technology helps actors see what is happening and react more effectively.

In the case studies, technology is rarely used alone. It is typically combined with organisational and social processes.

Together, these five categories provide a structured yet flexible framework for understanding how social innovation in security operates across different contexts.

They are not rigid boxes, but analytical lenses that help us compare initiatives and reflect on how security can be co-produced.

05

Introduction to the Case Studies section



This section presents a selection of 20 social innovation initiatives from across Europe. These cases were chosen because they are relevant to CO-SECUR's priority areas and because they provide inspiring example in which security in public spaces can be improved through collaboration, participation and new organisational approaches.

The aim of this section is not to evaluate or rank the cases. Instead, it is to present them in a clear, structured and practical way so that readers can quickly understand:

- what the initiative is about,
- who is involved,
- what kind of security challenges it addresses, and
- which working mechanisms can be observed in practice.

Each case offers a concrete example of how social innovation can support security, security perception and trust in different contexts.

5.1 Thematic focus areas represented in the case studies

To make the booklet easier to navigate, the selected cases are grouped under five broad thematic focus areas. These areas reflect the main types of security challenges identified during the project.

The five thematic areas are:

1. Nightlife-related risks

Initiatives addressing security in nightlife environments, including alcohol- and drug-related risks, harassment, violence, and tensions between residents and nightlife venues.

2. Mass events security and crowd management

Cases related to large public gatherings such as festivals, sports events or religious celebrations, focusing on prevention, coordination and crowd management.

3. Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Projects that work with or for groups exposed to higher risks, including youth, migrants, LGBTQ+ communities, women, and other marginalised groups. These initiatives often combine prevention, empowerment and inclusion.

4. Community conflict and trust-building

Initiatives addressing tensions in neighbourhoods or public spaces, aiming to build dialogue, strengthen cohesion and improve relationships between citizens and institutions.

5. Mobility and transport

Projects focused on security in transport systems and shared mobility spaces, including public transport, shared-use environments and conflicts between different users.

These thematic areas are designed to be clear and practical. They are distinct from the “working mechanisms” described in the previous chapter. The thematic areas describe what kind of security challenge the case addresses, while the working mechanisms explain how the initiative works internally.

5.2 How are the case studies structured?

Each case study follows the same clear and concise structure, inspired by a factsheet format. Every case includes:

Case title and location

The name of the initiative and the city/country where it is implemented.

Thematic focus area

One or more of the five thematic areas listed above.

Overview

A short but concrete description of:

- how and why the initiative was created,
- who coordinates it,
- what its main objectives are,
- and how it operates in practice.

The overview gives enough detail to understand the context and scope of the initiative.

Actors involved

A brief list of the main stakeholders participating in the initiative (e.g. municipalities, police, NGOs, volunteers, transport operators, schools, health services, community members).

Key working mechanisms and their impact

This section presents selected working mechanisms observed in the case. For each mechanism, we describe:

- the main category (e.g. participatory governance, cross-sector collaboration),
- a specific sub-mechanism,
- how it works in practice in this case,
- and what kind of impact it generates (e.g. increased trust, better coordination, improved preparedness).

The purpose is to show concrete processes in action, not to claim definitive “success factors”.

Why does it matter?

A short reflection explaining why the initiative is relevant for public space security and what makes it particularly interesting or inspiring.

This consistent structure allows readers to compare cases and identify elements that could be adapted to their own context.

5.3 How to read the case studies

The case studies can be read in different ways.

You may:

- focus on cases from a specific thematic area (e.g. mass events or mobility),
- look for examples involving certain stakeholders (e.g. municipalities, NGOs, transport providers),
- or explore specific working mechanisms that are relevant to your work.

This booklet provides short and accessible summaries.

More detailed descriptions of all extended case studies – including the broader set of over 150 mapped initiatives and 80+ extended analyses – are available in the project knowledge base on the CO-SECUR website (www.cosecur.eu).

5.4 Transferability and inspiration for local contexts

The cases presented here come from different countries, governance systems and socio-cultural contexts. They are not meant to be copied directly.

Instead, they should be seen as sources of inspiration.

When reading each case, we invite you to ask:

- Which elements could be adapted to my local context?
- Which stakeholders would need to be involved?
- What barriers might appear in my city or organisation?
- Which working mechanisms could be tested or strengthened?

Social innovation in security is rarely about importing a ready-made solution. It is about understanding processes, adapting them and building partnerships that respond to local needs.

The following section presents 20 concrete cases that illustrate how social innovation can strengthen security and security perception in practice.

In addition, CO-SECUR has developed a broader set of extended case studies (over 80) based on desk research and stakeholder inputs. These extended cases will be made available through the project's website (cosecur.eu), so readers can explore more examples beyond this booklet.

06

Case Studies



Brussels by Night

Brussels, Belgium

Nightlife-related risks

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

“Brussels by Night” is an ongoing city-level programme coordinated by Brussels Prevention & Security. It supports security, prevention and public order in the city’s main nightlife districts, including areas such as Saint-Géry, Sainte-Catherine, Ixelles and parts of the city centre.

The programme focuses on the most demanding time windows –especially weekend nights, holidays and large nightlife events – when risks such as aggression, intoxication, harassment, noise conflicts, overcrowding and mobility-related tensions tend to increase.

Instead of relying only on enforcement, the model combines police presence with prevention and support services. Multiple city teams work in a coordinated way on the ground, exchange information during the night, and adapt their actions to what is happening in real time. The programme is regularly adjusted based on observed trends, seasonal patterns and feedback from residents, venue operators and frontline staff.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Brussels Prevention & Security,
- Police patrols,
- Municipal prevention teams,
- Nightlife mediators / stewards,
- Mobility and public-space services,
- Cleaning and sanitation services,
- Drug and alcohol prevention specialists,
- Bars, clubs and nightlife operators,
- Residents and neighbourhood representatives.

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms **Integrated field response and joint operational coordination**

Nightlife areas combine many challenges in one space: crowds, alcohol, movement, noise, vulnerable individuals and local residents' concerns. Brussels by Night responds to this by making sure that services do not operate separately. Instead, police, prevention teams, stewards, mobility and cleaning services coordinate their actions as one system.

In practice, this means sharing updates about hotspots, adjusting patrols, sending mediators early to calm tensions, and aligning service responses so problems are addressed before they grow. The impact is a calmer atmosphere, fewer escalations, smoother crowd movement and stronger public trust, because the city response feels consistent rather than fragmented.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **On-the-ground mediation and de-escalation**

A key element of the programme is the use of trained mediators and stewards who operate directly in nightlife streets. Their role is to intervene early in minor conflicts, support people in distress, and reduce tension without immediately turning to enforcement.

In Brussels, mediators approach intoxicated or vulnerable individuals, help them reach safe places, encourage respectful behaviour and act as neutral intermediaries when disputes arise between groups or when residents complain about noise.

This "soft layer" reduces the number of situations that require police intervention and improves the overall perception of security, especially among visitors who might otherwise feel either over-policed or unsupported.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms **Night-time public-space management (lighting, flow, cleaning, visibility)**

The programme treats the physical environment as part of security delivery. Lighting, cleanliness, clear pedestrian paths and well-managed public space influence how people behave and how secure an area feels.

In this case, Brussels coordinates with mobility and cleaning teams to reduce disorder and stress points in nightlife zones. Practical actions include improving lighting in problematic spots, clearing litter quickly, reducing bottlenecks and placing stewards in visible locations that support natural surveillance. These changes reduce frustration, improve predictability and lower the risk of conflict.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Targeted prevention messaging and behavioural nudging**

Brussels by Night uses simple and practical communication aimed at nightlife audiences. The goal is not to lecture people, but to make expectations clear and support more secure choices.

Messages are shared through posters, digital screens, social media and cooperation with venues.

They focus on respectful behaviour, harassment prevention, alcohol and drug risks, and how to seek help if needed. The impact is better awareness, small but meaningful behaviour shifts, and a nightlife environment that feels more respectful and more secure for different groups.

**Participatory governance mechanisms
Engagement of venues and residents in
local nightlife governance**

Nightlife security works better when local actors feel involved rather than controlled.

Brussels by Night includes structured engagement with venue operators and residents to shape how the city manages nightlife.

In practice, consultations help inform decisions about priorities such as steward presence, crowd flow, communication focus and conflict prevention. This improves realism and acceptance: venues feel they are treated as partners, while residents feel their concerns are acknowledged. The result is a more balanced nightlife ecosystem, with fewer tensions and more stable long-term coexistence.

Why it matters?

Brussels by Night shows how cities can manage nightlife security through a prevention-first approach that combines enforcement, mediation, urban management and cooperation with local actors.

The case is particularly relevant for cities facing the “nightlife dilemma”: avoiding a situation where visitors feel over-policed while residents feel under-protected. Brussels demonstrates that coordinated services and visible human support can reduce conflicts, improve security perception and strengthen trust in public-space governance.

Brussels by Night: An Integrated Model for Urban Nightlife Security

Managed by Brussels Prevention & Security, this city-level program integrates police presence with prevention, mediation, and urban management to address intoxication, harassment, and noise in major nightlife hubs.

The Integrated Security Framework

- Cross-Sector Operational Coordination**
Aligning police, mediators, and city services into a single, real-time responsive system.
- Participatory Governance**
Engaging venue operators and residents to shape priorities and ensure stable long-term coexistence.
- Real-Time Adaptation**
Adjusting field actions based on observed trends, seasonal patterns, and frontline staff feedback.



Tactical Prevention Pillars

- On-the-Ground Mediation**
Using trained stewards to de-escalate minor conflicts and support vulnerable individuals before enforcement is needed.
- Environmental & Urban Management**
Optimizing lighting, cleanliness, and pedestrian flow to reduce disorder and behavioral stress points.
- Behavioral Nudging**
Using targeted messaging on respect and risk prevention to encourage more secure choices.

Core Challenges & Integrated Responses

Core Challenges	Integrated Response
Aggression & Harassment	Mediators & Police Presence
Noise & Residents' Concerns	Stakeholder Consultations
Crowding & Bottlenecks	Urban Design & Flow Management

Nightlife Coordination Office

Stuttgart, Germany

Nightlife-related risks

Community conflict and trust building

The Nightlife Coordination Office in Stuttgart was created to strengthen cooperation between the nightlife sector and city authorities while improving safety and coexistence in night-time public spaces.

The initiative emerged from a bottom-up demand from the local nightlife community. The Clubkollektiv, representing clubs and live music venues, called for stronger institutional support and a dedicated coordination structure within the city administration. Following a city-commissioned study and consultations with multiple stakeholders, Stuttgart launched the Nightlife Coordination Office in 2019.

The model operates through two complementary roles. A Night Manager, closely connected to the nightlife scene, works directly with venues, organisers and youth communities. At the same time, an Administrative Liaison within the municipal administration ensures that nightlife issues are recognised across city departments and integrated into urban planning and policy discussions.

The initiative is supported by research and stakeholder engagement. A comprehensive study analysed complaints, public perceptions and the economic role of nightlife, while workshops involving more than 30 institutions helped develop a shared roadmap for action. Several practical initiatives have emerged, including Nachtboje, a network of venues offering assistance to people who feel unsafe at night, and Mein Schlossplatz, a cultural activation programme that transformed a problematic public square into a lively and safer meeting space.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Stuttgart City Administration
- The Nightlife Coordination Office
- Clubkollektiv Stuttgart
- POP-Büro Stuttgart
- Local clubs and live music venues
- Police and municipal services
- Hospitality sector organisations such as DEHOGA
- Cultural organisations
- Migrant associations
- Youth groups
- Local residents.

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Co-creation of a city-wide nightlife roadmap**

A key element of the Stuttgart approach is the shared development of a strategic framework for nightlife governance. Instead of defining policies unilaterally, the city invited nightlife operators, cultural organisations, hospitality representatives and community actors to participate in shaping priorities and solutions.

Through surveys, data analysis and stakeholder workshops, the city gathered input from more than 700 nightlife users and numerous organisations. The resulting roadmap reflects the real challenges experienced in nightlife areas, including noise conflicts, safety concerns and the needs of cultural actors. This collaborative process strengthened the legitimacy of the strategy and created a shared sense of responsibility among stakeholders.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Dual coordination model linking nightlife actors and city administration**

The coordination office functions as a bridge between the nightlife community and municipal governance structures. The Night Manager maintains close contact with venues, cultural organisers and youth communities, while the Administrative Liaison ensures that nightlife-related issues are addressed within the city administration.

This dual structure allows concerns from the nightlife scene – such as safety risks, discrimination issues or spatial conflicts – to reach relevant departments quickly. At the same time, it enables city policies and regulations to be communicated clearly to nightlife stakeholders.

By improving mutual understanding, the model helps reduce misunderstandings and facilitates faster, more coherent responses to emerging problems.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism **Safety awareness training and safe-space practices**

Another important mechanism focuses on promoting responsible behaviour and improving the ability of nightlife staff to respond to difficult situations. Training sessions and awareness initiatives help venue staff recognise risks such as harassment, intoxication-related conflicts or distress among visitors.

One example is the Nachtboje initiative, which identifies venues where people who feel unsafe can seek assistance. Training programmes originally developed within the nightlife community were also adapted for large-scale events such as the UEFA EURO 2024 activities in Stuttgart. These initiatives encourage a culture of care and shared responsibility in nightlife spaces, helping prevent incidents before they escalate.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Mediation and conflict-resolution structures**

The coordination office also plays a mediating role between nightlife actors, residents and city authorities. Nightlife districts often generate tensions related to noise, crowd behaviour or different expectations regarding the use of public space.

By providing a structured platform for dialogue, the office helps transform these tensions into constructive discussions. Mediation processes address issues such as noise complaints, conflicts between venues and residents or disputes related to enforcement measures. This approach improves trust between stakeholders and helps create more predictable and balanced solutions for managing nightlife areas.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Cultural activation of public space

The Stuttgart model also demonstrates how cultural programming can improve safety in public spaces.

Rather than relying solely on restrictions or policing, the city sought to positively activate public spaces where conflicts had previously occurred.

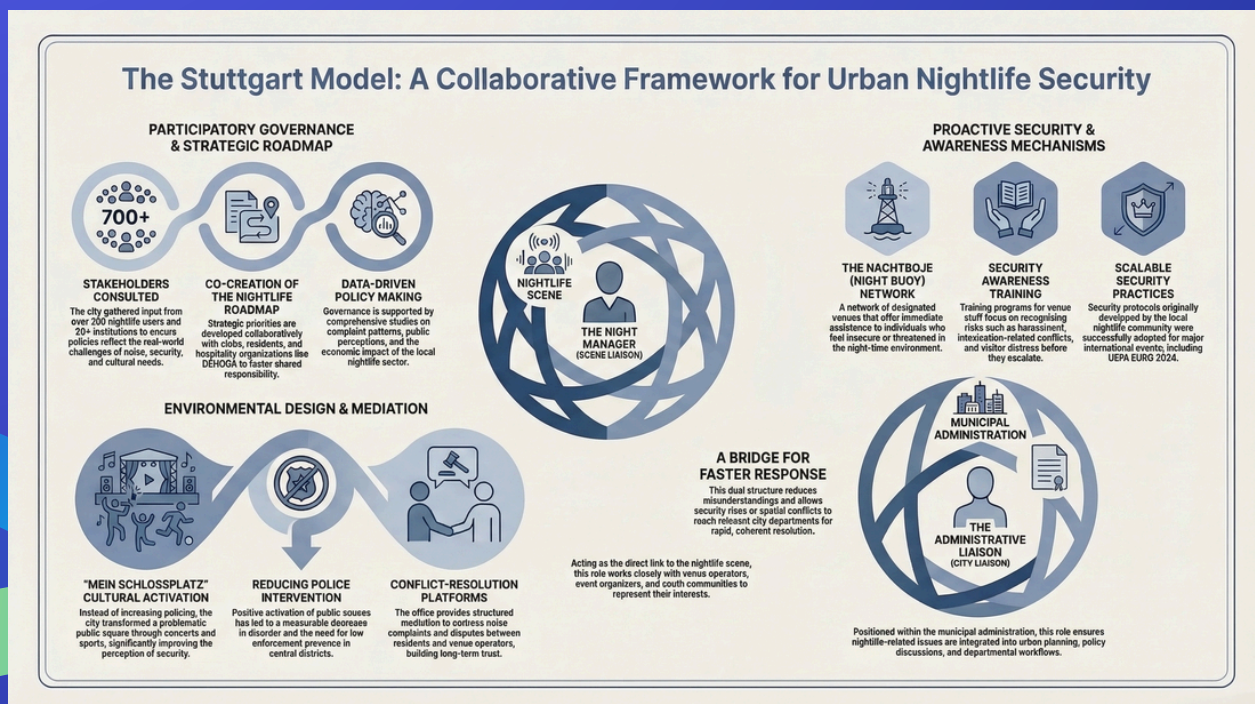
During the COVID-19 period, central squares such as Schlossplatz became hotspots for noise and disorder. In response, the city launched Mein Schlossplatz, a programme of concerts, sports activities and youth-oriented cultural events organised together with local partners. By introducing structured and attractive activities, the initiative transformed the atmosphere of the area and significantly reduced police interventions while improving the perception of safety.

