Scottish Community Safety Network

SCSN Briefing Paper No 15

European Forum on Urban Security (Efus)
Security, Democracy and Cities; the Manifesto of Aubervilliers and Saint-Denis

1   Background

The European Forum on Urban Security (Efus) held its 2012 international conference in Aubervilliers and Saint-Denis. The delegates came from many backgrounds with 900 delegates representing 200 cities, 40 countries and 5 continents. The presence of representation from 5 different continents illustrated the international importance of the conference and the audience for the findings recorded in the manifesto.

2   Aims

The theme of the 2012 conference was the 'future of prevention' which was driven by the global upheaval in social, environmental, economic and financial factors; factors that the conference agreed could, if unaddressed, jeopardise the social and cultural heritage of Europe.

The recommendations recorded in the Efus Manifesto of Aubervilliers and Saint-Denis are aimed at providing safety and security representatives with inspiration and support to facilitate the design of effective policies promoting security and encourage citizen engagement in all levels of security decision making in Europe. The manifesto recommendations invite local authorities to promote safer and fairer cities by adopting the findings into their local community policies.

It is important to note that the manifesto uses the term 'security' as a descriptor relating to safety. The use of the word security to represent safety may not correlate with community safety terminology; however Efus terminology prefers the use of security as a result of the diverse issues that Europe faces in providing a safe future for its citizens.

3   Summary

The areas of concern raised in the manifesto highlight the following areas:

- Economic efficiency
- Citizen's involvements in security
- Mediation, the police, crime and sanction
- Gender concerns and violence
- The use of sports, art and culture to improve security
- Urban design and risk management
- Drugs and addition
- Technology and use
- Organised and financial crime

The challenges facing Europe are at the forefront of the findings affirming concerns over the growing anxiety within Europe, its cities and communities. From the manifesto it is clear that the Eurozone upheaval has thrust economic concerns to the fore with increasing unemployment and reduction in public spending giving rise to anxiety and diminishing confidence in policy. This upheaval is closely linked to social change which has fragmented community's and increase isolation damaging the social cohesion.

The manifesto recognises this as the greatest threat to security as it weakens the social fabric and has a negative effect on expectations creating individualism, selfishness and disorder.

In addition to economic concerns the risk of authoritarianism is raised with well-publicised overt responses, by local authorities, to visible threats such as urban rioting, poverty, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse being considered to as short term measure aimed at affirming political status and therefore being counterproductive to the long term goal of prevention which aim to eradicate not manage.

To facilitate change the manifesto extols the need for a cost-benefit approach with stakeholders needing to be able to think creatively and pragmatically in order to maximise efficiency.

The integration of short term and long term aims, combined with democratic debate, nourished by science and knowledge and developed with a balance of sanction and prevention is the primary methodology within the manifesto to address the European issues.

The countries, cities and citizens of Europe are charged by the manifesto to provide a safer and more secure Europe. With improvement only being achievable through citizen participation with the needs of the individual and the community being taken into account, security policies must be designed around the needs of the individual and community and not that of the public institution. Active citizenship is the phrase used to express how citizenship and engagement is fundamental to providing an achievable design for the future security of Europe.

In addition to its people the manifesto recognising the needs of cities and partners to allocate financial and human resources effectively, ensuring that competent practitioners and partners collaborate at all levels to promote a safer future. The population diversity of European cities raised a concern over human rights and the requirement to ensure respect, provide public and private spaces with the view to integrating communities and individuals.

This coexistence and the need for more accessible areas in which to promote unity highlighted the need for proactive policies promoting coexistence and conviviality because without which communities and individuals would withdraw creating a negative society.

4 Recommendations

4.1 Safety audits, programmes and evaluation

With the financial budgets of local authorities decreasing there is greater need for more cost-effective measures and scientific based evidence that's considered prior to implementation. Security audits and scientific methodologies would then be devised to aid decision making and to formulate strategy justifying expenditure. The manifesto findings recommend that it is necessary to investigate evidence as problems must be fully analysed at all levels with sanctions proven and outcomes evaluated and reported. Systematic processes through community and coalition partnerships need to provide widespread evidence at all levels including the European Union (EU).

