



D2.3 Lessons learnt on how to implement SIS involving citizens



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About CO-SECUR: Co-creating urban security solutions in Europe

CO-SECUR is a 3-year Horizon Europe project 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.

The project will bring together existing knowledge, provide concrete tools and capacity-building activities, and present evidence-based results to promote good policy decisions. Its most important outcome will be the co-creation of a Societal Development Plan (SDP) to encourage the use of innovative security solutions that are sustainable, scalable, and effective.

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 socio-historical realities of different European regions.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used to support translation, language refinement and editorial consistency during the preparation of this document. All analytical content, interpretations and conclusions reflect the work and judgement of the authors.

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List of abbreviations

This glossary provides a list of key terms that are used thereafter and their definitions for the purposes of this document. It is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of all the terms related to the subject of this study.

Term	Definition
SIS	Social Innovation in Security
SDP	Societal Development Plan
PE	Participatory Event / Participatory Events
IoT	Internet of Things
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CSO	Civil Society Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
RRI	Responsible Research and Innovation

Summary

This deliverable summarises the key lessons learned from the implementation of Social Innovation for Security (SIS) initiatives across nine European countries, drawing on evidence from the literature, CO-SECUR case studies and stakeholder insights. The findings highlight the central role of early and inclusive citizen participation, ethical and interoperable technological solutions, clear multi-level governance structures, context-responsive methodologies and sustained investment to ensure long-term impact. These lessons provide essential inputs for the refinement of the CO-SECUR conceptual model (D2.1) and the co-creation of the Societal Development Plan (D3.1), supporting the development of effective, scalable and socially grounded urban security solutions across Europe.

1. Introduction

This document provides an integrated summary of the lessons learned from the implementation of Social Innovation for Security (SIS) initiatives in nine European countries within the framework of the COSECUR project. Its purpose is to provide a scientific and practical framework to guide policy formulation, intervention design and the scalability of urban security solutions aligned with the principles of collaboration, inclusion and sustainability promoted by the European Union.

The analysis is based on two complementary pillars. On the one hand, a comprehensive review of the literature identified evidence-based mechanisms of action that explain how social innovation interventions influence perceptions of security, community dynamics and citizen behaviour. On the other hand, empirical validation through national participatory events (PEs) provided institutional, professional and community perspectives, enriching the analysis with contextual knowledge and real operational experiences. The combination of these two sources offers a solid and multidimensional understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder the implementation of socially innovative security approaches in Europe.

The results reveal that participatory governance, ethical and inclusive technological integration, strategic communication, safe urban design and cross-sectoral collaboration are the basic pillars of any SIS initiative. However, the effectiveness of these elements depends on structural conditions common to the different contexts analysed. Among these, the central role of trust stands out: the relationship between citizens and institutions, as well as cooperation between sectors, is deeply conditioned by transparency, clarity of responsibilities and the continuity of participatory processes. When this trust is eroded, even well-designed interventions find it difficult to consolidate and generate sustained impact.

The document proposes a set of strategic recommendations aimed at institutionalising citizen participation, ensuring interoperability and digital justice, developing preventive and culturally adapted communication, integrating safe urban design into local policies, consolidating stable multi-stakeholder collaboration platforms, ensuring the financial and administrative sustainability of initiatives, and strengthening continuous evaluation systems. All these recommendations are derived directly from the mechanisms analysed and the challenges identified in the different national contexts, providing a practical basis for moving towards more democratic, inclusive and sustainable security models in European cities.

2. Methodology for Extracting and Validating Mechanisms of Action in Interventions

The process of identifying and validating mechanisms of action was developed based on the results obtained in the previous literature review, with the aim of isolating those elements that explain the causal relationship between interventions and their effects. First, a thorough reading of the selected texts was carried out, aimed at identifying passages that described the internal processes of the interventions, as well as explicit links between the methods applied and the expected changes in behavioural determinants or structural conditions. This phase involved the systematic coding of these passages and their organisation into conceptual categories that allowed mechanisms with similar characteristics to be grouped together.

Subsequently, validation criteria based on empirical evidence were applied, following the methodology proposed by Peters et al. (2020) and the Intervention Mapping approach (Bartholomew Eldredge et al., 2016). Each identified mechanism was evaluated according to three dimensions: the existence of studies supporting its effectiveness, replication in different contexts, and the presence of observable results confirming its impact. This process was complemented by verification of theoretical consistency, ensuring that the mechanisms were aligned with relevant determinants and could be incorporated into logical models articulating inputs, processes, and outcomes.

The methodological approach adopted for this deliverable follows the structure defined in the CO-SECUR proposal and is organised into two interlinked phases. The first phase consisted of an extensive review of relevant academic and grey literature on social innovation in security, urban security, participatory governance, and mechanisms influencing citizens' perceptions of security in public spaces. This theoretical work enabled the identification of a set of preliminary mechanisms of action that describe how socially innovative practices can generate changes in behaviour, trust, community dynamics and, more broadly, in urban security outcomes. These mechanisms served as the analytical foundation for the second phase.

The second phase involved a participatory validation process carried out through national stakeholder PEs in nine consortium countries: Belgium, Germany, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Finland. These sessions were conducted following a common methodological protocol to ensure comparability while allowing adaptation to each national context and stakeholder landscape. Participants were selected to represent

the Quintuple Helix; public authorities, security actors, civil society organisations, academia, private sector representatives, and, where possible, actors related to media and community groups. This diversity ensured that the discussions reflected both institutional and community-level perspectives on urban security challenges.

The validation PE generated qualitative evidence in the form of collective reflections, open discussions, written inputs, and real time responses using interactive tools. Across countries, the sessions provided insights into the perceived relevance, applicability and transferability of the mechanisms identified during the literature review. They also highlighted contextual enablers and barriers, practical needs, and gaps between formal security strategies and everyday operational realities. The evidence gathered from these PEs thus complements the theoretical analysis by anchoring the mechanisms in real world experiences, institutional practices, and the expectations of those directly engaged in implementing or affected by security initiatives.