Why it matters?

Stuttgart's experience shows that improving safety in nightlife districts requires more than enforcement measures. By creating a dedicated coordination structure, the city recognised nightlife as an important cultural and economic part of urban life while also addressing the conflicts that can emerge around it.

The model demonstrates how dialogue, mediation and cross-sector coordination can reduce tensions between residents, venues and authorities. It also highlights the importance of integrating cultural policy, urban management and public safety strategies.

Because many European cities face similar challenges related to nightlife, Stuttgart's approach offers a practical and transferable example of how to balance vibrant urban culture with the need for safe and inclusive public spaces.



Nightlife Mayor

Mannheim, Germany

Nightlife-related risks

Community conflict and trust building

The Nightlife Mayor (also called Nightlife Coordinator) is an institutional role created by the City of Mannheim to strengthen cooperation between nightlife actors, residents, city authorities and police, while improving safety and coexistence in night-time environments.

The idea emerged from the nightlife community itself. In the 1990s and 2000s Mannheim had a vibrant club scene, but its gradual decline triggered calls for stronger support and better dialogue with the city administration. Clubs, bars and event organisers argued that nightlife should be recognised as an important cultural and economic part of the city rather than treated mainly as a disturbance.

In response, Mannheim created the Nightlife Mayor position in 2018. The role acts as a central contact point between nightlife stakeholders and public institutions. The Nightlife Mayor listens to concerns, mediates conflicts, supports cultural events, helps organisers navigate administrative procedures and promotes safer behaviour in nightlife spaces.

The position also works to connect different actors in the nightlife ecosystem and translate between the informal language of the nightlife scene and the formal structures of municipal administration. Through office hours, participation in committees and ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, the role helps build long-term cooperation and trust across the city's nightlife environment.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- The City of Mannheim administration
- The Nightlife Mayor
- Club and bar owners
- Event organisers
- Nightlife visitors
- Local residents
- Cultural organisations
- Police
- Hospitality associations
- Networks such as IG Nacht Konsil

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism Mediation between nightlife community and city administration

A central task of the Nightlife Mayor is to act as a neutral intermediary between different groups affected by nightlife. Conflicts often arise between residents seeking quiet neighbourhoods, venue operators organising events and city authorities responsible for regulation.

By facilitating dialogue and explaining the perspectives of different actors, the Nightlife Mayor helps prevent misunderstandings and address problems before they escalate. Regular conversations with club owners, residents and city departments allow issues such as noise complaints, event organisation or safety concerns to be discussed openly. This mediation role strengthens trust between stakeholders and helps ensure that city policies reflect the realities of nightlife environments.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism Networking and alliance-building among nightlife stakeholders

The initiative also focuses on building a network connecting the many actors involved in nightlife. Instead of working separately, venues, cultural organisations, city departments and law enforcement are encouraged to cooperate and share information.

Through meetings, partnerships and collaborative initiatives, the Nightlife Mayor helps develop common approaches to safety and responsible nightlife management.

One example is the creation of regional cooperation initiatives, including an Awareness Alliance that brings together trained individuals and organisations supporting safe behaviour at events. These networks encourage shared responsibility and enable coordinated responses to emerging challenges.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism Positive safety messaging and behavioural awareness

Public communication plays an important role in shaping how nightlife is perceived and experienced. The Nightlife Mayor promotes messages encouraging respectful behaviour, awareness of risks and mutual care among nightlife participants.

Media communication and public campaigns highlight the cultural value of nightlife while emphasising the importance of safe and inclusive environments. This positive narrative helps shift public perception from seeing nightlife mainly as a source of disturbance to recognising it as a legitimate cultural activity that requires responsible management.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms Cultural recognition of nightlife within municipal policy

The initiative also seeks to integrate nightlife into the broader cultural policy framework of the city. Historically, nightclubs were often excluded from cultural funding or institutional support.

By advocating for nightlife as a legitimate cultural sector, the Nightlife Mayor helped expand the definition of culture within municipal structures.

As a result, some nightlife venues became eligible for cultural funding and support programmes. This recognition strengthens the sustainability of nightlife initiatives and aligns cultural policy with safety and urban development strategies.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Supporting safe and legally organised event spaces

Another important mechanism involves helping organisers transform informal or unregulated events into safe and legally supported gatherings.

Nightlife activities sometimes take place in locations that lack adequate safety measures or infrastructure.

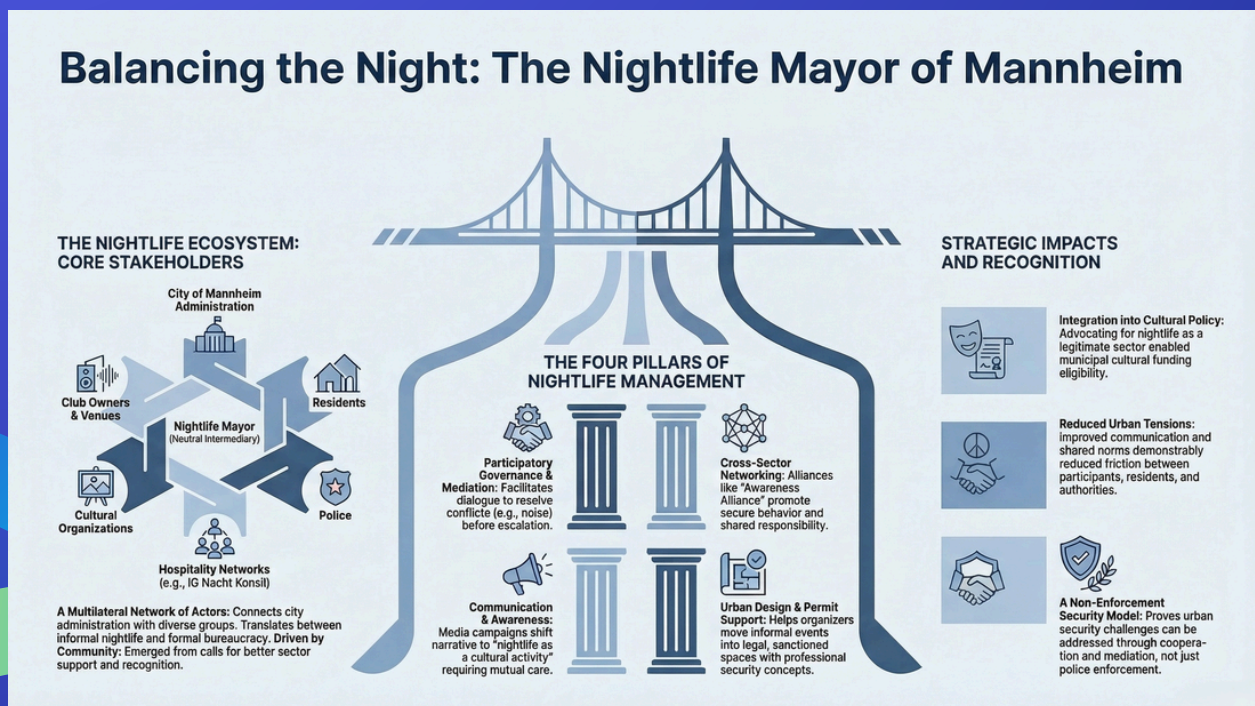
The Nightlife Mayor works with organisers to identify suitable venues, obtain permits and develop basic safety concepts. Support may include guidance on crowd management, sanitation facilities or coordination with authorities. This approach preserves the creative energy of the nightlife scene while ensuring that events take place in environments that are safer for participants and acceptable for the surrounding community.

Why it matters?

The Nightlife Mayor model shows how cities can address safety challenges in nightlife environments through dialogue, mediation and cooperation rather than relying only on enforcement.

By creating a dedicated role connecting nightlife communities with municipal governance, Mannheim has improved communication between stakeholders and reduced tensions between residents, venues and authorities. The model also promotes safer behaviour by strengthening shared norms and supporting responsible event organisation.

Because many cities face similar challenges related to nightlife conflicts and safety concerns, the Mannheim experience provides a practical example of how institutional mediation and cross-sector cooperation can help create nightlife environments that are both vibrant and safe.



Safer Leiria

A Collaborative Intervention Method Portugal

Mobility and transport

Community conflict and trust-building

Leiria is a medium-sized Portuguese city with around 128,000 inhabitants. In recent years, its historic centre has experienced significant demographic and spatial changes. Although official crime statistics showed an overall decline in crime, many residents reported growing feelings of insecurity. These concerns were linked to several urban factors, including empty buildings, poorly lit streets, underused public spaces, nightlife disturbances, mobility challenges and visible socio-cultural changes related to immigration.

To address these concerns, the municipality joined the URBACT UrbSecurity project and adopted a collaborative approach to improving safety in public spaces. Instead of relying only on traditional planning or policing, the city created an Urbact Local Group (ULG) that brought together a wide range of stakeholders. These included municipal departments, police forces, schools, universities, NGOs, community organisations, religious institutions, local businesses and emergency services.

Together, the group developed an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) focusing on two priority areas. The first was the historic city centre, where depopulation, nightlife pressures and deteriorating buildings had created tensions and safety concerns. The second was a newer and highly multicultural neighbourhood where rapid population growth had introduced new social dynamics and challenges related to coexistence.

A distinctive feature of the process was the use of serious games – structured participatory workshops designed to stimulate discussion and collaboration. These sessions encouraged participants to identify local safety issues, map problematic areas, discuss social dynamics and propose practical solutions. Participants also simulated municipal budget decisions, allowing them to experience the complexity of urban planning and policy choices.

Alongside this participatory approach, the municipality applied Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to rethink how the physical environment could contribute to safer and more welcoming public spaces. The project resulted in a Good Practices Guide on local crime prevention and training for municipal staff, and several actions were incorporated into ongoing urban regeneration initiatives.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- The Municipality of Leiria
- Local police forces (PSP and GNR)
- Municipal departments
- Schools and universities
- Emergency services
- NGOs
- Neighbourhood associations
- Youth organisations
- Disability associations
- Media organisations
- Religious institutions including churches and the Leiria mosque
- Local businesses

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism Gamified co-creation and inclusive problem identification

The project introduced gamified workshops to encourage active participation from residents and institutions. Instead of formal meetings, participants used interactive storytelling exercises, mapping activities and budget simulations to explore safety challenges and possible solutions.

This method reduced barriers between participants and encouraged people from different backgrounds to share their experiences openly. Residents, police officers, business owners and community organisations worked together to identify safety issues and propose practical improvements. The process generated deeper insights into everyday concerns, including emotional responses to spaces, small but persistent nuisances and social tensions that are often overlooked in traditional planning.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism Urbact Local Group as a multi-stakeholder governance platform

The Urbact Local Group served as a structured platform for cooperation between institutions and community actors. Municipal services, police forces, schools, emergency services and civil society organisations met regularly to discuss safety challenges and develop coordinated responses.

Through this collaboration, stakeholders shared knowledge and responsibilities while working together to design the Integrated Action Plan.

This joint approach improved coordination between institutions and ensured that proposed interventions reflected the real needs and experiences of local communities.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms Public dialogue and media engagement on urban safety

The project encouraged open public discussion about safety issues in the city. By bringing safety concerns into the public sphere and engaging with local media, the initiative helped residents better understand the challenges affecting their neighbourhoods.

Media coverage of the participatory process increased awareness and helped present the project as a collective effort to improve urban wellbeing. This open communication contributed to more constructive dialogue and strengthened the sense that safety is a shared responsibility among residents and institutions.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms CPTED-based improvements in public spaces

The project applied Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles to analyse and improve urban environments. By examining factors such as lighting, visibility, accessibility and the condition of public spaces, planners identified ways to make the city centre safer and more welcoming.

The Integrated Action Plan proposed practical measures such as improved lighting, regeneration of degraded areas, better pedestrian and mobility connections and redesign of problematic public spaces. These changes helped address both real safety risks and perceptions of insecurity among residents.

Technological integration mechanisms Digital adaptation of participatory methods

Although the project focused primarily on social and participatory innovation, digital tools played a supporting role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When in-person meetings became difficult, the participatory workshops and serious games were adapted for online formats.

This adaptation allowed stakeholders to continue collaborating and discussing safety issues despite restrictions on physical gatherings. Maintaining this dialogue ensured that the project's momentum continued and that participants remained engaged in the development of the city's safety strategies.

Why it matters?

The Safer Leiria initiative shows how cities can address safety concerns through collaboration, dialogue and inclusive planning. Rather than treating insecurity as only a policing issue, the project recognises that urban safety and security is closely linked to public space quality, social cohesion and trust between institutions and residents.

The use of participatory methods and gamification helped break down traditional hierarchies between citizens and authorities, encouraging more open and productive discussions about urban challenges. The approach offers a practical model for other cities seeking to integrate community participation, environmental design and cross-sector cooperation into their safety and security policies.



The National Security Threat Map

Poland

Mobility and transport

Community conflict and trust-building

The National Security Threat Map (Krajowa Mapa Zagrożeń Bezpieczeństwa – NSTM) is a nationwide digital platform that allows residents to report local security concerns quickly and anonymously using a computer or mobile phone. The system was launched in 2016 by the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration in cooperation with the national Police and the geospatial authority GUGiK.

The platform enables citizens to mark a location on an online map and indicate specific issues such as illegal parking, speeding, poor lighting, vandalism or alcohol consumption in public spaces. Each report is automatically sent to the relevant local police unit, which verifies the situation and updates the case status. If the issue falls outside police competence, it can be forwarded to other institutions such as municipal services or road authorities.

The system combines three types of information: citizen reports, police operational data and insights gathered during extensive public consultations that helped shape the categories of threats included in the system. Hosted on the national Geoportal infrastructure and accessible without registration, the platform has generated millions of reports since its launch and has become an important tool supporting data-driven safety management and everyday civic participation.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- the Ministry of Interior and Administration
- The Polish Police
- The national geospatial authority (GUGiK)
- Local police units
- Municipal services
- Road and infrastructure authorities
- Municipal guards
- Residents across Poland

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Digital co-production through anonymous reporting**

The platform enables residents to report security and safety concerns directly through a simple online map interface without the need to create an account. This removes barriers to participation and allows citizens to contribute their observations about everyday problems affecting their neighbourhoods.

Residents can indicate issues such as illegal parking, excessive speeding, poor lighting or vandalism and attach descriptions or photos. Each report is verified by local police officers, who update its status and take action where needed. This process helps citizens see that their input can influence local conditions and encourages continued engagement with public security and safety issues.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Inter-agency coordination triggered by reports**

Many safety concerns reported through the platform involve issues that go beyond policing, such as traffic organisation, infrastructure maintenance, or municipal services. The system therefore functions as a coordination hub that allows cases to be redirected to the appropriate institutions.

For example, reports about damaged road signs or unsafe crossings may be forwarded to road administrators, while public order issues can involve municipal guards. By connecting different authorities within a single reporting workflow, the platform improves institutional coordination and helps ensure that problems are addressed by the actors best placed to resolve them.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Normalising everyday reporting and civic responsibility**

The system encourages residents to actively report issues affecting their local environment, reinforcing the idea that public safety is a shared responsibility. Because the platform is simple to use and provides visible responses from authorities, it helps establish a routine practice of reporting problems rather than ignoring them.