4.2 Shared public spaces

Well-designed public spaces are essential to peaceful coexistence, collective heritage, mediation, cultural enrichment and a better quality of life; whereas poorly planned spaces result crime, insecurity and conflict for users. Evidence shows a link between design and safety and so professionals who contribute to design must be aware of the consequences.

The findings recommend that citizen must be involved in the design of shared space with the privatisation and dominant occupation of such areas being prevented. Shared space must be constantly evaluated to identify change, with issues such as gender and violence being considered and professionals responsible for designing shared space being trained in design and security.

4.3 Mediation

Bonds created through school, cities, families and businesses can be positive or negative and mediation can subsequently assist in resolving and preventing problems. Mediation is considered, by the forum, as a powerful response to negativity and as a result mediation practices are one of the solutions highlighted to ensure a safe future. The findings recommend the political resolve to supporting of implementing mediation, ensures that partnership and civil society are adequately involved and trained. An international initiative must be considered such as the United Nations (UN) international year of mediation.

4.4 Citizen participation in security

Cities are mobile, multi-cultural places with the people of which recognised as essential to the sustainability of democracy. The forum calls for citizens to be heard with policies integrating public concerns and feelings with local authorities gathering opinions for inclusion into the decision making process. Local authorities must engage all citizens to create bonds to fuel public action with citizen volunteers being used to engage in public security.

4.5   The police as an agent of prevention
The multifaceted security and safety concerns within cities results in the need for collaboration and coordination between local authorities and police to provide a safe urban area to facilitate the effective management of public space, inclusion of minorities and respect for human rights, the vulnerabilities of women and the increase in transnational organised crimes. Local authorities must act as an intermediary between the people and police providing an integrated approach and exchanging information. Strategies should be based on prevention, informed through evidence and designed, implemented and monitored through multi-agency collaboration

4.6   Prevention of reoffending

To best protect the community social inclusion is a proven method preventing harm and distress caused by crime. There is a request to find alternatives to increased sanctions and detention, emphasising the reintegration of ex-offenders. There should be opportunities for ex-offenders with social inclusion being a proven method to reduce reoffending rates and there should be a multi-agency approach, involving all restorative justice and local agencies, committed to evidenced-based statistical reporting directing strategy.

4.7   The gender approach and the prevention of violence against women

Femicide is the major cause of female death with women at risk in private and public spaces. The physical inequality in relationships is the main cause of this and local authorities must play a role in prevention and increasing female safety.   The manifesto recommends that the violence perpetrated against women by men be acknowledged in law and condemned with standard European edicts. Research must be conducted using victimisation surveys to collect accurate data for use in evidence-based policies with the protection of women being developed and better coordinated in strategies against gender violence supported by government and the EU.

4.8   Violence at School and School dropout

Schools are responsible for educating children about society, however if schools fail in their mission the consequences can be violence, verbal and physical abuse and antisocial behaviour. Violence in schools and school dropouts should not be treated as isolated phenomena and should be incorporated into security policy. The school system must be inclusive not exclusive, utilising mediation from the youngest age to promote citizenship and to manage gender, conflict and crisis. Alternative sanctions must be considered and victims supported. The local authorities must work to improve schools and their engagement with parents with protocols and best practices being based on scientific research and evidence from victim and student surveys.

4.9   Sport and prevention

Sport represents an important opportunity to foster social cohesion and crime prevention and builds on personal achievement. However sport is a challenge for local security and to ensure that sport is a positive influence, access to facilities must be provided for all citizens with amateur and professional sport being linked through "open stadium" initiatives. Amateur sport must educate to dispel violence, racism and hate with supporters and organisations being made aware of their role within the community. The approach must recognise the needs of local inhabitants who must be consulted when organised events affect their community, with supportive risk assessments and strategies being developed.

4.10   Art, culture and prevention

The manifesto views art and culture as positive influences on security, preventing isolation and social fragmentation. Art and culture also creates employment and has had positive results with children and young people in fostering a sense of belonging within the community. There is also a negative aspect with art and culture being attractive to criminals resulting in victims. The local authorities recommend that public policies be adequately finances to boost culture, aid collective development and promote coexistence and cohesion. Cultural and artistic practice must also be considered as a mediation tool with results being evidenced and presented. At no point should culture and art be marginalized they should be a part of any long term strategy with experimental practices being promoted at all levels with local schemes aimed at bridging intergenerational gaps.