Together, these two phases literature analysis and participatory validation provide a coherent and robust methodological basis for the lessons learnt presented in this deliverable.

3. Insights from the literature: Evidence-based mechanisms of action

This section presents the results of the literature review conducted in the first phase of the work. It provides an overview of the main mechanisms of action identified across academic and grey literature, which describe how socially innovative practices can influence urban security, perceptions of safety and community resilience. These mechanisms form the conceptual basis for the participatory validation carried out in the subsequent phase.

Evidence-based mechanisms of action refer to identifiable causal processes within an intervention that explain how and why that intervention produces its desired effects on a given population or context. These mechanisms explicitly link intervention methods to the behavioural determinants or structural conditions that are intended to be modified and are based on empirical evidence and theory of change. According to Peters et al. (2020), these mechanisms allow for the construction of logical models that articulate the components of an intervention with its expected outcomes, facilitating its evaluation, adaptation, and

transfer. Rigorous identification of these mechanisms allows not only for understanding the internal workings of interventions, but also for evaluating their effectiveness, scalability, and transferability to other contexts (Bartholomew Eldredge et al., 2016; Kok et al., 2017). Drawing from the literature, mechanisms of action in Social Innovation for Security (SIS) can be grouped into the following categories:

Five key categories were identified:

- **Participatory Governance:** deliberative processes and co-creation (e.g. participatory budgeting, community mediation).
- **Technological Integration:** IoT, AI and digital twins to improve situational awareness
- **Communication and Awareness:** prevention campaigns and safety training
- **Environmental and Urban Design:** inclusive redesign of public spaces applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** partnerships between the public, private and civil society sectors (e.g. Urban Labs).

Each mechanism is described with actors, processes, examples and observed effects (institutional trust, risk reduction, social cohesion).

3.1. Overview of Mechanisms Identified in the Literature

The literature review revealed a coherent set of recurring mechanisms through which social innovation initiatives contribute to enhanced security and improved perceptions of safety in public spaces. These mechanisms reflect multilevel interactions between governance, community engagement, environmental factors, communication processes and technological resources. While their specific manifestations vary across contexts, the review demonstrates that they consistently underpin successful socially innovative approaches to urban security. The sections below summarise the five preliminary mechanisms derived

from the literature and subsequently examined through stakeholder validation. Each mechanism is accompanied by concrete initiatives that illustrate its application in practice¹

Table 1. Mechanisms and Sub-mechanisms of Action Identified in the Literature

Mechanism	Sub-mechanisms
Participatory Governance	Citizen co-creation Community mediation Participatory platforms
Technological Integration	Alert and communication systems Threat maps and analytics IoT/AI systems, digital twins and crowd analytics
Communication and Awareness	Education and training Pre-event preventive communication Narratives and soft policing
Environmental and Urban Design	Natural surveillance and legibility Inclusive design Emotional and symbolic signage
Cross-Sector Collaboration	Multi-agency operational coordination Public-private and community networks Integrated youth programmes Co-operation with NGOs and vulnerable groups

3.2. Participatory governance

It refers to institutionalised or informal processes that enable citizens and other actors to actively participate in decision-making on security issues. These mechanisms include components such as public deliberation, co-creation of solutions, and accountability. According to Smith (2009), citizen participation improves democratic legitimacy and the effectiveness of public policies.

These mechanisms involve structured processes that enable citizens and stakeholders to actively participate in the co-creation, design, and implementation of security solutions.

¹ More information on these initiatives can be found in D1.2. Database with 180-225 SIS cases and D2.2. Booklet SIS Case Studies.

Key components include public deliberation, collaborative decision-making, and accountability frameworks. Examples include participatory budgeting, co-design platforms and community mediation. Observed effects include increased institutional trust, improved legitimacy of security policies, and better adaptation to local needs (Smith, 2009; Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2014).

Key features:

- **Main actors:** Citizens, local communities, neighbourhood associations.
- **Processes:** Co-creation, public deliberation, participatory budgeting, community mediation.

Observed effects: Increased trust, improved legitimacy, alignment with local needs. The implementation of participatory budgeting has been shown to increase citizen trust and institutional legitimacy (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014).

3.2.1 Sub-mechanism: Citizen co-creation

Citizen co-creation involves direct initiation, redefinition or adjustment of interventions by the public. Institutions act as facilitators, not leaders. This mechanism is grounded in empowerment, shared ownership, and the capacity of citizens to identify problems that may remain invisible to traditional security actors.

Functional definition

Citizen co-creation operates through participatory formats such as participatory budgeting, co-design workshops, challenge-driven innovation, or collaborative prototyping. It allows residents to influence priorities, propose solutions, shape intervention design, and participate in implementation and evaluation.

Table 2. Citizen co-creation: Illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Don't Give Up on Life	Poland	Citizen-initiated proposal through participatory budgeting to install motivational plaques and emergency contacts on bridges originally developed as a suicide prevention measure; evolved into a structured prevention programme involving crisis teams and coordinated monitoring.

Safer Leiria (co-design workshops)	Portugal	Residents and CSOs co-design actions to improve coexistence, security awareness and the use of public space; applied to youth, seniors and neighbourhood actors.
Women's Safety Mapping	Portugal	Women map safe/unsafe routes, co-producing spatial evidence for urban redesign, lighting improvements and identification of support points.
Neighbourhood Walks & Observations	Belgium	Residents co-identify environmental risks and propose micro-interventions for nightlife areas.
Youth Co-creation in Steps for Future	Romania	Young people co-create personal development and security-related programmes with institutions and NGOs.

3.2.2 Sub-mechanism: Community mediation

Community mediation enables structured dialogue between actors in tension, facilitated by neutral mediators. It promotes de-escalation, reduces polarisation and supports the emergence of shared norms.

Functional definition

This mechanism operates through conflict-resolution methodologies such as restorative dialogue, intercultural mediation, and facilitated negotiation. It is particularly relevant in contexts with low trust, emerging intergroup tensions or contested public spaces.