Public awareness campaigns and police presentations at community meetings promote the platform as a tool for everyday civic participation. Over time this has strengthened a “reporting culture” in which residents feel more confident raising concerns and contributing to the security and safety of their neighbourhoods.

Technological integration mechanisms **Data-driven hotspot detection and resource planning**

The geospatial structure of the platform allows authorities to analyse patterns in reported incidents and identify recurring hotspots. This information supports more targeted allocation of patrols and preventive actions.

Clusters of speeding reports, for example, may lead to increased traffic controls, while repeated complaints about infrastructure issues can trigger improvements in lighting, signage or road organisation. The integration of citizen reports with police operational data therefore helps institutions respond more strategically to local safety problems.

Technological integration mechanisms Continuous improvement through user feedback

The system has evolved over time based on feedback from both users and police officers. Surveys, consultations and everyday use have helped identify ways to improve the platform's functionality and relevance.

Additional features such as photo uploads and more detailed descriptions were introduced following user feedback.

Future versions of the system are expected to include new options allowing residents to support existing reports without submitting duplicates. This ongoing adaptation helps maintain the platform's usability and strengthens its long-term sustainability.

Why it matters?

The National Security Threat Map demonstrates how digital tools can strengthen collaboration between citizens and public institutions in the field of security and safety. By allowing residents to easily report everyday problems and by ensuring that these reports lead to visible responses, the system supports a more transparent and responsive approach to local governance.

The initiative shows that thousands of small citizen contributions can generate valuable data and lead to meaningful improvements in public spaces.

The National Security Threat Map: Digital Co-Production for Community Security

Launched in 2016 by the Polish Ministry of Interior and Administration, the NSTM is a nationwide digital platform transforming anonymous citizen reports into actionable data for police and municipal services to address local security concerns.

The Digital Reporting & Response Workflow



Anonymous Citizen Reporting
Residents mark security concerns on a digital map without requiring account registration.

Professional Verification
Local police units verify every report and provide transparent status updates.



Cross-Sector Coordination
Issues outside police jurisdiction are automatically redirected to municipal or road authorities.

Strategic Impacts on Public Security



Data-Driven Hotspot Detection
Geospatial data allows authorities to identify recurring incidents for targeted resource allocation.



Normalizing Civic Responsibility
The platform fosters a "reporting culture" where residents actively contribute to local security.



Continuous System Evolution
Ongoing updates, including photo uploads, are driven by direct user and officer feedback.

SECUR-ED: Securing European Urban Transport

Bucharest, Romania

Mobility and transport

SECUR-ED (Securing European Urban Transport) was a large European research project funded under the FP7 programme (2011–2014). One of its main pilot sites was Bucharest, where the project aimed to improve safety and security in the public transport system.

The initiative focused on strengthening situational awareness, operational coordination and the preparedness of frontline transport staff. In Bucharest, the local public transport operator (RATB/STB) worked closely with the Public Transportation Police Brigade and the Gendarmerie to analyse risks and test new solutions.

An initial assessment combined citizen complaints, staff reports and historical incident data. This helped identify theft hotspots, vandalism patterns, aggression against ticket inspectors and security vulnerabilities in depots and busy routes.

Based on these findings, the project tested several technological and organisational measures. These included real-time video transmission from vehicles to control rooms, rapid alert systems for drivers and inspectors, improved communication channels between transport operators and security services, and specialised training for staff on conflict management and threat recognition.

Over time, these tools helped improve coordination between institutions and led to lasting organisational changes. One important outcome was the creation of a permanent Public Transport Police Brigade responsible for transport security in the city.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Bucharest public transport operator (RATB/STB)
- Public Transportation Police Brigade
- Romanian Gendarmerie
- Control centre operators and transport inspectors
- Drivers and other frontline transport staff
- Passengers providing feedback and incident reports

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms **Integrated operational coordination** **between transport operator and security** **services**

Public transport security involves different types of incidents, from theft to conflicts between passengers. Addressing these risks requires close cooperation between the transport operator and law enforcement agencies.

In the SECUR-ED pilot, RATB/STB worked directly with the police and gendarmerie to create shared operational procedures. Control rooms exchanged information in real time, allowing the appropriate service to respond quickly when incidents occurred. The impact is faster interventions, clearer responsibilities and stronger protection for staff and passengers.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Institutionalisation of cooperation and** **long-term coordination structures**

One of the key achievements of SECUR-ED was that several solutions tested during the project became permanent parts of the system.

In Bucharest, a dedicated Public Transport Police Brigade was established, and cooperation between the transport operator and security services continued beyond the project's duration. The impact is long-term improvements in coordination, more resilient security structures and increased confidence in the safety of the transport network.

Communication and awareness-raising **mechanism**

Data-driven risk assessment and hotspot **mapping**

Security planning was based on concrete information collected from passengers and frontline staff. Complaints, inspector reports and police data were analysed to identify the locations and times where incidents occurred most frequently.

This information helped authorities understand real behavioural patterns in the transport network and design targeted interventions. The impact is better prioritisation of resources, improved situational awareness and stronger alignment between institutional responses and users' experiences.

Communication and awareness-raising **mechanisms**

Training and professionalisation of **frontline staff**

Drivers, inspectors and other transport workers often face difficult situations. SECUR-ED therefore introduced specialised training modules focused on conflict management, de-escalation techniques and recognising early signs of risky behaviour.

These training programmes helped staff respond more calmly and confidently when incidents occurred. The impact is fewer escalations, improved interaction with passengers and stronger professional capacity within the transport system.

Technological integration mechanism Real-time video monitoring and rapid alert systems

Technology played a key role in improving detection and response times. Vehicles were equipped with systems that transmitted live video to control centres, allowing operators and security services to observe incidents as they happened.

Drivers and inspectors also had access to rapid alert devices that allowed them to request assistance immediately. The impact is quicker detection of incidents, faster deployment of police or security teams and greater confidence among staff working in challenging environments.

Why it matters?

Public transport is one of the most complex public environments in any city. It brings together large numbers of people, diverse behaviours and many potential risks, including theft, harassment, conflict and safety concerns during travel.

SECUR-ED shows how combining technology, operational coordination and professional training can significantly strengthen security in mobility systems. The case also illustrates how innovations introduced through pilot projects can lead to lasting institutional changes when they are embedded in everyday operational structures.

For cities looking to improve transport safety, the experience of Bucharest demonstrates the value of data-driven planning, cross-sector cooperation and well-prepared frontline staff.

SECUR-ED: A Framework for Resilient Urban Transport Security

PHASE 1 — DATA-DRIVEN RISK ASSESSMENT

Identifying Security Vulnerabilities: Initial assessments identified theft hotspots, vandalism patterns, and aggression against ticket inspectors by analyzing citizen complaints and staff reports.

Mapping Hotspots: Historical incident data and police records were used to pinpoint specific times and locations where security risks were most prevalent.

Situational Awareness: Integrating diverse data sources allowed authorities to understand real behavioral patterns within the transport network.

PHASE 2 — IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY MECHANISMS

Integrated Operational Coordination
Shared operational procedures were created between the transport operator and law enforcement to ensure real-time information exchange.

Technological Integration
Vehicles were equipped with live video transmission to control rooms and rapid alert devices for drivers and inspectors.

Professionalization of Frontline Staff
Special training modules were introduced for conflict management, de-escalation, and recognizing early signs of risky behaviour.

PHASE 3 — IMPACT AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Faster Incident Response
Real-time monitoring and improved communication channels led to quicker detection and faster deployment of security teams.

From Pilot Project to Permanent Structure
Temporary measures were solidified through the creation of a permanent Public Transport Police Brigade.

Enhanced Staff and Passenger Confidence
Improved training and technical support resulted in fewer escalations and a stronger sense of security for everyone in the transport system.

SECURITY ECOSYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS

Transport Operators: RATB/STB

Law Enforcement: Public Transportation Police Brigade, Romanian Gendarmerie

Frontline Staff: Drivers, Ticket Inspectors, Control Center Operators

Public Contributors: Passengers (Feedback and Incident Reports)

REVERT

Resilience Without Violence, Resistance Without Hate

Athens, Greece

Mobility and transport

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

The REVERT project (2018–2021) was implemented in the public transport system of Athens in response to rising xenophobic and discriminatory incidents following the 2015 migration crisis. Buses and trolley buses had become everyday meeting points between local residents and migrant communities, sometimes leading to verbal harassment, racist behaviour and growing tensions.

The project was coordinated by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in cooperation with the Athens public transport authority OASA S.A. Its aim was to reduce discrimination and conflict in public transport by strengthening dialogue, improving driver preparedness and promoting respectful behaviour among passengers.

REVERT combined several types of activities. These included training programmes for bus and trolley drivers, awareness workshops with migrant communities, joint social activities and on-board communication campaigns promoting respectful behaviour. The project also experimented with a digital platform for reporting racist incidents, although the tool had limited use due to practical barriers.

A key feature of the initiative was its emphasis on face-to-face engagement. Researchers and trainers worked directly with drivers, transport staff and migrant communities in depots, buses and neighbourhood spaces. Despite challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the project helped create new forms of cooperation between transport operators, migrant groups and social organisations.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- The National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
- OASA S.A. (Athens public transport authority)
- Bus and trolley drivers
- Migrant and refugee communities
- NGOs supporting migrants
- Mental-health professionals
- Social organisations
- Local authorities.

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism Inclusion of frontline workers and migrant communities in co-design

A core principle of REVERT was to involve both drivers and migrant passengers in shaping the project's activities. Through interviews, focus groups and participatory workshops, the project team gathered insights into everyday experiences of discrimination and tension in public transport.

Drivers contributed to designing the training sessions and identifying typical conflict situations they encounter during their work. Migrants shared their experiences as passengers and helped shape awareness messages that reflected real-life challenges. This participatory approach increased trust in the project and helped overcome initial scepticism among some drivers and staff.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism Cooperation between transport authorities, migrant organisations and social services

The project created new channels of cooperation between actors who rarely worked together before. Transport operators, migrant organisations, NGOs and social professionals jointly organised workshops, discussions and community events.

These interactions allowed different groups to better understand each other's perspectives and concerns. For example, informal activities such as football matches between drivers and migrant groups created opportunities for positive contact outside the stressful environment of public transport.

This cooperation helped reduce hostility and improved communication in everyday interactions on buses.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism Anti-discrimination training and on- board awareness campaigns

A central element of the project was strengthening awareness and behavioural skills among both drivers and passengers. Drivers participated in a train-the-trainer programme focusing on conflict resolution, mediation and recognising discriminatory behaviour.

At the same time, migrants attended workshops about their rights and available support services. Visual campaigns inside buses used posters and infographics to promote respectful behaviour and highlight the importance of non-discrimination in public transport. These activities increased driver confidence in responding to incidents and made anti-racist norms more visible in the transport environment.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms Human-centred presence in transport environments

Instead of relying mainly on digital tools or distant management, the REVERT team worked directly in the environments where tensions occurred. Researchers and trainers spent time in bus depots, rode public transport routes and visited migrant communities.

This direct presence helped build personal relationships with drivers and passengers and allowed the project team to observe everyday interactions in real situations.

As a result, training materials and awareness campaigns were adapted to the real dynamics of the transport environment, improving their relevance and effectiveness.

Technological integration mechanisms Experimental online reporting platform

The project also attempted to introduce a digital platform for reporting racist incidents in public transport. The idea was to create an observatory that would help document and monitor discrimination cases.

However, the tool was used only to a limited extent. Many drivers had little time or experience with digital reporting systems, which reduced participation. Although the platform did not become a permanent solution, the experience highlighted the importance of designing simple and accessible reporting mechanisms for frontline workers.

Why it matters?

REVERT demonstrates that discrimination and conflict in public transport cannot be addressed only through surveillance or enforcement measures. Improving safety also requires dialogue, awareness and stronger relationships between different groups using the same public spaces.

By empowering drivers, engaging migrant communities and promoting respectful behaviour, the project helped create more constructive interactions in everyday mobility environments. It also encouraged transport authorities to integrate anti-discrimination topics into driver training and institutional policies.

The experience from Athens shows how human-centred approaches, cross-sector cooperation and behavioural awareness can contribute to safer and more inclusive public transport systems.

REVERT: Strengthening Transit Security Through Social Inclusion

Implemented in Athens (2018–2021), the REVERT project addressed rising xenophobia in public transport. By moving beyond surveillance and focusing on human-centered cooperation, the initiative fostered dialogue between transport workers and migrant communities to create a more secure transit environment.

Mechanisms for Social Integration

Strategic Pillars of Transit Security



Participatory Co-Design

Drivers and migrant passengers collaborated to design training sessions and awareness-raising messages.



Specialized Driver Training

Focused on conflict resolution, mediation, and recognizing discriminatory behavior to increase staff confidence.



Human-Centered Presence

Prioritizing face-to-face engagement in bus depots and routes over purely digital surveillance measures.



Cross-Sector Collaboration

Joint activities between transport operators and NGOs built trust outside the high-stress transit environment.



Visible Anti-Discrimination Norms

On-board communication campaigns established respectful behavior as a clear institutional standard.



Relationship-Based Security

Demonstrating that dialogue and mutual understanding are more effective than enforcement alone.

Pol'and'Rock Festival

Poland Czaplinek–Broczyno, Poland

Mass events safety and crowd management

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Pol'and'Rock Festival (formerly Woodstock Festival Poland) is one of Europe's largest open-air music events. It has been organised since 1995 by the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Foundation (WOŚP) and attracts hundreds of thousands of participants each year.

Since 2021, the festival has been hosted in Czaplinek–Broczyno, a rural area that transforms into a temporary "festival city" for several days. Its open format and scale create a high-demand security environment, where organisers and public services must manage crowd flows, medical emergencies, traffic pressure, weather risks, and the safety of many young participants.

The festival operates through a multi-level coordination model involving the organiser, the host municipality, regional authorities and multiple emergency services. Beyond formal planning, Pol'and'Rock is also known for its strong community culture ("The Most Beautiful Festival in the World"), which shapes behaviour and encourages mutual support among participants.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- WOŚP Foundation (festival organiser),
- Municipality of Czaplinek and local administration,
- Police and municipal services,
- Fire services and emergency response units,
- Medical services and first aid teams,
- Water rescue services (WOPR),
- Forestry administration and environmental services,
- Volunteers (including "Pokojoy Patrol"),
- Local residents and businesses

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms Multi-agency operational coordination

Pol'and'Rock relies on a coordinated security and safety system where public services and the organiser operate as one shared structure. Planning and response are not separated by institutions: police, fire services, medical teams, municipal crisis staff, rescue units and event security work side by side and share information.

In practice, the festival uses joint coordination arrangements and daily operational briefings to keep all actors aligned on priorities, risks and responsibilities. This reduces response delays and helps avoid “blind spots” between services. The result is a stronger operational picture, faster intervention capacity, and higher trust among participants and local partners.

Participatory governance mechanisms Community co-production of event safety

The festival's security model is not built only around professional services. Local residents and businesses are part of how the event functions and how risks are managed. Instead of treating the festival as an external disruption, the approach creates shared responsibility between the organiser and the host area.

In this case, residents contribute practical solutions such as organising private parking, supporting local access management, and participating in discussions around infrastructure and waste management. This improves acceptance, reduces friction, and strengthens long-term relations between the festival and the municipality.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Space organisation for safe flows and emergency access

A key part of Pol'and'Rock security is how the temporary “festival city” is physically organised. The goal is to reduce congestion, ensure safe movement across a large open area, and guarantee fast access for emergency services.

The festival infrastructure is designed to support safer crowd circulation through zoned camping areas, planned access routes, lighting, signage, and dedicated rescue corridors. One example is the planned pedestrian route on a former railway embankment, intended to separate festivalgoers from a nearby national road. These design choices reduce physical risk, support smoother crowd movement, and lower pressure on emergency responders.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Peer-to-peer safety culture and de-escalation support

Pol'and'Rock shows how social norms can become a safety and security mechanism at mass events. Instead of relying only on enforcement, the festival invests in a visible culture of care and mutual responsibility.

