



European
Commission

SAFE IN THE CITY: BEING PREPARED FOR AN ATTACK

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Project name:

Simulation, training and evaluation platform for the protection of crowded public spaces

Purpose:

Protecting public spaces and soft targets in urban environments

AT A GLANCE

Geographical coverage:

5 countries: France, Belgium, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands

Project coordinator:

DIGINEXT

Estimated budget:

€ 2 108 705

EU contribution:

90% co-funded by the European Union

Type of funding:

Internal Security Fund – Police (ISFP)

Start date:

November 2018

End date:

October 2020

Safe in the city: being prepared for an attack

On 13 November 2015, a series of coordinated terrorist attacks took place in Paris, France, in which 130 people were killed and another 413 injured. And on 22 March 2016, 32 civilians were killed and another 300 injured in three suicide bombings at Brussels airport and in the underground system.

Today's cities clearly face multiple threats like terrorism, organised crime and the insurgency of local populations. This means police, urban planners, security experts and architects must all do their utmost to secure public spaces and other soft targets, such as shopping centres and underground stations, while maintaining their accessibility.

EU-funded STEPWISE is a game changer. This 2-year project is aiming to develop and industrialise its predecessor, the Virtual studio for security concepts (VASCO) prototype. A final product would enable security professionals to visualise and gauge risks, threat scenarios and situations, thereby assessing the vulnerabilities of public spaces and providing a valuable toolkit to staff involved in the protection of these buildings: first responders, law enforcement agencies and firefighters alike.

"There was already a need to better protect public spaces but the attacks in London, Paris and Brussels reinforced the urgency of this need," says STEPWISE project coordinator Patrick Garnier.

The prototype enables the rapid 3D reconstruction of real-world locations in a virtual environment. This means that security experts can assess the potential impact of threats such as a bomb explosion, a building on fire, a hostage situation or violent protests – all in a virtual environment. And it avoids the need for experts and operational units to physically visit the site, a process that can disrupt and stress the local population.



Migration and
Home Affairs

New and improved

The project team plans on making the prototype more robust and secure, adding missing features, and developing 3D modelling and virtual reality training modules. User manuals and tutorials will also be provided.

In addition, the project will organise training programmes for the relevant authorities and security personnel, which will be rolled out across the EU.

These security personnel will also be encouraged to further collaborate on developing strategies to improve response procedures. This will see both technology and security experts across the EU uniting in order to build a product with real commercial value.

Delivering on the EU's Action Plan

Such a product would greatly help civil servants, security forces, first responders and fire fighters deal effectively with crisis situations. The general public also stands to benefit, as many lives could be saved in such situations.

This ambitious project is still in its early stages but experts predict that it will be a very useful tool for the EU to realise its Action Plan on the Protection of Public Spaces. It could also be pivotal for the adoption of a pan-European approach towards safe public spaces.

THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY

STEPWISE uses cutting-edge virtual reality and disaster management tools, as well as mapping technologies. Combined, these create accurate three-dimensional representations of buildings in their urban environment using existing blueprints, 360° camera shots and other data on the buildings' interior and exterior.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The innovative 3D technology helps police work on simulated situations with private security officers, fire crews, urban planners, public space operators and city managers, in order to assess the vulnerability of public spaces, and jointly develop and evaluate strategies to improve both their security and resilience, without having to actually 'be there'.

MORE INFORMATION

Project reference: ISFP-2017-AG-PROTECT 815182

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Social media accounts: Twitter: [@STEPWISE_EU](https://twitter.com/STEPWISE_EU)

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