

HECTOR



The Importance of Tourism in relation with European Security



HECTOR PROJECT

2023 - 2025

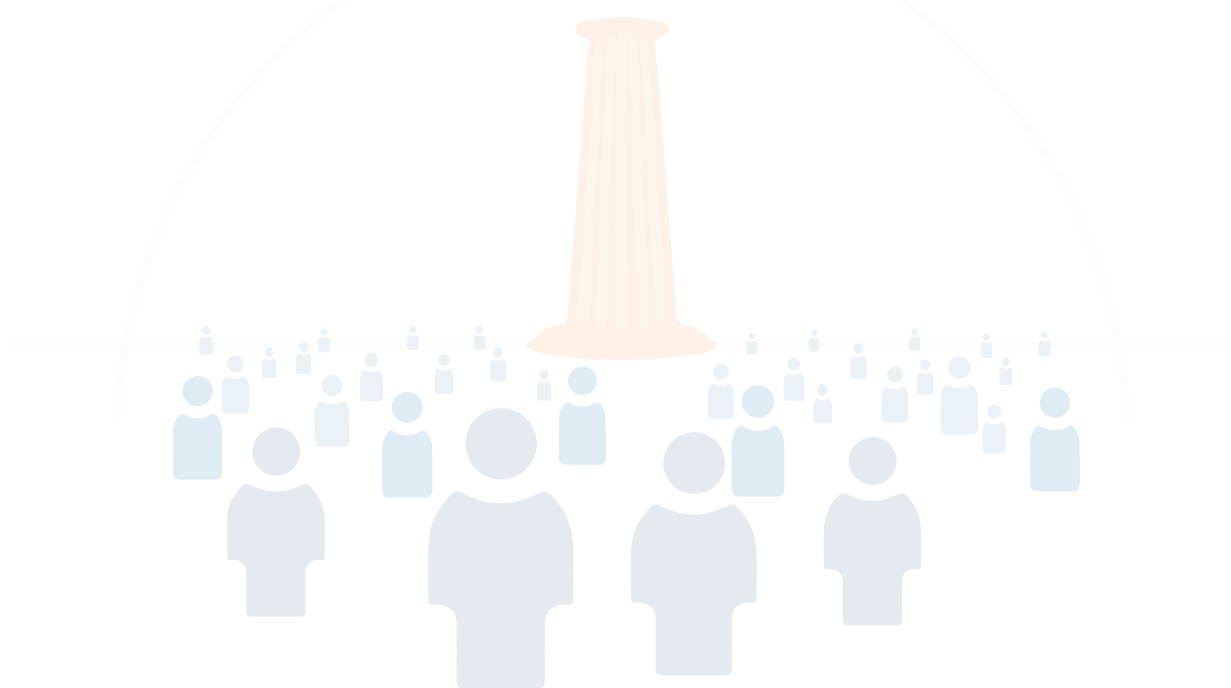
Project name: enHancing protECTION Of touristic sites in euROpe



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Introduction

The contemporary security landscape, as regards the threat steaming from terrorism, reveals the existence of a complex variety of challenges, also determined by a tumultuous international environment. Within this context, it is worth mentioning that past terrorist behavior indicates that it is highly probable soft targets, including touristic sites, to remain targets of a potential terrorist act. More **alarming though is the fact that, the current** geopolitical situation - as it is affected by the current war in Ukraine, and manifestations of hybrid threats within the **European soil - may both increase the level** of terrorism threat within the EU emanating from existing (or new) terrorist organizations, and develop opportunities for the utilization of clandestine groups by geopolitical opponents, in order to inflict damage to the EU's interests, **via terrorism.**

 **Hello &
Welcome**

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Protection of Public Spaces

Terrorist attacks during recent years indicated that perpetrators systematically focus on “soft targets”, taking advantage of their inherent vulnerabilities, which primarily stem from both their open and public character, and the limited security measures usually applied. The protection of the above mentioned targets poses multiple challenges that are determined by their significant number and variation of their structural features, as well as the need to achieve the appropriate balance between security measures and freedom.



In other words, it is imperative for the security measures to encompass the principles, and democratic values of the EU. Despite the fact that absolute security cannot be fundamentally achieved, it is necessary to highlight the fact that proper operational measures, in combination with coordinated actions, and the implementation of targeted guidelines (as are described within both the European Commission “Action Plan”, and the “Good Practices for the protection of public spaces”, issued by the Policy Task Force), can develop substantially effective and improved security measures, that will address the most important vulnerabilities of public spaces, as these are recognised by the evaluation and study of recent terrorist attacks. In addition, as it is highlighted by the “Global Counter Terrorism Forum”, organisational dynamics may vary not only from country to country, but also between the levels of the government of the same country, and across the private sector of course, a fact that complicates the protection of soft targets, that requires the cooperation of several stakeholders, with different structure and mentality.