The “Pokojoy Patrol” (Peaceful Patrol) volunteer corps plays a central role. Volunteers are trained in first aid, communication and de-escalation. They support participants, help prevent conflicts, guide behaviour, and provide early intervention in tense situations. Combined with education campaigns, this strengthens prosocial behaviour, reduces incidents, and contributes to a more secure atmosphere.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms
Protection protocols for vulnerable groups (especially youth and minors)

The festival includes specific procedures aimed at protecting vulnerable participants, especially young people. This mechanism ensures that support is organised in a structured, humane way, with clear escalation paths and involvement of specialists when needed.

In practice, after earlier concerns about minors attending the festival, the organiser and local partners introduced improved protocols for unaccompanied youth and strengthened psychological support. Importantly, the approach emphasises early-stage support and specialist intervention rather than immediate punitive responses. This reduces vulnerability, prevents escalation, and increases trust in event services among young attendees.

Why it matters?

Pol'and'Rock is a strong example of how mass event security can be built through coordination, community norms and inclusive support – not only through policing. It shows how large festivals can combine professional security governance with peer-to-peer responsibility, infrastructure planning and local cooperation.

Because open-air festivals are among the most complex public-space security environments in Europe, this case offers practical inspiration for municipalities, event organisers and public authorities working on more secure and more resilient mass events.

The Pol'and'Rock Model: Integrated Mass Event Security

Pol'and'Rock transforms rural areas into temporary "festival cities," relying on a social innovation model where security is a shared responsibility between public authorities, organizers, and the participant community.

Multi-Agency Joint Command
 Police, fire, medical, and organizers operate from a single, interconnected command center.



INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS



Cross-Sector Governance
 Formal cooperation between municipalities, NGOs, and local businesses ensures regional resilience.

Security Through Environmental Design

Infrastructure, such as dedicated rescue routes and zoned camping, reduces physical risks.



THE HUMAN ELEMENT OF SECURITY



Peer-to-Peer Normative Regulation
 The "Peaceful Patrol" volunteer corps uses de-escalation to promote pro-social behavior.



Targeted Vulnerability Protocols
 Specialized procedures protect minors and vulnerable groups through non-police intervention paths.



Community Co-Production
 Local residents manage traffic and services, increasing the event's social legitimacy.



PACTESUR

Protecting Allied Cities Against Terrorism by Securing Urban Areas

EU network coordinated by the City of Nice

Mass events security and crowd management

PACTESUR was a European initiative (2019–2021) designed to strengthen the capacity of cities to protect open and crowded public spaces from terrorism and major security threats. The project was coordinated by the City of Nice and involved partner cities including Liège and Turin, as well as organisations such as ANCI Piemonte and the European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS).

The initiative responded to a growing challenge across Europe: vibrant public spaces such as festivals, promenades and tourist districts are essential for urban life but can also be vulnerable to attacks or large-scale incidents. PACTESUR therefore focused on improving how cities plan and manage security in these environments.

The project combined comparative research, community consultations, professional training and the testing of innovative technological tools. Participating cities analysed their existing legal frameworks, operational practices and technologies, while also engaging residents and local stakeholders in discussions about security measures. Training programmes and exchanges between cities helped municipal police and crisis-management professionals improve their operational readiness.

The project also developed a technology toolbox including tools such as AI-assisted CCTV analytics, virtual-reality training environments, mobile reporting applications and crisis communication platforms. Recommendations produced during the project contributed to broader European discussions on standards for protecting public spaces. A follow-up initiative, PACTESUR2, expanded the network and continued cooperation between cities.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- The City of Nice (project coordinator)
- The cities of Liège and Turin
- ANCI Piemonte
- The European Forum for Urban Security (EFUS)
- Municipal police forces
- National authorities
- Private security providers
- Research organisations
- Technology developers
- Local communities

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Citizen–authority co–design of security strategies**

PACTESUR organised workshops and consultations where residents, businesses, municipal authorities and security professionals could discuss how public spaces should be protected. These discussions helped identify concerns related to surveillance technologies, physical security measures and the balance between safety and civil liberties.

By involving communities in the conversation, the project helped ensure that security strategies reflected local expectations and values. The dialogue also increased transparency around new technologies and strengthened public acceptance of protective measures implemented in urban spaces.

Cross–sector collaboration mechanism **Multi–agency and transnational cooperation**

Protecting crowded public spaces requires coordination between many actors including municipal administrations, police forces, crisis–management teams, private operators and researchers. PACTESUR created a structured network where cities and practitioners could exchange knowledge, test solutions and develop common approaches.

Training sessions and professional exchanges brought together municipal police officers, urban planners and crisis managers from different cities. This collaboration improved operational preparedness and encouraged the development of shared practices for risk assessment, event protection, and emergency communication.

Communication and awareness–raising mechanisms **Transparent dialogue about security technologies**

The introduction of advanced surveillance and monitoring technologies can raise concerns among residents. PACTESUR therefore placed strong emphasis on transparent communication about how such tools work and how privacy protections are ensured.

Public discussions, information materials, and stakeholder meetings explained the role of technologies such as CCTV analytics, drones, and protective barriers. This open communication helped reduce misunderstandings and increased public confidence in the measures being introduced.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms **Flexible protective infrastructure for crowded spaces**

PACTESUR also explored how urban design can contribute to the protection of public spaces without compromising their openness or attractiveness. One example is the use of modular barriers that can be deployed during large events or high-risk periods and removed afterwards.

Cities such as Liège tested such solutions in busy squares and nightlife districts. This approach allows cities to reduce vulnerability to vehicle–based attacks or other threats while preserving the everyday accessibility and character of public spaces.

Technological integration mechanisms Innovative tools for situational awareness and training

The project explored how new technologies can support city authorities in monitoring risks and responding more effectively to incidents. The technology toolbox developed through PACTESUR included tools such as AI-assisted video analytics, immersive virtual-reality training scenarios for crisis situations, mobile reporting applications and digital platforms supporting coordinated communication during emergencies.

These tools helped participating cities strengthen their situational awareness, improve professional training and support faster decision-making during complex events or crises.

Why it matters?

PACTESUR demonstrates that protecting public spaces is not only a technical challenge but also a governance challenge requiring cooperation between institutions, professionals and communities. The project shows that effective protection of crowded areas depends on a balanced combination of technology, urban design, professional training and citizen engagement.

By connecting cities across Europe and encouraging the exchange of knowledge and practices, the initiative has contributed to building a shared approach to public-space security. The project offers a scalable model showing how cities can strengthen resilience while preserving the openness and vibrancy that make urban public spaces valuable.

Securing Urban Spaces: The PACTESUR Framework for Resilient Cities

PACTESUR is an EU-coordinated network designed to shield 'soft targets' like festivals and tourist districts from terrorism, integrating community dialogue, cross-border professional training, and high-tech tools for urban security.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE & STRATEGY



Participatory Security Co-Design

Engaging residents and businesses ensures security measures respect civil liberties and local expectations.

Cross-Sector Transnational Cooperation

Linking police, planners, and crisis managers across Europe creates unified standards for risk assessment.

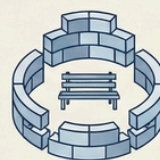


Transparent Tech Dialogue

Openly communicating the role of surveillance tools increases public confidence and reduces misunderstandings.



INNOVATION IN PROTECTION & RESPONSE



Flexible Urban Infrastructure

Using modular, removable barriers to prevent vehicle-based attacks without compromising city aesthetics.



Advanced Technological Integration

Implementing AI video analytics and Virtual Reality environments to enhance situational awareness and training.

OVERVIEW OF SECURITY TOOLKIT

CATEGORY	TOOL / METHOD	PRIMARY SECURITY BENEFIT
Digital	AI CCTV & VR Training	Improved crisis response and professional readiness.
Physical	Modular Barriers	Protection against vehicle-based threats in nightlife districts.
Social	Stakeholder Workshops	Increased transparency and public acceptance of security measures.

evaGuide: Real-Time Adaptive Evacuation Management for Large Venues

Greece

Mass events security and crowd management

evaGuide is a Horizon 2020 project (2018–2021) developed to improve emergency evacuation management in large venues such as stadiums and event arenas. Traditional evacuation plans usually rely on fixed routes and static signage, which cannot adapt to rapidly changing situations such as fires, security threats or sudden crowd congestion. evaGuide was designed to overcome this limitation by introducing a dynamic evacuation system that can adjust instructions in real time.

The system integrates cameras, sensors, Bluetooth beacons and smart exit signs with a platform that analyses crowd density, movement patterns and environmental conditions. Based on this information, the system can dynamically guide people along the safest available routes during an emergency. This helps prevent dangerous bottlenecks and improves the overall efficiency of evacuations.

The technology was tested in major Greek venues including the PAOK stadium in Thessaloniki and the Peace and Friendship Stadium in Athens. Large-scale drills and simulations were organised with venue operators and security personnel. Additional testing took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the system was adapted to support evacuation scenarios requiring social distancing.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Telesto Technologies
- EXUS
- Stadium operators such as PAOK FC and the Peace and Friendship Stadium (SEF)
- Private security teams
- Technology developers
- Venue management staff
- Volunteers participating in evacuation drills
- Local authorities responsible for public safety

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **End-user feedback shaping system development**

Security staff, venue personnel and volunteers played an important role in shaping the system through feedback gathered during pilot tests. Their practical experience helped identify improvements that could make the technology easier to use and more effective in real emergencies.

Suggestions from participants influenced adjustments to signage logic, device placement and user interfaces. By incorporating feedback from the people responsible for implementing evacuations, the project produced a system that is more intuitive and easier to adopt in different types of venues.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Joint testing between technology developers and venue operators**

The system was developed and tested through close cooperation between technology companies, stadium managers and security personnel. This collaboration ensured that the technical solutions matched real operational needs and could be integrated into existing safety procedures.

During pilot trials, developers worked directly with security teams at participating venues to adjust system interfaces, optimise the placement of sensors and refine operational procedures. This hands-on collaboration helped align the technological design with the realities of managing large events.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Training and clear evacuation communication

Even advanced safety technologies depend on people understanding how to use them. evaGuide therefore included training sessions and briefings to ensure that security staff and participants knew how the system functioned and how to follow its instructions.

Before evacuation drills, participants received short explanations of the dynamic signage and guidance system. Clear visual signals, directional arrows and audio instructions were designed to be easily understood even under stress. This preparation helped participants follow evacuation instructions more confidently and contributed to smoother crowd movement during simulations.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Realistic drills and behavioural learning

Testing the system in realistic conditions was an essential part of the project. Evacuation simulations allowed researchers and venue operators to observe how people behave in emergency scenarios and to refine the system accordingly.

Trials conducted with security volunteers revealed behavioural patterns such as hesitation points or preferred movement routes. These observations helped improve the timing of evacuation messages and the placement of guidance devices, making the system more intuitive for users.

Technological integration mechanisms

Real-time monitoring and adaptive evacuation guidance

The core innovation of evaGuide is its ability to monitor crowd movements and environmental conditions continuously and adjust evacuation routes accordingly. Instead of directing everyone to predetermined exits, the system analyses real-time data and guides people along the safest available paths.

During evacuation drills in Thessaloniki, the platform used CCTV analytics, BLE positioning beacons and dynamic signage that could change instructions depending on crowd density or simulated hazards. This adaptive guidance helped redistribute flows and avoid congestion, significantly improving the speed and safety of evacuations.

Why it matters?

Large venues hosting sports events, concerts or festivals represent some of the most complex environments for emergency management. Thousands of people move within constrained spaces, and emergencies can escalate quickly if evacuation procedures are not efficient.

evaGuide demonstrates how real-time data and adaptive technologies can significantly improve evacuation safety. By combining advanced monitoring tools with practical testing and user involvement, the project shows how technological innovation can strengthen both actual security and the confidence of those responsible for managing large crowds.

evaGuide: Real-Time Adaptive Security for Large-Scale Evacuations

The evaGuide project replaces rigid, static evacuation routes with a dynamic system that adapts to live threats and crowd conditions. It integrates real-time data to guide crowds through most secure available exits in crowded venues.

Dynamic Intelligence & Adaptive Guidance

From Static Routes to Live Security



Replaces fixed signage with dynamic instructions that adapt to changing hazards and crowd density.

Multi-Sensor Environmental Monitoring



Integrates CCTV analytics, BLE beacons, and environmental sensors to track movement patterns continuously.

Automated Bottleneck Prevention



Systematically redirects crowd flows to avoid dangerous congestion and optimize evacuation speed.

Collaborative Implementation & Testing

Validated in Major Sports Venues



Successfully tested through large-scale drills at PAOK Stadium and the Peace and Friendship Stadium.

Cross-Sector Stakeholder Alignment



Developed through joint cooperation between technology developers, private security teams, and stadium management.

Human-Centric Design Optimization



Behavioral data from drills was used to refine signage logic for intuitive use under stress.

Safety and Security Awareness Campaign at Electric Castle Festival Romania

Mass events security and crowd management

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Electric Castle is one of the largest music festivals in Central and Eastern Europe, held annually at Bánffy Castle in Bonțida, near Cluj-Napoca. With almost 300,000 participants in recent editions, the event attracts a large international audience, particularly young people. Such scale naturally creates safety challenges typical for major festivals, including harassment, excessive alcohol consumption, substance misuse and situations in which vulnerable participants - especially young women - may feel unsafe.

In response to these risks, the festival organisers launched in 2023 a comprehensive Safety Awareness Campaign combining immediate protective tools with longer-term educational initiatives. The programme focuses on prevention, clear help-seeking mechanisms and the promotion of respectful behaviour within the festival community.

Two central initiatives form the backbone of the campaign. The first is the "Angel Shot" protocol, a discreet signalling system that allows participants to request help at festival bars using coded language. Inspired by the international "Ask for Angela" model, the protocol enables bartenders and security staff to respond quickly without drawing unwanted attention to the person asking for assistance.

The second element is the "G-Info Spot" platform, developed with the NGO *Sexul vs Barza*, which provides accessible and stigma-free information about consent, sexual health, relationships and personal safety. By embedding this initiative directly within the festival environment, organisers created a space where young participants can engage openly with topics that are often considered taboo in traditional educational settings.

These initiatives are supported by additional safety measures, including a 24-hour Safety Hotline connected to on-site police and gendarmerie teams, drink-protection tools such as anti-spiking lids, dedicated Safety Booths providing assistance and safe spaces, and large-scale communication campaigns across screens, signage and social media. Together, these elements form an integrated approach that combines prevention, education and rapid response.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Electric Castle festival organisers
- Bar staff and volunteers
- Private security teams
- Romanian Police and Gendarmerie units
- the NGO *Sexul vs Barza*
- Medical and psychological support teams
- Festival participants

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Discreet help-seeking protocols and collective responsibility**

The Angel Shot system encourages shared responsibility for safety by involving bartenders, volunteers and participants in a simple but effective support network. The discreet code makes it easier for individuals to ask for help without drawing attention or escalating a situation.

When a person orders an Angel Shot, trained staff immediately recognise the signal and follow the appropriate response protocol. Depending on the variant used, staff may check on the person, escort them to a safe space or involve security teams. This system strengthens trust in the festival environment and allows risks to be addressed quickly before situations escalate.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Integrated safety ecosystem with institutional partners**

Large events require coordination between multiple actors responsible for safety, health and crisis management. The Electric Castle campaign therefore integrates the work of organisers, security teams, police, gendarmerie, NGOs and medical professionals.

The 24-hour Safety Hotline connects festival staff with on-site law enforcement and emergency services, enabling rapid response when incidents occur. The NGO Sexul vs Barza contributes expertise on sexual education and consent, while volunteers and bartenders act as the first line of support within the festival community. This coordinated structure improves response times and ensures that participants receive appropriate assistance when needed.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Preventive safety communication and behavioural guidance**

The campaign relies heavily on clear and visible communication to shape behaviour and encourage responsible participation in the festival environment. Messages displayed on LED screens, posters and social media channels explain available safety tools, promote respectful behaviour and encourage people to look out for one another.

Information about the Angel Shot protocol, the Safety Hotline and available support services is widely communicated throughout the festival site. The G-Info Spot initiative also introduces open discussions about consent and wellbeing, helping shift cultural norms around safety and personal boundaries. These communication efforts increase participants' confidence in seeking help and encourage more proactive, supportive behaviour among festivalgoers.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Sexual education and empowerment tools**

A key component of the initiative is educational work focused on consent, sexual health and personal safety. By providing credible, youth-friendly information in a setting where young people feel comfortable, the campaign helps participants recognise risky situations and respond appropriately.