Table 3. Community mediation: Illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Forssa Community Dialogue	Finland	Structured mediation between youth and asylum seekers involving professionals, schools, police and youth workers; reduces tension and rebuilds trust.
L'Hospitalet Community Mediation Service	Spain	Municipal mediation service facilitating conflict resolution between neighbours, youth, institutions and community actors; improves coexistence and reduces escalation.
Shared Use Concept (participatory phase)	Germany	Mediation and participatory sessions used to negotiate divergent user needs in a conflictive square prior to physical redesign.

REVERT informal mediation	Greece	Mediated conversations between migrants and transport staff aimed at reducing discriminatory interactions, misunderstandings and communication barriers between drivers and migrant group.
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3.2.3 Sub-mechanism: Participatory platforms

Participatory platforms provide digital or physical infrastructures for co-creation, ideation, testing and replication of innovations.

Functional definition

They operate as open innovation ecosystems where public authorities, professionals and citizens follow shared innovation cycles (problem identification → ideation → prototyping → piloting → documentation → scaling). They enhance transparency, structure collaboration and build innovation capacity

Table 4. Participatory platforms : Illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Innokylä	Finland	National digital platform for co-creating, piloting and scaling health and security innovations using structured methodologies.
PACTESUR2 Co-creation Spaces	France–Italy–Belgium	Cities use shared methodological toolkits to co-design safety solutions before large events.
Urban Labs	Germany	Platforms for testing, documenting and evaluating co-produced safety and urban solutions.
Neighbourhood Participation Hubs	Poland	Community-level spaces for iterative co-design of security improvements (lighting, patrol distribution, signalling).
Youth Innovation Platforms	Lithuania	Digital-participatory spaces for youth–police collaboration and proactive prevention.

3.3. Technological Integration Mechanisms

These mechanisms use digital tools to improve safety awareness and behaviour. Technologies include IoT sensors, artificial intelligence, digital twins and crowd monitoring

applications. When designed ethically, these tools improve situational awareness and enable real-time responses, contributing to adaptive urban safety strategies (Rupanetti and Kaabouch, 2024; Alasmari, 2024).

Key features:

- **Main actors:** Public administrations, technology companies, developers, law enforcement agencies.
- **Processes:** Implementation of IoT sensors, artificial intelligence, digital twins, citizen monitoring applications.

Observed effects: Improved situational awareness, real-time responsiveness, risk reduction

3.3.1 Sub-mechanism: Alert and communication systems

Functional definition

Alert and communication systems comprise technologies enabling immediate activation, transmission and co-ordination in the event of an incident. Examples include SOS buttons, silent alarms, secure messaging channels and live video feeds. They aim to compress the sequence; detection, reporting, verification and response, ensuring that frontline staff and emergency services operate with shared situational awareness.

Table 5. Table 3.3.A Alert and communication systems: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
SECUR-ED	Romania	The 'red button' system allows bus and tram drivers, as well as ticket inspectors, to discreetly signal incidents. Alerts automatically trigger live video transmission to the operator, police and gendarmerie, enabling prioritised dispatch and rapid intervention.
evaGuide	Greece	Real-time evacuation guidance links operator dashboards with alerts for venue staff to synchronise instructions and safe routes as conditions evolve.
Electric Castle Festival	Romania	Mobile awareness teams use structured communication protocols to escalate early signals to security and medical points and support live guidance for attendees.
Don't Give Up on Life	Poland	CCTV operators and a 24/7 crisis hotline create a fully closed loop for incident detection, communication, and

		response on bridges. This system enables the rapid signalling of events such as aggression, medical emergencies, threats, suicide attempts, or any severe disruption that may compromise passenger safety.
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3.3.2 Sub-mechanism: Threat maps and analytics

Functional definition

Threat maps and analytics platforms integrate data from multiple sources: citizen reports, police records, urban sensors, historical incidents and municipal data into dynamic, georeferenced risk pictures. This supports the prioritisation of interventions, the planning of patrols and transparent communication with the public.

Table 6. Threat maps and analytics: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
National Safety Threat Map	Poland	Publicly accessible tool that collects and visualises incident reports, enabling the identification of high-risk areas and improving institutional transparency.
INSIGHT Toolbox	Germany	Provides urban security diagnostics hotspot mapping and trend analysis to inform local prevention strategies.
SECUR-ED	Romania	Meta-data and streamed video improve real-time verification and provide a basis for post-incident analytical review.

3.3.3 Sub-mechanism: IoT/AI systems, digital twins and crowd analytics

Functional definition

Refers to sensor technologies, AI-based analytics and digital twins that model crowd flows, anticipate congestion and test interventions virtually prior to real-world implementation.

Table 7. IoT/AI, digital twins and crowd analytics: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Sure Tampere (digital twin)	Finland	Integrates multi-source city data to simulate crowd scenarios and optimise routing, signage and staffing for mass events.
evaGuide	Greece	Adaptive evacuation algorithms recompute safe egress routes as conditions change, using real-time inputs.
Pol'and'Rock Festival	Poland	Site layouts and monitoring points support data-driven crowd management across large temporary areas.
INSIGHT Toolbox	Germany	Analytical modules support pattern recognition and evidence-based prevention.

3.4. Communication and Awareness Mechanisms

These mechanisms encompass strategies aimed at informing and educating the public to their behaviour and perceptions regarding security. They include pre-event counter-terrorism communication, gender-sensitive campaigns, and security training programmes. These approaches have been shown to improve preparedness, reduce fear and encourage pro-social behaviour (Lundgren and McMakin, 2018).

Key features:

- **Main actors:** Local governments, NGOs, media, communication and social psychology experts.
- **Processes:** Information campaigns, security training, preventive communication, narrative approach.
- **Examples:** Pre-event counter-terrorism campaigns, gender-focused campaigns, security training programmes.

Observed effects: Increased citizen preparedness, reduced fear, promotion of prosocial behaviour.