→ Relatively, and in alignment with the shared global view regarding the sensitivity of the protection of “soft targets”, the UN Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) encourages the States to share information and experience with all stakeholders, including the private sector, as appropriate, in order to prevent, protect, mitigate, investigate, respond to and recover from damage from terrorist attacks. In the same spirit, OSCE recognised that there is an increasing need for co-operation and partnerships between States and private stakeholders that often own, operate and manage critical infrastructure and “soft” targets (SEC.GAL/40/20 SEC.GAL/40/20), and promotes public – private partnerships in the direction of adopting a holistic security approach.

Last but not least, the 7th of June 2021 ‘Council Conclusions on the Protection of Public Spaces’, emphasises the need for the protection of tourist sites, transport public areas, recreational places, as well to the enhancement of co-operation between local municipalities, universities, private agencies and local communities. To conclude, in order to confront the evolving threats, the EU has elaborated strategic actions for the protection of the public spaces by developing innovative, sustainable, and effective solutions with the aim to strengthen their protection, noting that cooperation is a key pillar to tackle this phenomenon.



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The Importance of Tourism in relation with European Security

Tourism is a cornerstone of European cohesion due to the fact that Europe plays a leading role globally in this sector - hosting more than 700 million tourists a year - thus contributing both to its economic development, and to the preservation of its cultural identity.

However, tourist sites are not only attractive destinations and areas of focus for visitors, but also for terrorists, or terrorist organisations. The latter, stems from the fact that tourist sites attract huge number of people – entailing contextual diversity - they are easily accessible, and they present limited security measures. A potential terrorist attack against them, may produce grave consequences (economic, societal, security, etc.), because it would include the (sought by the terrorists) symbolism, it could injure social cohesion and public trust to the EU states, and it would have international dimension (victims from many countries).

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In the Greek language, the word for hospitality is “philoxenia”. The term “hospitality” can be etymologically dissected into the components “friend” and “foreigner”. Philoxenia describes a state of mind where the “visitor” in ancient Greece was a sacred figure that had to be treated accordingly (with honour and respect). In other words, the above mentality about the “visitor” encompasses the today’ fundamental values of the EU, and it is a tradition that it is our responsibility to cultivate and inherit to the next generations.



Freedom is closely related to tourism that actually embodies democratic principles and liberty. Nothing can flourish if fundamental universal values are not upheld. Due to the fact that people travel from all over the globe, the security of a country’s tourist infrastructure affects not just the locals and their cultural artifacts, but the entire globe.



HECTOR PROJECT

Overview



HECTOR brings together 18 beneficiaries

The HECTOR project (enHancing protECTION of tourist sites in Europe) is a 24-month research project funded through the Internal Security Fund of the European Union.

The project is named after Hector, who was known for his commitment to protect his community during the Trojan War. It reflects the EU's dedication to secure the tourism sector and the urgent need to preserve freedom and democracy in the face of modern threats.

HECTOR brings together 18 beneficiaries

HECTOR brings together 18 beneficiaries (4 LEAs, 4 municipalities, 7 operators, 2 research Institutions, 1 private security company) from 5 EU countries, under the coordination of the Hellenic Police, and aims to enhance the preparedness and response capabilities of tourism infrastructure by presenting a holistic and integrated toolbox of modern technological solutions and security best practices/guidelines against terrorist attacks.

In this context, a direct mapping of HECTOR's aims and objective, according to the relevant priorities of the call, is described as follows:

During the project, vulnerability assessments will be carried out in 10 different tourist places - covering the whole range of tourist activities - while the results of these will be exploited in collaboration with the evaluation of incidents of past attacks, for effective security planning (assessment and planning).



Furthermore, the project will raise awareness through a pan-European campaign for tourists and operators, and will produce specialised joint training programmes with the utilisation of modern technology, such as VR modules and an e-learning Gamification platform (awareness and training). During the VAs, not only the physical protection of the sites will be assessed, but also the proposed worldwide technological solutions, and security by design activities on places to be constructed, will be reviewed (physical Protection). Moreover, a product of the project will be a “security model plan for touristic sites” that will provide a set of procedures, recommendation good practices, security by design and physical security guidelines, plan, and contemporary training and awareness material for the network of touristic sites operators. Lastly, the project aspires to develop a cooperative approach through the CE Hubs, and test the results through a cross - border exercise (cooperation).