Through the G-Info Spot platform, visitors can access educational materials, speak with trained facilitators and receive guidance on relationships, consent and wellbeing.

This approach helps strengthen self-protection skills and contributes to a festival culture where harassment and unsafe behaviour are less tolerated.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Staff training and accessible support structures

Effective safety systems depend on well-trained staff and clear procedures. Electric Castle invested in training programmes for bartenders, volunteers and security personnel so they could recognise distress signals and respond appropriately.

Staff were trained to handle Angel Shot requests, identify signs of harassment or intoxication and guide participants to Safety Booths where confidential support is available. These dedicated support points provide information, assistance and safe spaces for people who feel uncomfortable or threatened. As a result, the festival has established a more professional and accessible safety system that allows participants to seek help quickly and confidently.

Why it matters?

Electric Castle demonstrates how organisers of large cultural events can move beyond traditional security approaches focused mainly on policing and reaction. By combining awareness campaigns, discreet support mechanisms, education and multi-actor coordination, the festival creates an environment where security becomes a shared responsibility among organisers, staff and participants.

The initiative also highlights the importance of addressing vulnerability and harassment proactively in environments where alcohol consumption and large crowds can increase risks. Its approach offers a practical and transferable model for improving security at festivals, large events and other spaces where young people gather in large numbers.

THE ELECTRIC CASTLE SECURITY & AWARENESS FRAMEWORK: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO LARGE-SCALE EVENT MANAGEMENT

Electric Castle festival transitions to an integrated security ecosystem, combining immediate protective tools with long-term educational initiatives for nearly 300,000 international participants.

RESPONSE MECHANISMS & DISCREET SUPPORT



THE "ANGEL SHOT" PROTOCOL

A coded signaling system allowing participants to request discreet assistance from trained bar staff.



24-HOUR SECURITY HOTLINE

An integrated communication link connecting on-site staff directly to police, gendarmerie, and medical teams.



DEDICATED SECURITY BOOTHS

Physical safe spaces providing confidential support, information, and professional assistance for vulnerable individuals.

PREVENTION, EDUCATION & GOVERNANCE



THE 'G-INFO SPOT' PLATFORM

A collaborative space with NGOs providing stigma-free education on consent and personal security.



MULTI-SECTOR COLLABORATION

A coordinated framework involving festival organizers, private security, law enforcement, and health professionals.



PREVENTIVE BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE

Large-scale communication across LED screens and social media to shape respectful community norms.

INSIGHT Toolbox

Bremen, Braunschweig, Essen, Germany

Community conflict and trust-building

The INSIGHT Toolbox is a set of practical methods developed within the EU-funded Cutting Crime Impact (CCI) project to help cities better understand how people experience safety in public spaces. Instead of relying only on crime statistics or surveillance technologies, the approach combines professional expertise and citizens' lived experience to analyse why certain places feel safe or unsafe.

The toolbox brings together urban planners, police officers, municipal services, housing companies, transport operators and researchers to examine public spaces from multiple perspectives. By combining spatial analysis, participatory tools and data visualisation, cities can gain a more comprehensive picture of how people move through spaces, where discomfort occurs and what factors contribute to insecurity.

The approach includes four main tools. The Spatial Inventory provides a structured way to document physical features that influence perceived safety, such as lighting, visibility, seating or natural surveillance. The "Walk Around Your Hood" expert inspection brings professionals from different institutions together to walk through a neighbourhood and observe it from the perspective of different users, such as elderly residents or young women returning home at night.

The Emoji Mapping tool allows residents to mark places where they feel comfortable, uneasy or unsafe using simple symbols on a map. Finally, Heat Maps of Disorder use police data to visualise where disturbances or disorder occur, helping cities understand patterns that are not always visible in official crime statistics.

The INSIGHT approach has been tested in the German cities of Bremen, Braunschweig and Essen. It has since been institutionalised through the creation of the Competence Center for Urban Security (KURBAS) within the Lower Saxony State Police, allowing the methods to be integrated into routine safety assessments and urban planning processes.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Municipal planning departments in Bremen, Braunschweig and Essen
- Local police authorities
- Housing companies
- Public transport operators
- Municipal service providers
- Researchers involved in the Cutting Crime Impact project
- Local residents

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Citizen-centred diagnostics through Emoji Mapping**

The Emoji Mapping tool provides an accessible way for residents to share their experiences of public spaces. Instead of requiring lengthy surveys or formal consultations, participants simply mark locations on a map using emojis that represent positive or negative feelings.

Through this process, cities can identify locations where people feel uncomfortable or avoid certain routes, often revealing subtle factors such as poor lighting, unpleasant smells or confusing pathways. These insights help municipal authorities prioritise improvements that respond directly to everyday experiences of residents.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Interdisciplinary neighbourhood inspections**

The “Walk Around Your Hood” method brings professionals from different sectors together to observe a public space in person. Participants from fields such as urban planning, policing, transport management and environmental services jointly walk through a neighbourhood and analyse how different users might experience it.

During these inspections, participants often adopt specific roles, such as imagining the perspective of a child, an elderly person or a woman returning home at night. This approach encourages professionals to consider accessibility, visibility and safety in a more empathetic and realistic way.

The observations gathered during these walks are translated into concrete recommendations that different institutions can implement together.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Visualising safety perceptions and disorder patterns**

INSIGHT uses visual tools such as emoji maps, spatial inventories and disorder heat maps to make safety-related information easier to understand and discuss. By presenting complex insights through simple visual formats, the toolbox supports constructive dialogue between citizens, planners and police.

For example, heat maps of disorder can reveal that a location perceived as very unsafe may actually experience few incidents, while another overlooked area may show frequent disturbances. These visualisations help avoid misconceptions and support more balanced decision-making about where interventions are needed.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms **Structured spatial analysis of safety factors**

The Spatial Inventory tool provides a systematic way to evaluate physical characteristics that influence safety perceptions. Urban planners use the inventory to document elements such as lighting conditions, visibility between buildings, seating arrangements or the clarity of pedestrian routes.

This structured analysis helps cities identify simple improvements that can significantly influence how safe a space feels.

In many cases, small interventions such as better lighting, improved signage or regular maintenance can address insecurity without requiring costly redesign or increased policing.

Technological integration mechanisms Data-driven mapping of public disorder

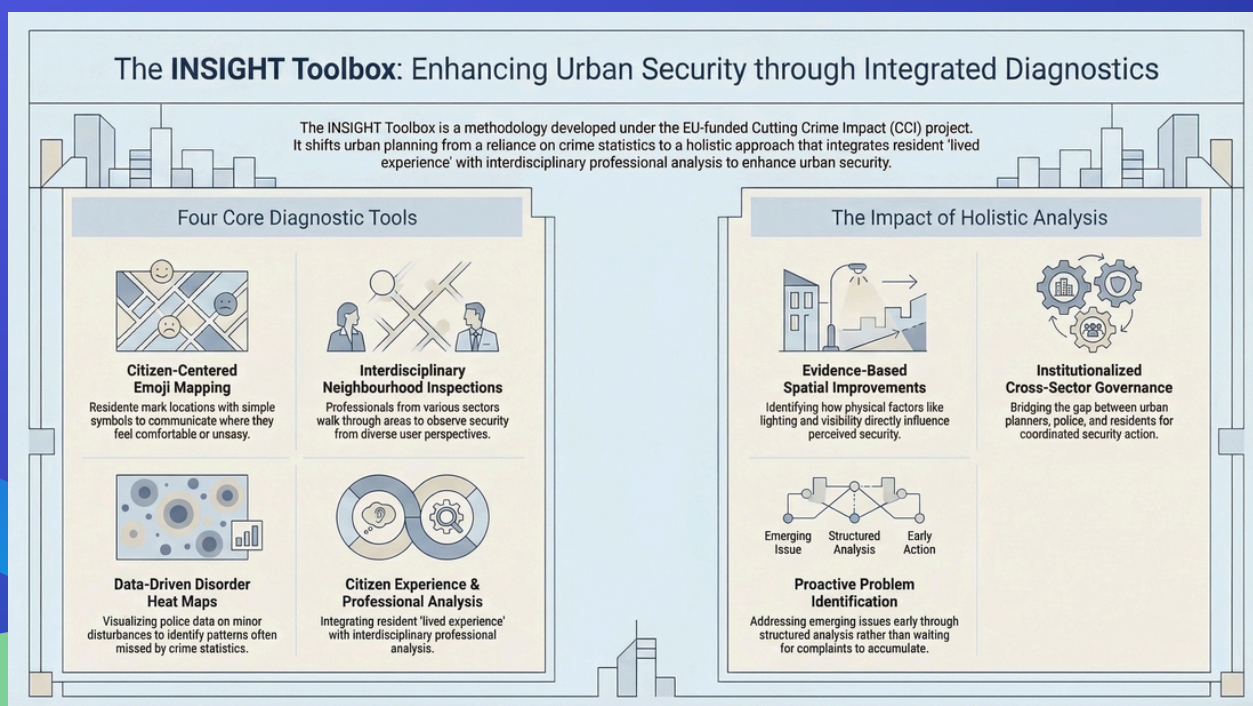
The INSIGHT Toolbox also incorporates police data to identify patterns of disturbances that affect everyday safety perceptions. Using data systems such as the police Nivadis platform, authorities can visualise clusters of minor incidents or disorder that may not appear in official crime statistics.

These heat maps help municipalities allocate resources more effectively and address problems before they escalate. By combining this data with citizen feedback and spatial observations, the toolbox supports a more balanced and evidence-based approach to managing safety in public spaces.

Why it matters?

The INSIGHT Toolbox represents an important shift in how cities approach safety and security planning. Instead of responding only after complaints accumulate or incidents occur, the approach helps municipalities identify potential problems early and address them through coordinated action.

By combining professional expertise, citizen input and data analysis, the toolbox bridges the gap between urban planning, policing and community experience. It enables cities to design and manage public spaces that feel more secure and more inclusive for all users while strengthening trust between institutions and residents.



Secure Neighbourhood

Warsaw, Poland

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Secure Neighbourhood is one of Warsaw's flagship participatory security programmes. It started as a pilot in 2003, became a city programme in 2007, and was updated to its current format in 2023.

The initiative was created to address everyday security concerns at neighbourhood level – not only through enforcement, but through regular dialogue and joint problem-solving with residents.

It is coordinated by the Department of Public Security within the Warsaw City Security Centre, together with district-level delegations. The programme works through open local forums and meetings where residents and local institutions discuss security problems and agree on practical actions.

In practice, the initiative covers a wide range of topics: nuisance behaviour, poor lighting, vandalism, safety/security around schools, local conflicts, and issues affecting vulnerable groups such as seniors.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Warsaw City Security Centre and district delegations
- District councils and local administration
- Municipal Guard
- Police
- Residents and neighbourhood leaders
- Housing cooperatives and building managers
- Schools and local educational institutions
- NGOs

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance **Civic co-creation through local safety forums**

Secure Neighbourhood is built around regular meetings where residents, local leaders, district officials, Police and the Municipal Guard discuss problems and jointly decide what should be done. This mechanism makes security and safety a shared process: residents are not only asked for opinions, but are involved in setting priorities and choosing solutions.

In practice, the forums help identify concrete local needs (e.g., unsafe paths, nuisance hotspots, recurring vandalism). Decisions about interventions – such as improved lighting, patrol priorities, or camera placement – are discussed with the community.

Communication and awareness-raising **Targeted education and prevention sessions**

The programme includes educational activities aimed at specific groups, especially those who may feel more exposed in public spaces, such as children, teenagers, parents and seniors. These sessions focus on practical everyday security: recognising risks, reacting in difficult situations, and knowing where to seek support.

This mechanism strengthens prevention by improving confidence and practical knowledge, which can reduce fear and increase people's readiness to act responsibly.

Communication and awareness-raising **Inclusive and flexible engagement formats**

Participation is supported through flexible meeting times and multiple channels. The programme uses both in-person gatherings and digital communication, and meetings are often organised in the late afternoon or evening to make them accessible.

This helps ensure that participation is not limited to the most active residents. It allows more people to join, including busy parents, seniors, or residents who prefer online communication.

Cross-sector collaboration **Integrated local coordination across services**

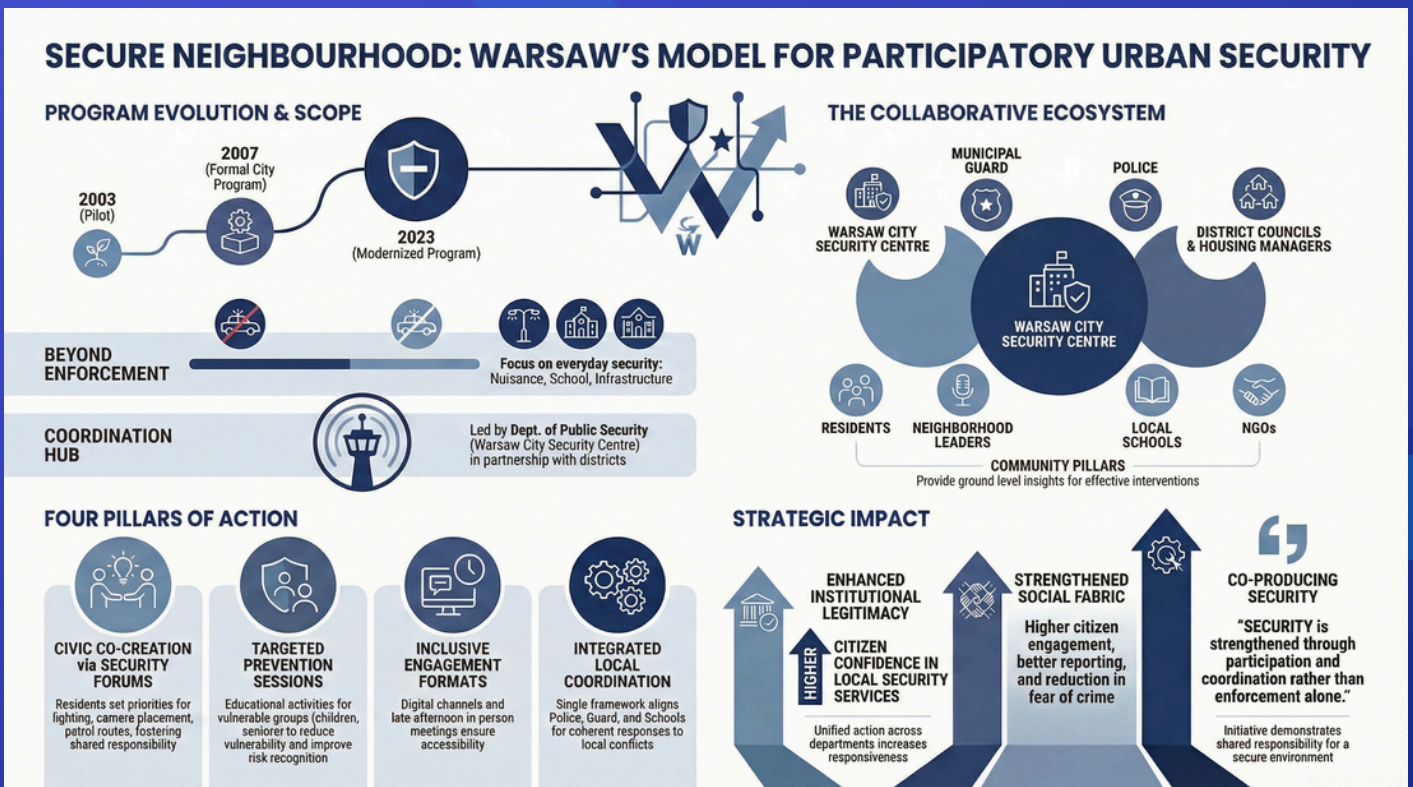
Secure Neighbourhood connects multiple local actors through one coordination framework led by the City Security Centre. Municipal services, district administration, Police, Municipal Guard, schools and sometimes NGOs can align their actions instead of working separately.

When problems arise – for example, repeated nuisance behaviour near a school or conflicts in a shared housing area – the initiative supports faster coordination and clearer division of responsibilities.

Why it matters?