3.4.1 Sub-mechanism: Education and training

Functional definition

Education and training involve structured transfer of knowledge, practical skills and preventive competencies to distinct groups, youth, frontline staff, vulnerable populations or the public through workshops, simulations and experiential methods.

Table 8. Education and training : illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Young Police Supporters	Lithuania	Young people receive regular training on crime prevention, civic behaviour and first aid and act as peer multipliers.
EVA-Guide (training)	Greece	Security and venue staff are trained to interpret evacuation routes and real-time signals.
Steps for Future	Romania	Youth development programme strengthening resilience, emotional skills and constructive behaviour.
Safe Neighbourhood (workshops)	Poland	Preventive education for seniors, families and young people on everyday security and self-protection.

3.4.2 Sub-mechanism: Pre-event preventive communication

Functional definition

Pre-event preventive communication provides advance messaging to prepare audiences psychologically and practically for an upcoming event or known risk scenario. It clarifies what to expect, how to behave, where to seek help and how to mitigate risks. This reduces uncertainty and prevents improvisation that could increase vulnerability.

Table 9. Pre-event preventive communication : illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
PACTESUR2	EU network	Cities prepare pre-event materials on risks, safe points and emergency procedures for mass gatherings.

Pol'and'Rock Festival	Poland	Attendees receive advance guidance on safety behaviour, routes and support services.
SECUR-ED	Romania	Pre-event communication in public transport clarifies safety rules and appropriate responses.
Young Police Supporters	Lithuania	Youth volunteers disseminate advance messages on coexistence and safe behaviour during local events.

3.4.3 Sub-mechanism: Narratives and “soft policing”

Functional definition

Narratives and soft policing rely on non-coercive approaches: mediation, empathetic communication and emotional support to de-escalate conflict, reinforce constructive behaviour and foster trust. This strengthens institutional legitimacy and reduces reliance on punitive responses.

Table 10. Narratives and “soft policing”: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Brussels by Night	Belgium	Street mediators intervene early, accompany vulnerable individuals and defuse tensions.
Nightlife Coordination Office	Germany	Uses mediation and dialogue with youth and venues to prevent escalation in nightlife areas.
REVERT	Greece	Promotes intercultural understanding and conflict reduction between drivers and migrant communities.
Artemis	Spain	Gender-sensitive campaigns use empathetic language to encourage awareness and safe bystander action.
Electric Castle Festival	Romania	Positive messaging and approachable staff reduce anxiety and support prosocial norms.

3.5. Environmental and Urban Design Mechanisms

These mechanisms involve collaboration between public, private, academic and civil society actors to jointly develop security solutions. They focus on the physical design of spaces to prevent crime and promote security. These mechanisms reduce opportunities for crime and improve the perception of safety, especially among vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly. Examples include the CPTED (Crime Prevention Through

Environmental Design) approach and inclusive urban planning. These collaborations mobilise diverse resources, foster innovation and ensure multidimensional responses to complex challenges.

Key features:

- **Key Actors:** urban planners and architects, local government authorities, civil society organisations and neighbourhood associations, public safety experts and law enforcement (in advisory roles)
- **Processes:** Application of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles, including natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and access control, Inclusive urban planning that integrates safety considerations for vulnerable groups
- **Examples:** Redesign of public parks with improved lighting and visibility to deter antisocial behaviour, inclusive planning initiatives that incorporate gender-sensitive spatial analysis (e.g. mapping unsafe zones for women), urban renewal projects in deprived neighbourhoods with a focus on safety and accessibility

Observed effects: Reduction in opportunities to commit crime, improvement in the perception of safety.

3.5.1 Sub-mechanism: Natural surveillance and legibility

Functional definition

Improving visibility, lighting, clear lines of sight and intuitive spatial organisation to support natural surveillance, reduce ambiguity and facilitate safe navigation.

Table 11. Natural surveillance and legibility: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Shared Use Concept	Germany	Redesigned a conflictive square through improved lighting, visibility and circulation routes.
Brussels by Night (urban improvements)	Belgium	Enhanced lighting, pedestrian flows and maintenance to reduce conflict in nightlife areas.
Safe Neighbourhood	Poland	Micro-CPTED solutions co-decided with residents (lighting, cameras, routes).

Mein Schlossplatz Activation	Germany	Light urban activation combined with visibility and community programming.
Pol'and'Rock Festival	Poland	Spatial layout of routes, service zones and emergency access supports safe crowd flows.

3.5.2 Sub-mechanism: Inclusive design

Functional definition

Design that explicitly incorporates the perspectives and needs of women, young people, older adults and migrants, recognising that perceptions of security vary across groups.

Table 12. Inclusive design : illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Women's Safety Mapping	Portugal	Participatory safety walks and mapping exercises where women identify unsafe routes, poorly lit areas and spaces generating anxiety; the evidence directly informs improvements in lighting, visibility, signage and the creation of safe points in public space.
Safer Leiria	Portugal	Co-designed interventions involving young people, older adults and local organisations to ensure that public spaces are accessible, welcoming and safe for diverse groups; includes adjustments to lighting, mobility and micro-design elements.
REVERT (inclusive transport design)	Greece	Adaptations in public transport environments, supported by migrants and NGOs to reduce cultural tensions, improve communication and strengthen perceived safety for both drivers and passengers.
Nightlife Coordination Office	Germany	Collaborative planning with venues, youth groups and municipal departments integrates accessibility, user diversity and inclusive safety considerations into nightlife districts.

3.5.3 Sub-mechanism: Emotional and symbolic signage

Functional definition

Visual and affective messages in public spaces that support emotional regulation, orientation and access to help, reinforcing norms of care and solidarity.

