What is the role of local and regional authorities in the protection of public spaces and what tools can they use to better respond to terrorist threats?

A series of web conferences

Public spaces are places of exchange, culture, commerce, leisure and political expression. Because of their open nature, their high level of frequentation and their symbolic dimension, they can be subjected to several threats, terrorism being one of them. The protection of public spaces is a complex challenge for local and regional authorities. As stated by the European Commission in the Action Plan to support the protection of public spaces, besides Member States, "local and regional authorities are also important stakeholders in the protection of public space".

A project to strengthen local and regional authorities' capabilities in the protection of areas in public space

In this context, PRoTECT – a project co-funded by the European Union's ISFP programme – aims to strengthen local authorities' capabilities in the protection of areas in public space that could potentially be soft targets for terrorism. Soft Targets are locations that are easily accessible to large numbers of people and have limited security or protective measures in place, making them vulnerable to an attack, for instance: sports venues, shopping venues, schools, and transportation systems. By applying an overarching concept where tools, technology, training and field demonstrations will lead to enhanced situational awareness and improvement of a direct response before, during and after a terrorist attack, the PRoTECT project seeks to ultimately strengthen security in public spaces.

In order to promote the exchange of experiences, Efus, in the framework of PRoTECT, has launched a series of web conferences on the protection of public spaces and soft targets. The aim of these online sessions is to discuss and raise awareness of the role of local and regional authorities in the protection of public spaces, as well as to propose tools to prevent these types of risks.

PRoTECT Web Conference 3

How can technology protect public spaces and soft urban targets?

> 28th April 2021- 2:00 pm CET

New technologies offer opportunities to better protect public spaces. These include ICT (for communicating, storing, analysing and protecting information), Sensors (for detection, identification, localisation, tracking), Actuators (for warning, intercepting, eliminating), Physical (for controlling access, impeding an attack, protective materials), etc.

This session has discussed the existing technologies as well as the opportunities and challenges that local authorities face when they decide to adopt them. What are the most widely used technologies for

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the protection of public spaces? What type of risks do these technologies address? What is the objective of these technologies (prevention, facilitating intervention, etc)?

Speakers:

- Ms Anniina Autero, Senior Project Manager at City of Tampere, leader of SURE project, Finland
- Mr. Jorge Donadeu Prieto, Senior Director EU & International Institutions, Airbus Secure Land Communications S.A.U.
- Dr. Philo Daniel, Global Director Urban Security, Smiths Detection

Main insights from the session:

The session explored the various opportunities provided by modern technologies, as well as the major considerations and challenges which must be considered when planning their development and implementation in any given local context. As outlined in the session, detection software (such as the iCMORE Weapons tool and various sensory measurement softwares feeding into AI-based analysis) can serve as a speedy and cost-effective means of determining immediate threats, but also poses concerns for data protection. Public perceptions of security are important, so transparency regarding these new technologies is essential in order to ensure that citizens do not perceive the tools themselves as further threats.

How can cities use technology to protect public spaces? The case study of the city of Tampere.

Ms. Anniina Autero, Senior Project Manager at Tampereen Kaupunki (City of Tampere, Finland) presented the progress and recommendations of the *SURE – Smart Urban Security and Event Resilience* project in Tampere. This project is funded by the EU's Urban Innovative Actions Initiative.

As Ms. Anniina Autero outlined, public events are important for building civic interaction and community engagement, but these must be protected. Safety and security within our cities – and during our crowded public events in particular – should be seen as a driver to awaken the well-being potentials of urban planning. SURE aims to create a seamless blend of security and ambience for urban events.

The Systemic Approach used in the project includes continuous measurement and analysis of sensory data, which is then used by the First Response Situation Room, the Police, the Fire Service, the Traffic Control Service, etc. Video Surveillance cameras and Sensory Detection software provide important data sources for this work.

SURE aims to:

- Improve security in everyday life through developing and piloting smart event security solutions.
- Better prepare citizens and local on-the-ground actors by facilitating close collaboration between security and event operators, and by involving residents and event visitors in developing city security policies and measures.
- Support innovation in city security by enabling local companies and expert organisations to develop and test smart products and services.

Main Challenges:

- Public events are often very densely packed, with various different actors and services in place on the ground, all holding different priorities.
- Security routines and technologies are often regarded negatively by many event-goers.
- The social acceptability of new surveillance technology solutions must also be analysed, so as not to bring unease and thus damage the event.

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- Comprehensive EU regulations on privacy, such as GDPR, must be a constant point of reflection in the implementation of new data and technology solutions. Ms. Anniina Autero specifically highlighted the issues related to facial identification software, which presents efficient possibilities for city crime management but poses certain ethical issues which must be carefully considered, although she noted that the focus of Tampere's utilisation of sensory technology detection solutions is on general crowd movements and activities, rather than the detection/tracking of individuals.

Technologies proposed by industry experts:

Security solutions and effective new technologies were presented by two industry experts working under EOS (the European Organisation for Security).

AIRBUS Communication Technologies:

- Jorge Donadeu Prieto – Senior Director EU & International Institutions, Airbus Secure Land Communications S.A.U. – explained that secure communications are a key element of coordinating security efforts within and across organisations and authorities.
- Today's fast-paced society demands increased situational awareness and proactivity from our authorities. PMR (Private Mobile Radiocommunication) and ICT (Information Communication Technology) tools are thus increasingly in demand. These collaboration tools must enable us to share our data with the right people, transfer data securely, and improve collaboration across authorities, thus streamlining cross-border missions and expanding teams efficiently while keeping all employees safe.
- The Hybrid Networks Concept aims to integrate various technologies to create a secure multimedia solution, including secure messaging, private video calls real-time secure location sharing, and end-to-end encryption.
- Key benefits of these communication technologies include enhanced sharing, team expansion, efficient collaboration, and effective management between the control room/leadership and people working in the field.

Dr. Philo Daniel, Global Director Urban Security, Smiths Detection, presented various sensory-monitoring technologies used to detect threats to public safety and security.

She highlighted that perceptions of security depend very much on the local and temporal context. For example: in a recent survey, carried out within the ongoing sanitary criss, 58% of respondents expressed concern of short-term infection risks, while 38% were concerned about a terrorist attack in the short term.

iCMORE Weapons:

- Used by the NBA (National Baseball Association), this technological tool delivers a high probability of detection and low false alarm rate using deep learning and AI through collaboration with custo;ers and security authorities.
- The tool is easy to use, supports risk-based screening and offers effective real-time detection.
- Automated threat/target identification software offers a 10% reduction in waiting time, reduces machine operator training costs and eliminates the factor of human error, providing a more accurate and thorough detection of risks and security.

BioFlash: Detection of Viral Load in Enclosed Spaces.

- This mobile high-sensitivity biothreat detector, first developed to counter bio-terrorism, can also be used to detect Covid-19 in enclosed spaces, and thus enhance public security and perceptions of security amid the ongoing sanitary crisis.

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- A recent success story of this technology: the system enabled the detection of three aymptomatic Covid-positive students who were set to depart for a Lacrosse tournament, and thus prevented a dangerous possibility for contamination.

Main Conclusions:

- Advanced technological tools (such as sensory monitoring tools, AI-based detection software, etc.) offer efficient and effective means to swiftly detect and counteract threats within public spaces.
- Cooperation is essential in the development and implementation of any new and enhanced technological tools, in order to ensure security (both real and perceived) and to effectively target specific local areas of concern.
- Data protection regulations (such as GDPR) and ethical issues must be carefully considered in the implementation of any new technological tools.
- Transparency with the public regarding the implementation of any new technologies is essential in order to ensure feelings of security within the community.

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