Secure Neighbourhood shows how cities can strengthen public space security by building trust, dialogue and shared responsibility at district level. Many security issues in neighbourhoods are not “major crimes”, but recurring everyday problems that affect quality of life and perceptions of security.

This initiative is inspiring because it creates a stable, long-term structure for co-producing security with residents. It shows that public security can be strengthened through participation, local coordination and practical prevention – not only through enforcement.



Steps for Future

Emotional & Life-Skills Support for Forcibly Displaced Persons from Ukraine

Romania

Community conflict and trust-building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

“Steps for Future” is a multi-city initiative implemented between September 2023 and June 2024 by the NGO Asociația Social Activ (ASA) and its partners, with partial funding from Swiss Solidarity. The project was launched in response to the arrival of more than one million people fleeing the war in Ukraine, many of whom passed through or temporarily settled in Romanian cities that had limited infrastructure for long-term support.

Before starting activities, the project team carried out a needs assessment in five locations — Bucharest, Prahova, Baia Mare, Vâlcea and Arad. Through consultations, focus groups and field observations in shelters, community venues and public spaces, several key challenges were identified. Refugee families were experiencing high levels of stress and trauma, children lacked safe places for play and support, and many people felt vulnerable in unfamiliar environments where harassment or misunderstanding could occur. The assessment also highlighted limited access to psychological support and weak connections between refugees, local communities and public institutions.

In response, ASA and its partners developed a trauma-informed programme focused on emotional resilience, social integration and everyday safety. Activities included art and play therapy sessions, life-skills workshops, emergency counselling and community events designed to strengthen a sense of belonging. The programme also introduced safe-space protocols for activities involving children, along with training for volunteers and staff in psychological first aid, conflict de-escalation and crisis communication.

Sessions were organised in schools, community halls, parks and cultural venues adapted to function as small “safe zones.” Over ten months, the initiative reached more than 450 direct beneficiaries, including over 150 children, and more than 3,500 indirect beneficiaries, helping improve emotional stability, confidence and integration in shared public spaces.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Asociația Social Activ (ASA)
- Local partner NGOs across five Romanian regions
- Volunteers and community mediators
- Swiss Solidarity as funding partner
- International organisations such as UNHCR and UNICEF
- Local institutions hosting activities
- Ukrainian refugee families

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Trauma-informed co-creation with** **refugee families**

The programme was designed through continuous dialogue with the refugee families it aimed to support. Instead of implementing predefined activities, the organisers consulted participants about their needs, fears and priorities. This participatory approach ensured that the programme addressed real challenges faced by displaced families.

Consultations in shelters, schools and community spaces revealed the need for psychological first aid, safe play areas for children and guidance for parents coping with stress. These insights shaped the structure of the activities and helped ensure that the programme remained culturally sensitive and responsive to participants' evolving needs.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Multi-city NGO network and volunteer** **partnerships**

The project relied on cooperation between NGOs, volunteers, local institutions and international organisations. ASA coordinated activities across several regions, working with partner organisations that provided support services and facilitated community outreach.

Networking sessions and shared training helped create common approaches to emergency support and psychosocial assistance. Volunteers also played an important role as mediators between refugee families and local institutions, supporting communication and helping people access services when needed.

Communication and awareness-raising **mechanisms**

Psychological first aid and safety **awareness training**

Workshops focused on building practical skills that help people manage stressful situations and navigate unfamiliar environments. Participants learned how to communicate during emergencies, recognise early signs of distress and seek appropriate help when needed.

Sessions for parents and volunteers also addressed conflict de-escalation and strategies for supporting children experiencing trauma. These activities helped strengthen participants' confidence and ability to respond calmly to challenges in everyday situations.

Communication and awareness-raising **mechanisms**

Life-skills development and peer support

The programme also focused on strengthening emotional regulation, communication skills and social connections among participants. Activities such as art therapy, storytelling and group exercises helped children express emotions and develop coping strategies.

For adults, parenting sessions and peer discussions created opportunities to share experiences and learn practical approaches to managing stress and supporting their families. These activities strengthened resilience and helped participants feel more confident in interacting with local communities.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Creation of micro “safe zones” in community spaces

Programme activities were organised in environments carefully adapted to provide a sense of safety and stability. Schools, community halls and parks were arranged to ensure visibility, privacy and child protection standards while maintaining a welcoming atmosphere.

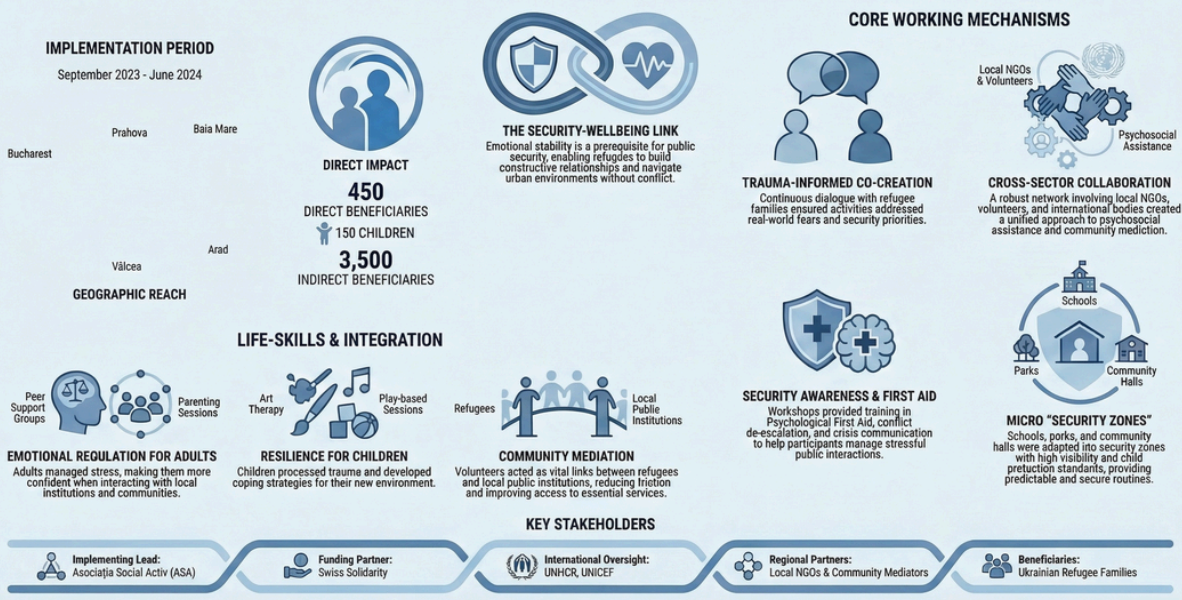
These spaces provided predictable routines and supportive settings for therapy sessions, workshops and community gatherings. The approach helped reduce stress for participants and allowed children and families to interact more comfortably in shared environments

Why it matters?

The “Steps for Future” initiative highlights the strong connection between emotional wellbeing and public security and safety. Refugees who feel supported and connected to their communities are better able to navigate public spaces, respond calmly in difficult situations and build constructive relationships with others.

The project also demonstrates how community-based psychosocial support can complement formal services, particularly in contexts where local systems are under pressure. By combining emotional support, life-skills training and community engagement, the initiative offers a practical model for helping displaced populations integrate more safely and confidently into urban environments.

Steps for Future: Strengthening Security through Emotional Resilience and Social Inclusion



"Don't Give Up on Life"

Crisis Aid on Warsaw's Bridges

Warsaw, Poland

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

"Don't Give Up on Life" is a citizen-driven suicide prevention initiative launched in Warsaw through the city's Civic Budget. It was selected in the 10th edition of the Civic Budget for 2024 and is currently being implemented (2024–ongoing).

Proposed by a resident, Karol Bąkowski, the project began as a simple but targeted intervention: installing motivational plaques on bridges, with a clear message and a 24/7 crisis hotline number operated by specialists from the Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre. The first stage covered seven bridges, with a city-level recommendation to expand the initiative to all bridges in Warsaw (84 plaques).

Importantly, the city treated the initiative not only as a communication campaign, but as part of a broader prevention model. On the Mayor's initiative, an interdisciplinary expert group (including NGOs, suicidologists, academics, city services and WOIK) developed recommendations and coordinated the response system.

The project was strengthened with expanded CCTV monitoring (currently 10 bridges) and increased river police patrols, linked to intervention protocols and crisis response procedures.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Residents (Civic Budget authors and voters),
- City of Warsaw (Mayor's office and municipal departments),
- Warsaw Crisis Intervention Centre,
- Police and river police patrols,
- City services responsible for bridges and public infrastructure,
- CCTV operators and monitoring units,
- NGOs and mental health organisations,
- Academic experts and suicidologists,
- Health services (in crisis response pathways).

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance **Civic co-creation through local safety forums**

The initiative began as a bottom-up idea. This mechanism gives legitimacy to the project and creates a sense of shared ownership: people feel it is a community solution, not only an institutional programme.

In practice, the Civic Budget made it possible for a sensitive topic like suicide prevention to enter the public policy agenda concretely. The fact that residents supported the project also helped city authorities treat it seriously and expand it beyond the initial plan.

Communication & awareness-raising **Symbolic and behavioural “pause” intervention in public space**

The plaques are a simple communication tool, but placed in a very strategic way: exactly where a person in crisis may be close to self-harm. The mechanism combines emotional support (“you are not alone”) with a clear action (“call this number now”).

In this case, the plaques act as a visible “pause button” during a high-risk moment. They also communicate to the wider public that mental health is a real and recognised issue, and that support is available without shame.

Cross-sector collaboration **Integrated crisis-prevention governance**

Once the initiative gained visibility, Warsaw treated it as a shared responsibility across services rather than a single “awareness project”. The Mayor created an interdisciplinary team bringing together crisis professionals, city services, NGOs, and experts.

In practice, this cooperation made it possible to align roles and procedures: who responds when someone is detected on a bridge, how the hotline and police interact, and how to expand the intervention consistently across the city. This reduced the risk of gaps and unclear responsibilities.

Technological integration **Technology-supported detection and rapid response**

Technology plays a supporting role in this initiative. CCTV monitoring helps detect risky behaviour early, while the crisis hotline provides immediate access to trained professionals at any time. Together they form a prevention loop: detection, contact, intervention and support.

In this case, Warsaw expanded CCTV coverage on bridges and connected it with intervention protocols. When operators identify a person at risk, they can alert police or crisis services. At the same time, the hotline provides immediate psychological support and can guide further action.

Cross-sector collaboration
Institutional learning and system integration

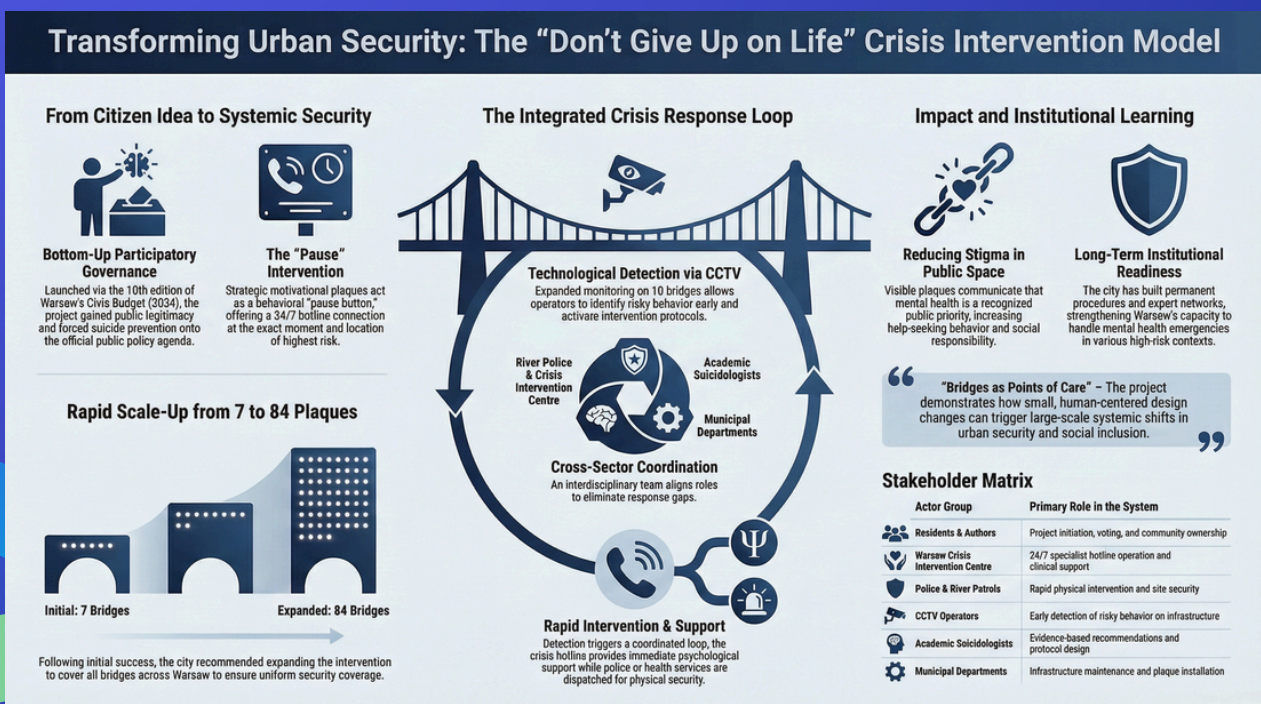
A key part of the initiative is that it did not remain a one-off Civic Budget project. Warsaw used it to strengthen long-term crisis prevention capacity. The city built procedures, expert coordination and standards that can support future interventions, not only on bridges but also in other high-risk contexts.

In practice, the initiative contributed to broader organisational learning across municipal units and crisis services, strengthening how the city prepares for and responds to mental health emergencies.

Why it matters?

This case shows how a very small, human-centred intervention in public space can trigger a much larger and more coordinated prevention system. It turns bridges from “high-risk locations” into points of care and communication, where design, awareness and institutional cooperation support life-saving action.

It is also a strong example of how social innovation in security can start from a citizen idea, but become systemic when a city decides to treat it seriously and integrate it into wider safety and support structures.



Forssa Community Dialogue

Forssa, Finland

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

The Forssa Community Dialogue approach was developed in 2016 in response to growing tensions between local youth and asylum seekers living in reception centres in the Finnish town of Forssa. Several violent incidents increased fear and mistrust in the community and raised concerns about further escalation.

Instead of relying only on policing, the city launched a structured community dialogue process aimed at calming tensions and rebuilding trust. The initiative brought together police, municipal services, schools, youth workers, professional mediators from the Centre for Neighbourhood Mediation and civil society organisations. Alongside formal police investigations, a dialogue track was created to address the social roots of the conflict and help restore communication between groups.

The city also collaborated with Gutsy Go, a youth-led peacebuilding initiative that supports young people in creating projects promoting coexistence and positive community narratives. Through dialogue sessions, youth activities and transparent communication, the initiative helped stabilise the situation and rebuild trust among residents.

The approach proved effective in quickly reducing tensions and was recognised with the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) in 2018. Since then, elements of the model have been transferred to other Finnish municipalities facing similar challenges related to polarisation and community conflict.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- City of Forssa municipal authorities
- Local police
- Centre for Neighbourhood Mediation
- Schools and youth workers
- Civil society organisations
- Gutsy Go youth initiative
- Local residents and asylum seekers

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Community mediation and structured dialogue**

A central element of the Forssa approach was the creation of safe spaces for dialogue between groups that had come into conflict. Professional mediators helped organise structured meetings where participants could express concerns, explain misunderstandings and discuss practical ways to avoid further confrontations.

Through these discussions, both local youth and asylum seekers were able to share their perspectives and address fears that had developed after the incidents. The process helped reduce emotional tensions, humanise the opposing groups and rebuild a sense of shared community responsibility. As trust slowly returned, the likelihood of further violence decreased and residents began to feel more secure in their everyday environment.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Multi-agency crisis coordination**

The initiative relied on close cooperation between several institutions that normally operate separately. Police addressed immediate safety concerns, mediators facilitated dialogue, schools supported engagement with young people, and NGOs provided support to newcomers.

This coordinated response ensured that different actors worked toward the same goal of de-escalation. Because information was shared and actions were aligned, the city was able to stabilise the situation more quickly and communicate a clear and consistent message to the community.