4.11   Tourism and security

Tourism is a massive commercial and social part of Europe, with Europe remaining the world's top destination for tourists. With the success of tourism linked to security, local authorities must ensure a safe Europe acknowledging that tourists can be victims and perpetrators with antisocial behaviour being a problem. The manifesto recommends that local prevention and security policies for safe stainable tourism, that recognising the none-permanent status and rights of tourists and their mobility, must be implemented. This policy must be development by local partnerships with all security sectors, public, private, international and regional matters included.

4.12   Addiction and drugs

The manifesto acknowledges that society consume both legal and illegal drugs, which has a negative effect on health and social cohesion. To achieve any solution there must be a financial commitment with the means to deploy new tools which generate sustainable and successful practices. The manifesto recommendations that the approach must be based on evidence and fact not morality and ideology, with the balance of the approach considering care, prevention, integration, risk reduction and the prevention of trafficking. This combined with regulation which is driven by health, security

and public engagement, especially with substance users, will result in a proactive policy.

4.13   The city at night
The city is occupied differently at night with anxiety and insecurity being common feelings. Festive spaces, excessive consumption and reduced public services affect perception. The manifesto looks at risk prevention, maintaining public order and health and debating alcohol pricing at the highest levels of government with a shared vision and a charter on nightlife. There must be shared objectives, prevention, risk management, public space design, culture and tourism and regulation. Staff should be properly trained on health and security and public transport should be addressed to prevent drink driving.

4.14   Collective violence

Collective violence refers to violence caused by groups, often youths which is different from hooliganism and often related to groups such as gangs that act as a replacement to one or more social exclusions experienced by an individual. This issue cannot be dealt with short term. Long term aims identify methods of interaction, improved social contact, developed partnerships and the option of escape through employment and support. The recommendations state that judicial review and punishment is one option but it is not exclusive and investment in prevention with strategies and local partnerships is. Stigmatisation is damaging and detrimental and to prevent stigmatisation solutions using skills, interests and values should be adopted to support youths.

4.15   Urban risk management

Increased urbanisation and high population density is a risk, a risk that is abnormal to standard security concerns. Risk and crisis management must therefore be planned for with principles and campaigns such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) "making cities resilient – My city is getting ready!" campaign. Local authorities must become stakeholders in risk management, which can only be achieved if integrated strategies for prevention are developed to promote more resilient cities with a dedicated structure to manage risk. Planning and preparation is essential with resources pooled at all levels and civil, private and public sectors being involved in planning and prevention.

4.16   Using technology for prevention

Technology has the capability to assist and intrude. Opportunities to improve security using technology must be investigated but not at the expense of basic rights. Technology must complement existing services, as a result it is recognised that there is a need for charters to monitor use, provide in-depth training and solicit approval from citizens. The manifesto recommends that technology should not create insecurity by failing to address underlying cause and it must be necessary, transparent and monitored independently. This will

result in a cost-benefit ratio that will be considerate of human need and privacy and developed with efficacy, relevance and efficiency in mind.

4.17   Public-private partnership

The public and private sectors need to work together exchanging knowledge and creating employment. To achieve this greater collaboration needs to be established, identifying common goals with clear and transparent partnership rules ensuring that safety is inclusive for the whole community and not just potential customers.

4.18   Interaction between local, regional and international levels

Coordination between local, regional and national level is essential in providing an inclusive and integrated security strategy. Often the local level involvement in crime prevention strategies is overlooked so there is a call for stronger efforts in Europe to link all levels, adopting resolutions with policies being equal with regional authorities acting as intermediary between government and local administration.

4.19   Cities and organised crime

Organised crime has never been just a local issue with criminal enterprises inhabiting regions, cities and countries. Many local issues such as prostitution, drugs, human trafficking are issues identified locally but often have international roots which makes local enforcement difficult. The manifesto calls for a more integrated action plan at multiple levels to combatting organised crime. More decisive action must be taken with a European directive on the confiscation of assets as a result of organised crime being implemented and cities should develop tools to monitor risk using a network of transparent organisation aimed at supporting local businesses against organised crime.

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