Table 13. Emotional and symbolic signage: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Don't Give Up on Life	Poland	Motivational plaques displaying supportive messages and the number of the municipal crisis hotline are installed on bridges. Their purpose is to interrupt suicidal ideation, provide immediate emotional guidance and act as a visible invitation to seek help. Combined with increased monitoring and rapid-response protocols, the signage offers a compassionate, low-threshold mechanism for prevention in high-risk locations.
Electric Castle Festival	Romania	Highly visible and creatively designed signs in rest areas to promote positive, reassuring and harm-reduction messages. These prompts encourage hydration, help-seeking and respectful behaviour, supporting emotional regulation in crowded and stimulating environments. Their tone is friendly and youth-oriented, helping normalise safe practices without appearing coercive.
Puntos Violeta	Spain	Clearly signposted support points at festivals and public events where women can seek assistance in cases of harassment or gender-based violence. The highly recognisable purple symbol acts as a visual reassurance mechanism, signalling safety, confidentiality and immediate access to trained personnel. Their presence also reinforces social norms that reject violence and promote collective responsibility.

3.6. Cross-Sector Collaboration Mechanisms

This mechanism focuses on cooperation between different institutional and professional sectors to address security from multiple dimensions. It does not involve direct citizen participation, but rather strategic partnerships between actors with different skills and resources. These mechanisms involve partnerships between public, private, academic and

civil society actors to jointly develop security solutions. These mechanisms are particularly relevant in contexts of social innovation, where the goal is not only to solve problems but to transform the way institutions and communities interact. As Pache et al. (2023) argue, cross-sector collaborations are essential for addressing complex problems that require coordination across diverse values, interests, and operational logics.

Key features:

- **Key actors:** Public administrations, private companies, universities, NGOs.
- **Processes:** Joint project design, inter-institutional coordination, exchange of knowledge and resources.
- **Examples:** Urban Labs in Germany and the Netherlands, which serve as experimental spaces for multi-actor innovation in public safety, Interventions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods that combine the efforts of local governments, architects, social workers, and community organisations to enhance safety and foster social cohesion.

Observed effects: Reduction of crime opportunities, improvement of the perception of safety, especially among vulnerable groups.

3.6.1 Sub-mechanism: Multi-agency operational co-ordination

Functional definition

Shared command structures and real time situational pictures, allowing different agencies to act as a single operational system.

Table 14. Multi-agency co-ordination: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Pol'and'Rock Festival	Poland	Unified command integrating police, fire, medical teams, municipal services and volunteers.
SECUR-ED	Romania	Operator, police and gendarmerie share real-time video and geo-positioning with unified protocols.
Brussels by Night	Belgium	Cross-service co-ordination (mobility, cleaning, police, mediation) on the ground.
evaGuide	Greece	Real-time co-ordination between venue operators, security and emergency responders.

INSIGHT Toolbox	Germany	Provides intelligence for co-ordinated prevention actions by multiple municipal actors.
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3.6.2 Sub-mechanism: Public–private and community networks

Functional definition

Stable alliances across public authorities, private sector and community organisations that sustain safety interventions and ensure shared responsibility over time.

Table 15. Public–private and community networks: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
Nightlife Mayor	Germany	A permanent network of venues, youth groups, residents, cultural actors and police co-ordinated through the Night Mayor. The Night Mayor acts as a mediator and facilitator, ensuring ongoing dialogue, conflict resolution and collective planning for nightlife safety. This structure promotes shared responsibility, reduces tensions between stakeholders and supports more coherent and inclusive management of the night-time economy
Nightlife Coordination Office	Germany	Formal governance platform bringing together venues, municipal departments, youth actors and police. It enables regular communication, joint planning and rapid mediation when issues arise. By maintaining a unified strategy for nightlife management, it strengthens coherence across services, prevents escalation and fosters a safer, more balanced night-time environment.
Steps for Future	Romania	NGOs and municipal services jointly support vulnerable youth. Through mentoring, life-skills training and personalised guidance, the programme reduces social isolation and enhances young people’s resilience. Co-ordinated action between professionals ensures early identification of risks and sustained follow-up, contributing to safer pathways into adulthood.

3.6.3 Sub-mechanism: Integrated youth programmes

Functional definition

Multidisciplinary teams intervene early with young people through integrated assessment, support and follow-up, addressing risks

Table 16. Integrated youth programmes: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
ANCHOR (Ankkuri)	Finland	A multidisciplinary early-intervention model where police, social workers, nurses and youth professionals operate as a single integrated team, conducting joint assessments, home visits and tailored support to prevent escalation among at-risk young people.
Young Police Supporters	Lithuania	A youth–police collaboration scheme in which adolescents receive training in crime prevention, civic responsibility and first aid, and act as peer multipliers while working directly alongside local police to promote safety and positive engagement.
Forssa Community Dialogue (youth track)	Finland	Part of a wider structured mediation process in which youth workers, schools, police and community services jointly support young people involved in intergroup tensions, creating a restorative pathway that reduces conflict and promotes social cohesion.

3.6.4 Sub-mechanism: Co-operation with NGOs and vulnerable groups

Functional definition

Integrating community knowledge, cultural mediation and support for vulnerable groups into planning and implementation.

Table 17. Co-operation with NGOs and vulnerable groups: illustrative examples

Example	Country	Summary
REVERT	Greece	Transport operators, NGOs and migrants co-design responses to xenophobia and support driver training.

Don't Give Up on Life (support services)	Poland	Crisis intervention teams and municipal services co-operate to support vulnerable individuals.
Brussels by Night	Belgium	Social support teams accompany vulnerable people in nightlife districts. Social support teams work alongside mediators to accompany vulnerable individuals in nightlife districts, including those who may be intoxicated, isolated or at risk of exploitation. Their presence provides immediate assistance, emotional support and safe guidance to appropriate services, helping prevent escalation and reducing harm.

4. Insights from Stakeholders: results validation

This section presents the results of the participatory validation process conducted across nine consortium countries: Belgium, Germany, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Finland. The purpose of this process was to assess the relevance, applicability and transferability of the preliminary mechanisms identified through the literature review, as well as to capture context specific insights, challenges and expectations from practitioners, policymakers, civil society actors, and other stakeholders involved in security related work.