The collaboration also strengthened the legitimacy of local institutions and helped build longer-term trust.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism **Youth empowerment through constructive community action**

Young people were not treated only as a risk group but were actively involved in building solutions. Through cooperation with the Gutsy Go initiative, youth from different backgrounds worked together on creative projects promoting peace and coexistence.

They produced videos, campaigns and small community initiatives that challenged negative stereotypes and encouraged positive behaviour among their peers. This approach helped shift the narrative from conflict to cooperation, strengthened youth engagement and promoted more responsible behaviour within the community.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism **Inclusive participation of newcomers and vulnerable groups**

The initiative also focused on ensuring that asylum seekers and newcomers were included in the dialogue process rather than excluded from it. By inviting them to mediation sessions and community activities, the city recognised them as legitimate members of the local community.

This inclusive approach helped reduce feelings of isolation and misunderstanding. As newcomers gained opportunities to express their experiences and interact directly with long-term residents, mistrust gradually declined and the community became more resilient to future tensions.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism

Transparent communication and narrative correction

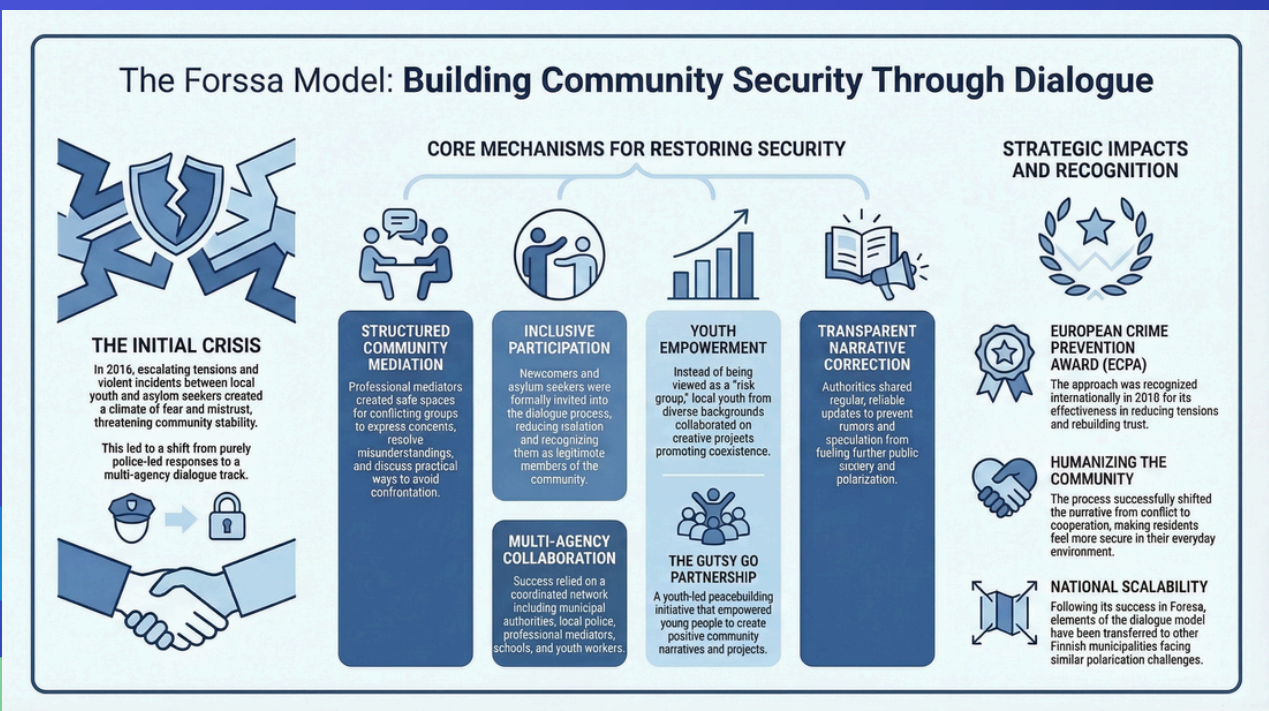
Clear and timely communication played an important role in preventing rumours and exaggerated stories from fuelling further tensions. Municipal authorities, police and mediators regularly shared updates with residents about the situation and the steps being taken to address it.

This transparency helped calm public anxiety and ensured that the dialogue process was understood as a collective effort to restore stability. As reliable information replaced speculation, the public debate became less polarised and the atmosphere in the city gradually improved.

Why it matters?

The Forssa experience shows that security challenges linked to social tensions cannot be addressed only through enforcement measures. In situations where mistrust and polarisation are growing, structured dialogue and community mediation can play a crucial role in restoring stability.

The case demonstrates how cooperation between institutions, residents and newcomers can interrupt cycles of conflict and rebuild trust even after violent incidents. It highlights the importance of community-based approaches, youth engagement and transparent communication in strengthening both real and perceived security in public spaces.



ANCHOR

Multiagency Prevention of Juvenile Crime

Finland

Community conflict and trust building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

The ANCHOR model (Ankkuri) is Finland's nationwide approach to preventing juvenile crime, violence and early signs of radicalisation. It operates through local multiagency teams that bring together professionals from different services into one coordinated frontline unit.

ANCHOR teams work mainly with young people aged around 10–17 and intervene as early as possible after an incident or when warning signs appear. The goal is not only to address an immediate problem but to understand the broader situation of the young person and their family.

Each team combines expertise from law enforcement, social services, mental health and youth work. Together they conduct risk assessments, home visits, motivational discussions and referrals to additional support services. This integrated approach allows institutions to respond quickly and holistically instead of through fragmented interventions.

The model has been gradually developed since the early 2000s and has been formally embedded in Finland's national policy framework since 2015. Today it operates through dozens of local teams coordinated under the Ministry of the Interior.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- Ministry of Interior Finland
- Local police officers
- Social workers
- Psychiatric nurses
- Youth workers
- Municipal social services
- Schools
- Families of young people

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Shared decision-making with families**

A central principle of ANCHOR is that effective prevention must involve the family environment of the young person. Teams therefore work closely with parents and caregivers rather than focusing only on the individual youth.

Through home visits and structured conversations, professionals help families understand risk situations, strengthen communication and establish supportive routines. Parents are not treated as the source of the problem but as key partners in the solution. This collaborative approach improves trust between families and institutions and creates a more stable environment around the young person, which supports lasting behavioural change.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Integrated multi-agency intervention teams**

The core of the ANCHOR model is the creation of small teams composed of professionals from different institutions who work together on the same cases.

Each team typically includes a police officer, a social worker, a psychiatric nurse and a youth worker. They jointly assess the situation of the young person, share information within legal limits and develop coordinated support plans. By combining different professional perspectives, the teams are able to address behavioural, social and psychological factors at the same time. This integrated cooperation prevents gaps between services and ensures that young people receive consistent support.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism

Motivational conversations and behavioural coaching

ANCHOR places strong emphasis on direct dialogue with young people. Youth workers and other team members conduct motivational conversations aimed at helping young people reflect on their choices and understand the consequences of risky behaviour.

These discussions often focus on building confidence, strengthening school engagement and encouraging healthier social relationships. At the same time, police officers communicate legal boundaries and responsibilities in a clear but supportive manner. This balanced approach helps young people develop resilience and make more informed decisions, reducing the likelihood of further involvement in violence or crime.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Stabilising the young person's social environment

Risk behaviour among youth is often shaped by the surrounding social environment, including peer groups, school dynamics and neighbourhood tensions. ANCHOR therefore works beyond the individual case and engages with the wider context around the young person.

Teams cooperate with schools, youth centres and community organisations to address issues such as bullying, local conflicts or exposure to negative peer influence.

By reconnecting young people with supportive social spaces and constructive activities, the model helps create safer everyday environments and reduces the likelihood of repeated incidents.

**Technological integration mechanisms
Coordinated information-sharing and case monitoring**

Although ANCHOR is primarily based on human interaction and cooperation, structured information management plays an important supporting role.

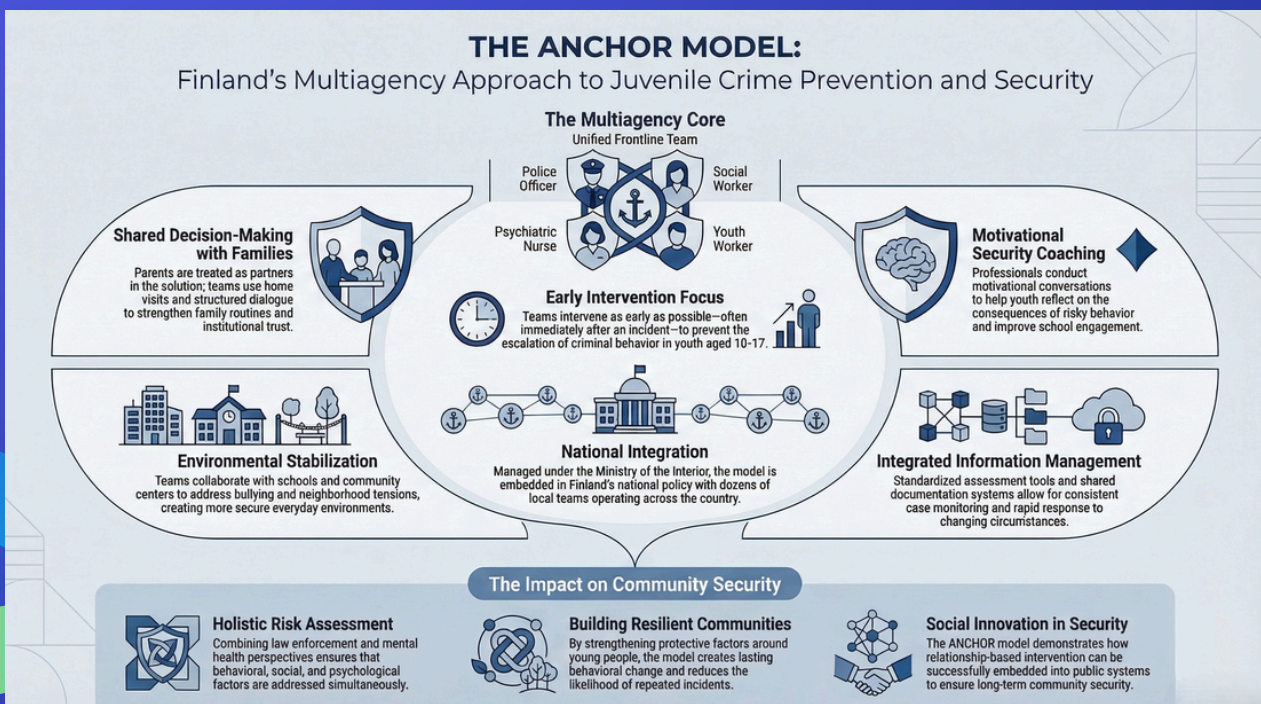
Teams use shared documentation systems, standardised assessment tools and joint referral procedures.

These tools ensure that all professionals involved have a common understanding of the situation and can follow the progress of each case over time. Consistent information-sharing improves coordination between institutions and allows teams to respond quickly when circumstances change.

Why it matters?

The ANCHOR model demonstrates how early, coordinated and relationship-based intervention can prevent the escalation of youth crime and violence. By combining the perspectives of law enforcement, social services, mental health professionals and youth workers, the approach addresses the complex factors that shape young people's behaviour.

The model also shows that building trust with families and communities is essential for long-term prevention. Instead of focusing only on punishment, ANCHOR strengthens protective factors around young people and helps institutions work together more effectively. Its nationwide implementation in Finland illustrates how social innovation in security can become embedded in public systems and contribute to more resilient communities.



Shared Use Concept

Bremer Platz

Münster, Germany

Community conflict and trust-building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Bremer Platz, located directly behind Münster's main railway station, had long been perceived as one of the city's most problematic public spaces. The square was poorly maintained, poorly lit and widely known as a meeting point for the local open drug scene. Residents, local businesses and nearby institutions, including a Montessori school, frequently reported safety concerns related to noise, litter and intimidating behaviour.

At the same time, the drug scene had deep historical roots in the area and relied on nearby support services such as shelters and a drug consumption room. City authorities recognised that simply displacing the group would neither solve the problem nor respect the needs of vulnerable individuals. Instead, Münster decided to redesign the square in a way that allows different groups to coexist.

The project introduced a shared-use park concept dividing the square into three functional zones. A southern area was designed for recreation and school activities, including a "green classroom". A central zone provides seating and relaxation spaces for the wider public. The northern part was intentionally designated as an acceptance area for the drug scene, equipped with shelter, seating and sanitary facilities.

The physical redesign was accompanied by an intensive neighbourhood management process led by two social workers. They organised dialogue with residents, local institutions, businesses and members of the drug scene. Public participation played a major role, including large-scale resident surveys, on-site consultations and thematic round tables. The project, launched in 2018 and still ongoing, represents one of Germany's most ambitious attempts to manage a highly contested public space through inclusive design and cooperation rather than displacement.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- The City of Münster administration
- Municipal urban planning and security departments
- Police
- Social services
- Neighbourhood managers
- Outreach workers
- the nearby Montessori school
- Local residents and businesses
- People from the local drug scene

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Structured multi-stakeholder dialogue and participation**

The redesign of Bremer Platz was developed through an extensive participation process involving different groups affected by the space. Rather than imposing a solution from above, the city organised surveys, public consultations and thematic round tables to understand the needs and concerns of residents, institutions and vulnerable groups.

Thousands of residents were invited to participate in surveys, while neighbourhood managers organised regular meetings with schools, businesses and support services. Pop-up consultation stands were also installed directly on the square to collect input from people using the space daily, including members of the drug scene. This open dialogue helped clarify expectations and allowed difficult compromises to emerge through collective discussion.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Coordinated management between police, city administration and social services**

Managing Bremer Platz requires close coordination between institutions with different responsibilities, including law enforcement, social services and municipal departments. The project established regular coordination meetings and communication channels to ensure that interventions are aligned.

Police actions addressing security risks are combined with social outreach efforts aimed at maintaining trust and providing support to vulnerable individuals.

This cooperation prevents contradictory interventions and helps avoid the displacement of problems into surrounding neighbourhoods. Through coordinated responses, the city has been able to stabilise the area while maintaining a balance between security and social support.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanisms **Outreach engagement with vulnerable groups**

A continuous presence of neighbourhood managers and outreach workers has been essential to building trust with vulnerable groups using the square. Many individuals connected to the drug scene have limited interaction with formal institutions, making direct engagement particularly important.

Social workers regularly meet people in the square, at nearby support centres and in street settings to understand their needs and communicate new rules or changes in the space. Their feedback has influenced several design decisions, including the placement of seating, shelters, and water access points. This ongoing dialogue helps ensure that the square functions realistically for all users and supports links between vulnerable individuals and support services.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Transparent communication and expectation management

Because Bremer Platz has long been a sensitive topic in the city, clear communication with residents and stakeholders has been essential. Neighbourhood managers play a key role in sharing information about the project, explaining decisions and gathering feedback.

Regular newsletters, community meetings and direct outreach help ensure that residents understand the goals of the initiative and the reasons behind difficult policy choices. At the same time, social workers communicate directly with members of the drug scene to explain new rules and gather their perspectives. This transparency helps reduce rumours and frustration while encouraging constructive engagement with the project.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Functional zoning of public space

The central innovation of the project is the spatial organisation of Bremer Platz into clearly defined zones designed to accommodate different user groups.

