

Resolution of the Executive Committee of the European Forum for Urban Security (Efus)

Working towards a common culture of the security of European public spaces: training all local stakeholders

Europe's locally elected representatives are calling for a major effort to build the capacities of local stakeholders involved in the management of public spaces in order to improve the protection of such spaces while preserving their open, inclusive nature.

Mannheim, Germany, 12 June, 2023 – We, the elected representatives of the regions and cities that are members of the European Forum for Urban Security's (Efus) Executive Committee, representing nearly 250 European local and regional authorities, call for major investment in building the capacities of local stakeholders involved in the design, management and security of public spaces to create a common professional culture of public space management and protection.

The resolution we are adopting today is the result of work carried out by Efus over many years, most recently through the EU-funded Secu4All project (December 2020-June 2023). This project was designed and led by Efus alongside a consortium of 13 partners from eight European countries – local authorities, national forums for urban security, universities and research centres – with the aim of training local authorities to offer citizens a safe urban environment by reducing risks in public spaces.

A wide range of actors

Responsible for the design, management and protection of urban public spaces, local and regional authorities have to manage a wide range of actors from different disciplines, all with different skills and professional cultures. Although this type of partnership and cooperation is gaining ground at the local level, it is not yet the norm¹. However, it is a key factor for designing and managing public spaces where all citizens can feel safe and comfortable, but also listened to and associated in decision-making.

Developing cross-cutting competencies

Rather than developing knowledge and working in silos, cross-disciplinary training programmes should be developed and delivered in joint sessions involving a wide range of local actors, such as local police forces *and* urban planners *and* grassroots associations *and* emergency services. The challenge is not only to strengthen the capacities of local actors to anticipate, prevent and reduce the various types of risks and threats that affect public spaces, but also to combine knowledge and create a shared culture of public space management and protection.

¹ Local authorities can rely on the recently published official European standards that explain, standardise and facilitate such partnerships and cooperation, in particular CEN/TS 14383-2:2022

Encouraging the acquisition of cross-disciplinary skills in this way enables all local actors involved in the design, management and protection of public spaces to gain new competencies and better understand each other. Such cross-fertilisation will contribute to developing a holistic, long-term vision of public space management that takes into account their fundamental role in the quality of life, inclusiveness, security, and social, cultural and economic attractiveness of our cities.

Interdisciplinary areas of work

Secu4All's online educational programme fulfils this need for cross-disciplinary, unified training. It covers all aspects of management and protection of public spaces, reflecting their complexity and interdependence, and is aimed at professionals from all European countries whatever their discipline, whether local security and crime prevention officials, local police forces or urban planners, to name a few.

The fruit of multidisciplinary work, the platform offers theoretical knowledge and practical methods and tools for accurately assessing the risks and vulnerabilities of a given public space; organising regular safety audits and diagnoses; conducting prospective monitoring; reducing citizens' feelings of insecurity through crime prevention through environmental design; communicating with the relevant actors and citizens in the event of a crisis (before, during and after), and ethically selecting and deploying urban security technologies that guarantee fundamental rights and civil liberties.

The central role of local authorities

The Efus's Secu4All programme, which is accessible in four languages to any interested local authority or organisation, is an example of a holistic approach to capacity building for local actors involved in the management and protection of public spaces.

It illustrates the willingness of European local authorities, with support from the European Commission, to invest in strengthening and cross-fertilising local skills to foster common European standards and comprehensive, cross-cutting public policies for public space management and protection.

Efus' local and regional authorities reaffirm the key principles of the *Security, Democracy and Cities Manifesto and the *Brussels Declaration*** :**

1. Efus members share a common view that public spaces should be considered in all their dimensions, including their design and management, to be better protected against evolving threats while remaining open and accessible to all.
2. Efus members prioritise the development of a prevention culture as regards security in order to improve public perceptions and strengthen citizen participation in the decision-making process.
3. A shared culture on security issues in public spaces must be developed through more training and strengthened co-production mechanisms.
4. Training and a discussion forum for stakeholders in charge of planning and managing public spaces should be developed in order to create a common culture.
5. Efus members aim to facilitate European cities' and communities' access to funding, advice and training to enable them to respond to topical security challenges.

* The [Security, Democracy and Cities Manifesto](#) sets out the principles to which European Forum for Urban Security members adhere.

** The [Brussels Declaration](#) on the security of public spaces was adopted by Efus

members on 23 November, 2022.

The resolution we are adopting today is the result of work carried out by Efus over many years. It builds on the findings of the Action Plan delivered in 2022 by the Partnership Security in public spaces of the Urban Agenda of the EU (in particular Action 4) and, more recently, through the EU-funded Secu4All project (December 2020-June 2023).