4.1. Objectives of the Validation PEs

The validation PE aimed to:

- verify the extent to which the five preliminary mechanisms reflect real world practices and challenges in urban security;
- identify enablers and barriers affecting their implementation across diverse European contexts;
- explore stakeholders' expectations regarding practical tools, operational guidance and future outcomes of the CO-SECUR project;
- complement theoretical findings with practitioner driven evidence and lived experience.

These objectives ensured that the mechanisms were not only theoretically grounded but also empirically tested and shaped by actors directly responsible for or affected by security policies and interventions.

4.2. Methodological Approach

All PE followed a common methodological protocol to ensure consistency. Each session included:

- a presentation of the CO-SECUR framework and the five mechanisms;
- discussion questions structured around applicability, transferability and contextualisation;

- structured and open reflections facilitated through guided discussion, interactive polling tools and written contributions;
- documentation of inputs to enable cross country comparison.

Participants were recruited to represent the Quintuple Helix public authorities (local, regional and national), law enforcement, social and community services, academia, private sector actors, NGOs, and, where possible, media and vulnerable group representatives. This diversity allowed for a well-rounded and Multi perspective assessment.

4.3. Cross-Country Findings

Although each country had different institutional and socio-cultural contexts, a series of cross-cutting findings emerged that were consistently repeated. First, the mechanisms identified were recognised as relevant by the actors involved in the nine countries, but the need to advance their operationalisation was noted. Participants agreed that they adequately reflect the key components of effective and innovative urban security, although they require clearer and more practical guidance, including concrete steps, checklists, decision-making pathways, and implementation guides.

Secondly, the issue of trust emerged as a fundamental element for any process of innovation in security. Concern about declining trust in institutions, the police and communication systems was common in Western, Southern and Eastern Europe. Stakeholders emphasised that without trust, it is unfeasible to sustain participatory governance models, foster cooperation or promote behavioural change.

Another recurring issue was the fragmentation of responsibilities, both thematic and institutional, between police forces, municipal departments, and health or social services. This dispersion hinders coordination, creates inefficiencies, produces unclear mandates, and hinders the continuity of long-term initiatives. Added to this is the vulnerability of project sustainability, which often depends on highly motivated individuals. When these key figures leave their posts or funding ends, initiatives tend to stagnate. Participants emphasised the need to consolidate permanent structures, stable funding and formal coordination mechanisms to ensure durability.

Communication was also identified as a critical but underdeveloped mechanism. Stakeholders emphasised that communication influences both perceptions of security and actual risk; however, misinformation, sensationalist coverage, unclear institutional messages and digital exclusion were repeatedly cited as significant barriers.

Several PEs also highlighted the persistent difficulty of engaging vulnerable or marginalised groups. Participation tends to attract people who are already committed or empowered,

while groups such as at-risk youth, migrants, people experiencing homelessness or substance abuse, women at risk, and other vulnerable groups often remain on the margins of participatory processes.

Although technology is considered necessary, it was noted that it is not sufficient on its own. Participants pointed out that it can exclude certain groups and cannot replace interpersonal trust, local knowledge or cooperation between actors. They therefore advocated the importance of combining technological solutions with social, communicative and participatory approaches.

The relevance of the local context was also strongly emphasised. Even when mechanisms are considered valid, their application depends on factors such as the culture of governance, the availability of resources, social capital, the size of the city or institutional maturity. This led to the assertion that no model can be applied uniformly in all urban environments.

4.4. Country Specific Nuances

In Western Europe, represented by countries such as Belgium, Germany and Finland, participants particularly highlighted the challenges arising from cooperation in complex governance systems. The multiplicity of actors and administrative levels creates difficulties in coordinating efforts, which is exacerbated by significant communication gaps. There was also considerable concern about the fragmentation of services, which is perceived as an obstacle to the effectiveness of interventions. At the same time, there was clear interest in evidence-based evaluation to strengthen the quality and legitimacy of urban security actions.

In the case of Southern Europe, with contributions from Spain, Portugal and Greece, the emphasis was on participatory governance and the central role of communication and inclusion. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of involving citizens and vulnerable groups in design and decision-making processes. However, they also emphasised the presence of resource constraints that condition the implementation of policies and programmes. In this context, the relevance of cultural mediation and specific adaptation to each local environment was recognised as key elements for effectiveness.

In Eastern Europe, represented by Lithuania, Poland and Romania, there was strong concern about trust deficits and administrative rigidities that hinder innovation in security. Participants also showed particular interest in hybrid and cognitive threats, which are increasingly present in these territories, and pointed to the need for operational tools that allow for a rapid response. Likewise, great importance was given to the role of grassroots actors, such as volunteer fire brigades and local community organisations, which are considered essential for strengthening social resilience and institutional proximity.

Finally, some countries on the eastern flank of the EU, such as Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, drew attention to the need to address hybrid and cognitive threats in greater depth. In these contexts, disinformation, cognitive warfare, cyber threats and social destabilisation constitute growing risks that are not always sufficiently represented in conventional urban security frameworks.

4.5. Validation of Each Mechanism

Overall, the validation PE confirmed the theoretical mechanisms while highlighting practical conditions for their implementation. They provided concrete, contextually informed evidence that guides the refinement of the lessons learnt presented in the next section.

More concretely, stakeholders nuanced the different mechanisms as follows:

- **Participatory governance:** effective but fragile where trust is low; needs institutional mandates. The participants agreed that participatory governance is the most transformative mechanism, but also the most fragile if it is not underpinned by formal and stable structures. In theory, deliberative processes, citizen co-creation and participatory platforms offer robust ways of adapting security policies to local needs. However, participants emphasised that these dynamics only work when there is a pre-existing foundation of trust between institutions and citizens.
In contexts where trust has been eroded by experiences of a lack of transparency, project discontinuity or tensions between communities and authorities, participation tends to be perceived as an empty ritual or as a communication strategy with no real consequences. Conversely, when participation is institutionalised (for example, through stable participatory budgeting or permanent mediation services), it becomes a legitimate space for negotiating priorities, sharing responsibilities and preventing conflicts.
- **Cross sectoral cooperation:** essential yet complicated; requires structural coordination. Cross-sectoral collaboration is perceived as an essential mechanism for addressing the complexity of urban security issues, but implementing it is considerably more complex than the literature suggests. In most countries, participants highlighted the fragmentation of responsibilities, overlapping competences and cultural differences between sectors as common obstacles.
Stakeholders agreed that, without formal coordination structures, cooperation relies too heavily on individual 'champions' who, when they change roles or a project ends, leave processes weakened. Thus, the most successful cases presented in the case studies share common elements: defined roles, stable communication channels and operational protocols that allocate tasks and prevent duplication.