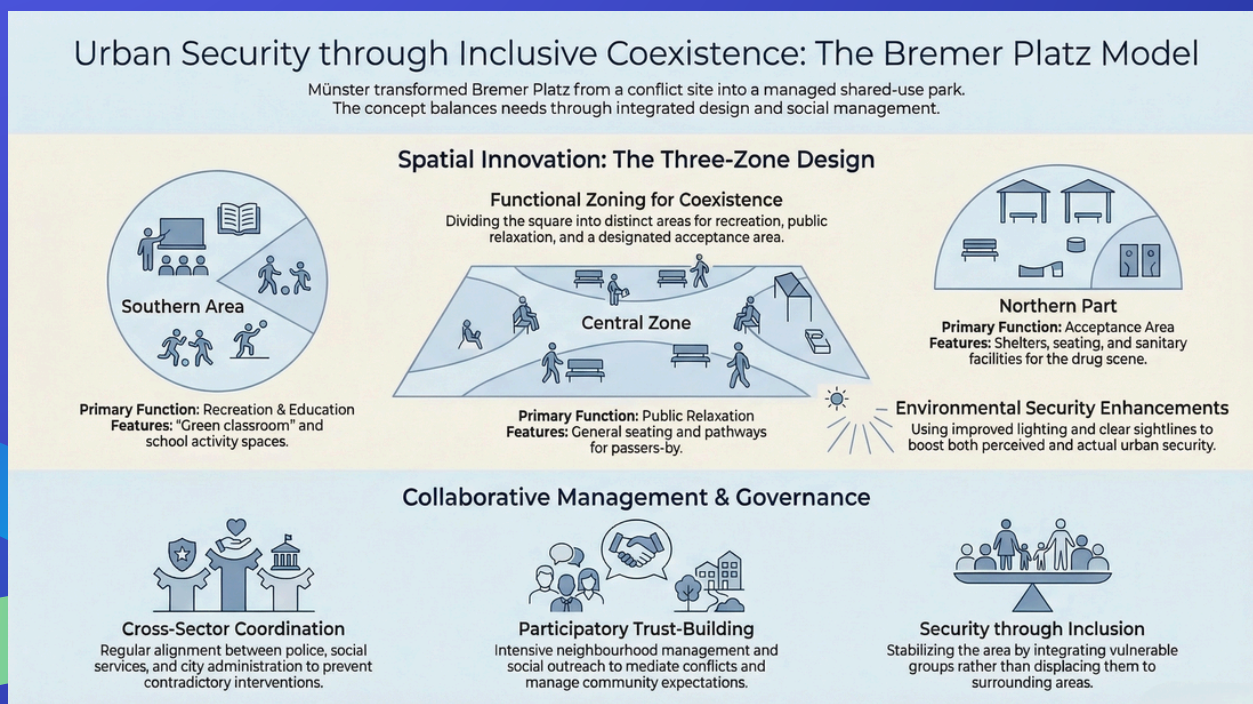
Facilitators create clear rules for interaction and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to express their views.

The southern part of the square offers recreational facilities and outdoor learning space for the neighbouring school and families. The central zone provides seating and relaxation areas for passers-by. The northern area is designed to accommodate the drug scene in a controlled environment with shelters, seating and access to basic facilities. Lighting, clear sightlines and well-defined pathways further contribute to both real and perceived safety in the square.

Why it matters?

The Bremer Platz initiative shows how cities can address complex public space conflicts without relying solely on displacement or enforcement. By combining participatory planning, social outreach and thoughtful urban design, Münster has attempted to transform a highly contested space into a more balanced and manageable environment.

The project demonstrates that security in public spaces depends not only on policing but also on inclusive planning and social support. By recognising the needs of different groups – including those often excluded from planning processes – the city created a model that promotes coexistence while reducing tensions and improving perceptions of security.



Young Police Supporters Youth Volunteering in Law Enforcement and Community Safety Lithuania

Community conflict and trust-building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

The Young Police Supporters (Jaunieji Policijos Rėmėjai – JPR) programme is a nationwide Lithuanian initiative that engages young volunteers aged 12–18 in community safety activities, crime prevention and civic education. The programme has been running for more than two decades and is formally supported by national legislation. It is implemented by the Lithuanian Police under the Ministry of the Interior, together with county police headquarters and the Lithuanian Police School.

The initiative provides young people with a structured opportunity to participate in safety-related activities both in schools and local communities. Volunteers support awareness campaigns, help organise peer-to-peer prevention initiatives, assist with school safety activities and take part in workshops led by community police officers.

One of the programme's central elements is the annual "Cadet for a Week" camp organised by the Lithuanian Police School. During the camp, participants experience aspects of police training through teamwork exercises, practical simulations and discipline routines. The programme operates under a clear national framework that defines recruitment rules, responsibilities and cooperation between police, schools and families, while allowing local police officers and schools to adapt activities to community needs.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- the Lithuanian Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior
- County police headquarters
- The Lithuanian Police School
- Community police officers
- Schools
- Teachers
- Parents
- Young volunteers participating in the programme

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Youth volunteering as structured civic participation**

The programme encourages teenagers to take an active role in improving safety within their schools and neighbourhoods. Instead of treating young people only as recipients of prevention programmes, the initiative involves them directly in awareness activities and discussions about local safety issues.

Community police officers regularly meet with volunteer groups in schools to plan activities such as safety campaigns or educational sessions for younger students. By contributing their own perspectives and working alongside police officers, participants develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their local environment.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Structured cooperation between police, schools and families**

The programme relies on close cooperation between police institutions, educational organisations and families. Community police officers provide mentoring and practical guidance, while schools create a supportive environment for meetings, workshops and prevention activities.

County police headquarters coordinate activities at regional level, and the Lithuanian Police School provides training and national-level events. This structured cooperation ensures that young volunteers receive consistent support and that prevention activities are integrated into school environments.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Peer education and safety awareness activities

A key element of the programme is peer-to-peer learning, where young volunteers help raise awareness among their classmates about safety issues and responsible behaviour. Training sessions and workshops provide participants with knowledge about topics such as bullying, cyber safety, legal responsibility and conflict prevention.

Volunteers often lead or support educational sessions in schools, sharing practical advice and promoting respectful behaviour among their peers. These activities help create positive social norms and encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions and surroundings.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms

Experiential learning and youth leadership development

Hands-on activities and practical experiences play an important role in building confidence and leadership skills among participants. The annual “Cadet for a Week” camp allows young volunteers to experience elements of police training, teamwork exercises and simulated safety scenarios.

Through these experiences, participants learn discipline, cooperation and responsibility while building stronger relationships with police officers and other volunteers. This experiential approach strengthens their sense of civic responsibility and encourages them to act as positive role models within their communities.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms
Institutional support and structured mentoring

The programme is supported by a clear legal and organisational framework that ensures continuity and stability. National regulations define how volunteers are recruited, trained and supervised, while police coordinators provide ongoing mentorship and guidance.

Participants receive certificates, badges and opportunities to attend national events or advanced training sessions. This structured support system helps maintain motivation among volunteers and contributes to the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Why it matters?

The Young Police Supporters programme demonstrates how early engagement and positive cooperation between youth and law enforcement can strengthen community safety in the long term. By providing young people with meaningful opportunities to participate in prevention activities, the initiative encourages responsible behaviour and builds trust between citizens and police institutions.

The programme also shows that youth engagement can be successfully integrated into national security and prevention strategies when supported by clear organisational structures and partnerships with schools and families. As a long-running and institutionalised initiative, it offers a valuable example of sustainable community-based prevention.

Empowering Youth for Community Security: The Lithuanian JPR Model

The Young Police Supporters (JPR) is a nationwide Lithuanian initiative engaging youth aged 12–18 in civic education and crime prevention. Supported by national legislation, the programme builds trust between citizens and law enforcement through structured volunteering and institutional partnerships.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

Multi-Sector Institutional Cooperation



Formal partnerships between the Ministry of the Interior, police headquarters, schools, and families.

Structured Civic Participation



Youth transition from passive recipients of prevention to active contributors to community security.

National Legislative Foundation



Clear legal frameworks define recruitment, mentorship, and long-term institutional sustainability.

IMPACT THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The "Cadet for a Week" Experience



Immersive training camps focused on discipline, teamwork, and practical security simulations.

Peer-to-Peer Security Education



Volunteers lead workshops for classmates on cyber security, legal responsibility, and conflict prevention.

Leadership and Role Modeling



Hands-on activities build confidence, helping youth act as positive influences within their communities.



Steps for Future Life Skills & Personal Development

Arad, Romania

Community conflict and trust-building

Vulnerable groups and social inclusion

Steps for Future – Life Skills & Personal Development is a preventive education programme implemented by the General Directorate of Social Assistance (DGAS) in the city of Arad, Romania. The initiative was created to support children and teenagers who face social or emotional difficulties that may later lead to conflict, risky behaviour or social exclusion.

The programme focuses on young people who experience challenging life conditions, including unstable family environments, poverty, family violence, substance abuse in the household or long-term unemployment. It also supports youth who struggle with emotional regulation, low self-esteem, peer conflicts or difficulties in school.

The initiative is based on structured life-skills workshops delivered by psychologists, social workers and educators. Sessions address topics such as emotional awareness, communication, empathy, conflict resolution, decision-making and cooperation. Activities rely on interactive learning methods including group discussions, role-play, storytelling and reflective exercises that help young people practise these skills in a supportive environment.

The programme operates as part of a broader support system connecting schools, family services and social care institutions. Teachers help identify students who may benefit from the programme, while social workers and psychologists monitor progress and maintain contact with families. Workshops are organised in multi-session cycles over several weeks or months, allowing facilitators to build relationships with participants and observe gradual behavioural changes.

In some cases, parents or caregivers are also involved through counselling or educational activities, particularly when family dynamics contribute to the young person's difficulties. Through this coordinated approach, the programme seeks to strengthen resilience and create more stable support networks around vulnerable youth.

Actors involved

Key stakeholders include:

- the General Directorate of Social Assistance (DGAS) in Arad
- Municipal social services
- Psychologists and social workers
- Educators, schools and teachers
- Child protection professionals
- Families and caregivers
- Local NGOs.

Key working mechanisms and their impact

Participatory governance mechanism **Youth participation in shaping activities**

A distinctive feature of the programme is the active involvement of young participants in shaping the learning process. Rather than delivering a fixed curriculum, facilitators encourage children and teenagers to discuss their concerns and propose topics that reflect their everyday challenges.

Before each cycle of workshops, facilitators hold open discussions with participants about issues such as peer conflict, emotional stress, bullying or family pressures. These conversations help adapt the activities to the real needs of the group. During the sessions, young people are also invited to reflect on group dynamics and suggest improvements. This participatory approach strengthens motivation and trust, encouraging participants to engage more openly and apply the skills they develop in real-life situations.

Cross-sector collaboration mechanism **Coordinated support system linking schools and social services**

The programme relies on close cooperation between different professionals working with young people. Schools, psychologists, social workers and child protection services collaborate to identify vulnerable youth and coordinate appropriate support.

Teachers often notice early signs of behavioural or emotional difficulties and refer students to the programme. Psychologists and educators lead the workshops, while social workers maintain communication with families and monitor the broader social context.

If more serious problems emerge, additional services can be activated. This coordinated system allows risks to be detected early and addressed in a consistent way across institutions.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanism **Emotional literacy and behavioural skills training**

A central element of the programme focuses on helping young people understand their emotions and manage conflicts constructively. Many behavioural problems arise not from intentional harm but from difficulties in recognising emotions or communicating effectively.

Through role-play, group discussions and scenario-based learning, participants practise identifying emotional triggers, expressing their needs and responding calmly to difficult situations. These exercises gradually improve empathy, communication skills and self-control. As young people become more confident in managing emotions, conflicts with peers decrease and relationships within schools and communities become more constructive.

Communication and awareness-raising mechanisms **Positive identity building and self-confidence**

The programme also focuses on strengthening young people's sense of personal value and agency. Activities encourage participants to recognise their strengths, set goals and develop a positive self-image.

Exercises such as personal reflection, group feedback and future planning help young people imagine constructive life paths and build confidence in their abilities. When participants begin to see themselves as capable and respected individuals, they are less likely to engage in aggressive or risky behaviour and more likely to contribute positively to their social environment.

Environmental and urban design mechanisms

Creating safe and supportive learning environments

Workshops take place in structured settings designed to encourage openness and mutual respect.

Facilitators create clear rules for interaction and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to express their views.

Sessions are usually organised in familiar environments such as schools, where young people feel comfortable. Seating arrangements, group activities and moderated discussions are used to create a supportive atmosphere where participants can safely explore personal experiences and practise new behaviours. This sense of psychological safety is essential for building trust and enabling meaningful personal development.

Why it matters?

The Steps for Future programme illustrates how preventive work with young people can reduce risks long before they escalate into violence, school dropout or long-term social exclusion.

By strengthening emotional resilience, communication skills and self-confidence, the initiative helps young people build healthier relationships and make better decisions. These changes contribute directly to safer schools, more stable communities and reduced social tensions.

The case demonstrates that effective security prevention often begins far upstream, by addressing social vulnerabilities and equipping young people with the skills and support needed to navigate challenges in their everyday lives.

Steps for Future: Enhancing Community Security through Youth Resilience

A preventive education initiative in Arad, Romania, providing structured life-skills workshops for vulnerable youth to strengthen resilience and prevent long-term community conflict.

Core Program Mechanisms



Cross-Sector Collaboration
Schools, psychologists, and social workers coordinate to identify vulnerable youth and provide consistent support.

Participatory Youth Governance
Participants actively shape workshop topics, ensuring the curriculum addresses their real-life challenges and peer conflicts.



Psychological Security in Learning
Workshops use familiar environments and structured rules to create a secure space for personal development.

Impact on Social Security



Emotional Literacy & Conflict Reduction
Training in empathy and emotional regulation decreases aggressive behavior and builds more constructive community relationships.



Positive Identity Building
Strengthening self-esteem and agency makes youth less likely to engage in risky or anti-social behaviors.



Upstream Risk Prevention
Addressing social vulnerabilities early reduces the long-term risks of violence, school dropout, and exclusion.

Conclusion and next steps

Public spaces across Europe are becoming more complex environments. Cities and public events must address not only traditional crime prevention, but also challenges related to crowd dynamics, social tensions, vulnerable groups, nightlife activities and mobility systems. These challenges require approaches that combine institutional capacity with community participation, communication, and innovative use of technology.

The twenty initiatives presented in this booklet show that social innovation in security can take many forms. Some initiatives focus on improving cooperation between institutions, others on empowering local communities, redesigning public spaces, or using technology to better understand and manage risks. In many cases, the most effective solutions emerge from combining several approaches at once.

While each initiative is unique, together they illustrate how cities and organisations can address complex challenges through cooperation, experimentation and learning.

Across the cases, several recurring patterns appear. Many initiatives rely on strong collaboration between public authorities, civil society organisations, community members and private actors. Others highlight the importance of early prevention, communication and education in shaping behaviour and reducing risks. Many cases also show how urban design, technology and operational coordination can strengthen the ability of cities to respond to evolving situations.

The purpose of this booklet is not to present universal solutions. Public security challenges always depend on local context, governance structures and social conditions. Instead, the cases are meant to serve as sources of inspiration that help practitioners reflect on how similar approaches could be adopted in their own cities or organisations.

Readers are therefore encouraged to focus not only on what each initiative does, but also on how it works: which actors cooperate, how decisions are made, how communities are involved, and how different tools and practices reinforce each other.

Looking beyond the 20 examples

The initiatives presented here are only a small part of the broader knowledge base developed within the CO-SECUR project. Behind this booklet lies a much larger research effort that identified more than 150 social innovation practices in public space security across Europe, including around 80 extended case studies analysed in detail by the project consortium.

These extended cases include deeper descriptions of governance models, operational structures, and lessons learned from implementation. They provide additional examples from different countries, institutional settings and thematic areas.

The full set of extended case studies is available in the CO-SECUR knowledge base on the project website, where readers can explore the initiatives in greater detail and access the original case fiches.

Continuing the dialogue

This booklet is part of an ongoing process within the CO-SECUR project. Throughout the project, the cases and the insights derived from them are discussed with practitioners, researchers and policymakers during participatory workshops, conferences and stakeholder meetings.

The aim is not only to document existing practices, but also to stimulate dialogue and learning process. By exchanging experiences and reflecting on working mechanisms behind successful initiatives, stakeholders can better understand how to develop more effective and socially inclusive approaches to public space security.

Ultimately, strengthening security in public spaces is not only about responding to risks. It is about building environments where people feel more secure, supported and able to participate in public life. Social innovation can play an important role in this process by connecting institutions, communities and knowledge in new ways.

The CO-SECUR project hopes that the examples presented here will contribute to this shared effort.



CO-SECUR

Co-creating urban security solutions

CO-SECUR is a 3-year Horizon Europe project (2023-26) that aims to **improve citizens' security perception and behaviour in public spaces**, especially at large events and crowded areas, by actively engaging them to co-create innovative security solutions.

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