The validation also highlighted that collaboration cannot be based exclusively on technical exchange between institutions; it requires common languages, mutual recognition of capabilities and safe spaces to negotiate divergent interests. In this sense, multisectoral cooperation is established as a powerful mechanism, but it demands stable organisational infrastructures that enable it to be sustained over time.

- **Communication and awareness:** foundational; requires clarity, accessibility and counter misinformation strategies. Communication was highlighted by participants as a cross-cutting and often underestimated element within security policies. Although the literature presents it as a mechanism designed to improve preparedness, reduce fear or promote pro-social behaviour, stakeholders emphasised that in practice it also operates as a key determinant of institutional legitimacy.

Poor communication whether due to a lack of clarity, contradictory messages, inaccessible technical language or a lack of social media strategies generates confusion, increases the perception of risk and even fuels misinformation. In contrast, when communication is proactive, empathetic and tailored to different social groups, it facilitates understanding of the risks, fosters shared responsibility and reduces tensions.

Stakeholders emphasised that communication must go beyond one-off campaigns: it requires sustained, coherent, multilingual and culturally adapted strategies. This is particularly relevant for reaching vulnerable groups, whose experiences and information channels often differ from those of the general population. In summary, communication was validated not only as a functional mechanism, but as a central element for building trust, managing perceptions and preventing the spread of counterproductive narratives.

- **Spatial design:** effective when user centred; must consider marginalised groups. Participants widely endorsed the importance of urban design as a means of improving both objective safety and the perception of safety. However, they emphasised that its effects depend largely on the design being people-centred, context-sensitive and aligned with the social dynamics of the environment. Physical redesign: better lighting, greater visibility, clear routes, and adapted street furniture can reduce opportunities for crime and foster a sense of community. However, the findings confirmed that spatial interventions fail when applied in a standardised manner, without understanding who uses the space, what conflicts exist, or which groups are systematically excluded. Consequently, the most highly valued initiatives were those combining design with participatory methodologies, spatial usage mapping, and considerations of gender, age or cultural background.

In summary, urban design is understood as a highly effective mechanism but one that is deeply context-dependent and reliant on the diversity of those who inhabit and pass through these spaces.

- **Technological integration:** supportive tool, not centrepiece; must remain inclusive and transparent. Technological integration was validated as a valuable mechanism, but participants insisted that its effectiveness is complementary to and never a substitute for social mechanisms.

Digital tools: sensors, risk maps, warning systems, flow analysis or data platforms can improve early detection, coordination and response capacity. However, stakeholders warned that technology can create inclusion gaps, perceptions of excessive surveillance and resistance if it is not accompanied by an ethical, transparent and human-centred approach.

In practice, technology is effective when it is integrated into clear routines, when it supports professionals' decision-making, and when it does not require digital skills that certain groups lack. The importance of interoperability between systems was also highlighted, as technological fragmentation is perceived as a risk that can complicate coordination between services. The validation concluded that technology adds value when used to enhance, rather than replace, cooperation, communication and participation.

5. Lessons Learnt

This section synthesises the insights drawn from both the literature review and the stakeholder validation process. The lessons learnt reflect areas of consensus regarding what enables or constrains socially innovative approaches to urban security. They also serve as a foundation for the development of the Societal Development Plan (SDP) in WP3 (D3.1).

5.1. Governance, Legitimacy and Trust

Effective security interventions require robust governance structures built on transparency, shared responsibility and legitimacy. Across all countries, stakeholders highlighted that trust between citizens and institutions, between sectors, and within communities is the most critical determinant of whether interventions succeed or fail. Participatory mechanisms are more effective when embedded in formal structures rather than implemented sporadically

or informally. A clear example is the Participatory Budgeting model in Portugal, where institutionalised procedures, transparent decision making and stable funding cycles have contributed to sustained citizen trust and long-term legitimacy.

5.2. Coordination, Roles and Long-term Sustainability

Social innovation in security depends on stable collaboration between diverse actors. However, fragmented responsibilities, unclear mandates and administrative rigidity repeatedly hinder cooperation. Sustainable initiatives require defined roles, long-term funding strategies, and institutionalised mechanisms that reduce dependency on individual champions or temporary project-based efforts.

5.3. Inclusion and Meaningful Participation

Inclusive processes are central to socially innovative security practices, but achieving meaningful participation remains challenging. Marginalised groups often face barriers related to trust, language, digital access, stigma or lack of outreach. Successful approaches rely on tailored engagement strategies, intermediary organisations, and recognition of community knowledge and lived experience.

5.4. Communication, Narratives and Perceptions of Safety

Perceptions of safety are shaped not only by incidents or environmental conditions but by communication dynamics and social narratives. Poor institutional communication, misinformation, and sensationalist media coverage can erode trust and heighten anxiety. Conversely, clear, accessible, empathetic communication strengthens understanding, reduces uncertainty and enables more constructive community engagement.

5.5. Spatial Design and the Social Use of Public Space

The literature and PEs underscore the importance of well-designed public spaces in promoting safety and social cohesion. Interventions that improve visibility, accessibility, usability and urban comfort can positively influence behaviour and perceptions. However, spatial solutions must consider the needs of different groups, including those who are often excluded or stigmatised in debates about public space.

5.6. Technology, Data and Human Centred Approaches

Technological tools can enhance situational awareness and coordination, but their use must be proportionate, transparent and inclusive. Overreliance on technological solutions risks deepening digital inequalities and may undermine trust. A human centred approach is essential to ensure that technology supports, not replaces, social interaction, communication and collaborative decision making.

5.7. Contextual Adaptation and Transferability

A key lesson emerging from all countries is that there is no universal model for socially innovative security. While the five mechanisms provide a useful conceptual framework, their implementation must be adapted to local conditions, institutional cultures, legal frameworks, available resources and community dynamics. Successful transferability requires flexibility and sensitivity to context.

5.8. Emerging Threats and the Need for Societal Resilience

Several countries emphasised the need to incorporate emerging threats, such as hybrid and cognitive warfare, disinformation, and digital manipulation. These threats highlight the importance of strengthening societal resilience, media literacy, crisis preparedness and public awareness areas traditionally considered outside the scope of urban security but increasingly relevant.

5.9. Synthesis

The lessons learnt confirm the relevance of the five mechanisms of action while demonstrating that their effectiveness depends on concrete, context-sensitive conditions. Across the cases analysed, examples such as **Participatory Budgeting in Portugal**² show how institutionalised participation strengthens trust and legitimacy, while the **Nightlife Coordination Office in Germany** illustrates how clearly defined roles and stable governance structures support long-term cooperation. Inclusive approaches, as demonstrated by **Safer Leiria**, reveal the importance of tailored engagement with diverse groups, and communication-centred practices such as those at the **Electric Castle Festival in Romania** highlight the role of clear, empathetic messaging in shaping perceptions of safety.

Spatial interventions, including the **Shared Use Concept in Germany**, demonstrate how thoughtful urban design can transform the social dynamics of public spaces when combined with participatory processes. Technological solutions, exemplified by **SECURED in Romania**, show added value when embedded in human-centred routines and multiagency systems. At the same time, adaptable methods such as **Women's Safety Mapping in Portugal** underline the need for context-responsive approaches to ensure transferability. Finally, programmes such as **Young Police Supporters in Lithuania** demonstrate how social resilience can be strengthened in the face of emerging cognitive and hybrid threats. Together, these examples illustrate how the five mechanisms operate in practice and how their integration can produce meaningful and sustainable improvements in urban security.

These findings directly inform the recommendations and operational guidance that will be developed in the Societal Development Plan.

6. Conclusions

This deliverable presents an integrated framework that connects scientific evidence with professional practice, providing a solid basis for policy formulation and the design of urban safety interventions. The combination of validated mechanisms of action and lessons learned allows us to understand both the causal processes that explain the effectiveness

² More information on these initiatives can be found in D1.2. Database with 180-225 SIS cases and D2.2. Booklet SIS Case Studies.

of initiatives and the contextual factors that condition their success, sustainability and transferability. The results show that social innovation approaches to safety are most effective when built on five mutually reinforcing pillars: participatory governance, cross-sector cooperation, clear and empathetic communication, people-centred spatial design, and proportionate and ethical technological integration. Together, these elements form a practical and humanised framework capable of improving both actual safety and the public perception of it.

Across the different contexts analysed, trust emerges as the decisive condition for success. When citizens and institutions share clear rules, open channels and visible accountability mechanisms, participation becomes meaningful and collaboration endures beyond specific projects or individual figures who act as ‘champions’. Conversely, fragmented responsibilities, opaque processes and ad hoc dynamics erode legitimacy and slow down implementation. Consolidating lasting results therefore requires formalising coordination, clarifying mandates, integrating participation into routine procedures and ensuring stable, albeit modest, resources to guarantee continuity.

The analysis also emphasises that communication is not an accessory element, but an essential security mechanism. Timely, accessible and responsible communication reduces uncertainty, counteracts misinformation and encourages behavioural changes aimed at the common good. This is particularly relevant for involving groups that are under-represented or most affected by insecurity. Inclusive participation requires adapted formats, trusted intermediaries and accessible opportunities to contribute; otherwise, processes may reproduce existing inequalities.

Likewise, the physical environment has as much influence as governance. Small, iterative improvements lighting, visibility, street furniture, maintenance can make public spaces more welcoming and safer, especially when designed and evaluated alongside diverse users. Technology, for its part, adds significant value when used proportionately, transparently and in combination with non-digital alternatives, training and simple evaluation mechanisms. Over-reliance on technological tools without complementary social measures can erode public acceptance and widen exclusion gaps.

Finally, the results confirm that there is no single model applicable to all cities. Urban size, administrative culture, social capital and resource availability determine which interventions are feasible and at what pace they can be developed. The strategic challenge is to combine the five pillars in a context-sensitive manner, starting with clear use cases, lightweight and adaptive monitoring systems, and early results that demonstrate tangible changes. This approach allows us to move from reactive and fragmented responses to a culture of collaborative security that is reliable, resilient to new threats, and capable of evolving over time.

6.1. Next steps

Within this framework, deliverable D2.3 provides three types of input that are crucial for the next steps of the project. First, the conceptual framework and mechanisms identified, which should become the backbone of the Societal Development Plan (SDP) and guide the development of practical tools and guidelines. Secondly, the practical findings and contextual conditions, which are essential for substantiating realistic recommendations, designing transferable instruments and ensuring the applicability of the model in different European urban environments. And thirdly, the needs expressed by stakeholders, which guide the design of concrete, scalable and useful solutions, tailored to the real expectations and challenges of those who implement or experience security policies.

This document not only synthesises knowledge but also offers a roadmap for action. It serves as the basis for Participatory Events, policy briefs and the Societal Development Plan (SDP), and provides a strategic framework for maximising the impact of interventions, ensuring their social relevance and guaranteeing their adaptability to different urban environments. The integration of scientific evidence, participatory validation, and contextual analysis demonstrates that the urban security of the future requires collaborative, inclusive, and adaptive approaches capable of strengthening social cohesion, reducing risks, and consolidating trust as the foundation of any sustainable intervention.

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