Aim and Methodology

The HECTOR project aims to create an holistic approach for the protection of tourism infrastructure throughout Europe, that will include actions deriving from the cooperation between the private and public sector (SOPs, recommendations, guidelines, tools, management protocols and good practices at all levels of safety, security), thus merging the elements of specific experience and expertise from several stakeholders, with both the strategic priorities of the EU regarding the protection of public spaces, and the EU developed tools, methods and recommendations in this area.



The methodology that will be implemented by the programme has been inspired by the European Counter-Terrorism Agenda of the Commission, with risk assessments on tourist sites in the EU (anticipate), physical protection and safety design-based approach (protect), community involvement with a bottom-up approach (prevention), and enhance collaboration at all levels (respond).

Through this project, the first axis of the EU Security Union Strategy, a future-proof security environment, is achieved, since tourism is an area of interest to every Member State.

HECTOR & Roadmap

- ✓ (WP1) Management and Coordination of the Action
- ✓ (WP2) Risk Analysis & Security Model Plan of the EU Tourism Landscape
- ✓ (WP3) Enhancement of Public–Private Cooperation
- ✓ (WP4) Dissemination, Communication & Sustainability

Except from the WP1: Management and Coordination of the Action and the WP4: Dissemination, Communication & Sustainability of the Project, which will cover horizontally the core of the project from the first till the last day, the rest of the project is divided into thematic phases according to their purpose.

During the first two phases, the project will focus on Risk Analysis & Security Model Plan of the EU Tourism Landscape (WP2), through Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), recommendations, security and crisis management plans, and security by design and physical security guidelines. These efforts will align with European guidelines on protecting public spaces, culminating in the creation of a Security Model Plan for European tourist sites and infrastructures. Vulnerability assessments of tourist sites will be carried out – covering the entire spectrum of tourist activities – while the results will be used, considering past attacks, to evaluate threats in security planning. Additionally, Hector seeks to elevate the security awareness and culture of both tourism operators, and tourists via a comprehensive European campaign and a Joint Training Programme based on the previous mentioned contemporary Security Model Plan. The effectiveness of the actions will be tested through a large scale exercise on the final phase of the project, building synergies for the Enhancement of Public–Private Cooperation (WP3).



Phase I (Anticipate): Security Planning

As part of the HECTOR project, vulnerability assessments on various tourist sites will be conducted to evaluate potential security threats. The assessments will cover all types of tourist activities and will consider past attacks. The chosen locations for vulnerability assessments include Athens International Airport, Port of Thessaloniki, Lyon's Old Town, Mykonos Island, Varna City, Jewish Museum and Holocaust Site, Limassol Marina, Louis Group - Apollonia, the archaeological site surrounding the Athens Acropolis area, and Krakow Square.

The HECTOR project's Security Risk Assessment Group (SRAG) training initiative aims to equip relevant stakeholders across Europe with advanced skills and comprehensive knowledge necessary to tackle different security challenges and especially in security planning. The training will range from routine security & safety operations to complex terrorist threats. The goal is to foster a unified and highly effective response mechanism to ensure rapid, coordinated, and efficient actions in times of crisis. This will be the core group to implement the above mentioned VAs.



Phase II (Protect) :

Physical security and technological solutions

During the security planning process, the HECTORproject evaluates the physical protection of premises and examines innovative technological solutions that can be implemented for enhanced safety and security. The project includes several initiatives aimed at improving security in the tourism sector, by implementing tailor made security measures, both in physical security and technological measures. The HECTOR project has introduced several initiatives to enhance security measures at tourist sites. One of the initiatives is the Critical Incidents Observatory (CIO), which collects and analyzes data on security incidents – terrorist attacks at tourist sites. The CIO aims to develop a thorough understanding of potential threats and create customized Standard Operating Procedures and recommendations. This ensures that public space operators and security personnel are well-equipped to manage emergencies.



Another initiative is the Security by Design programme, which integrates security considerations into the development and management of tourist sites as well the construction security perspective. The programme categorises tourist sites in line with EU guidelines and principles and creates a handbook for tourism operators to follow.

The projects technical experts will conduct a comprehensive Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to gather the latest security best practices and technological innovations. The insights from the SLR are instrumental in crafting a detailed handbook for EU tourism operators, guiding them towards preemptive security planning and implementation. Finally, during the project a Crisis Management Protocol will be drafted as a guidebook including procedures, equipment and template to prevent, protect, detect and mitigate the result of a terrorist attack.



Phase III (Prevent): Awareness and Education

The HECTOR project is launching a **European Raise Awareness Campaign**, an essential effort to enhance the security of public tourist spots by increasing awareness and providing educational content, through videos, posters, newsletters, podcasts, and other digital material. This campaign targets a broad audience, including tourism operators, security professionals, policymakers, tourists, and the general public, with the objective to disseminate knowledge and exchange best practices to promote safer tourism settings throughout Europe.

The campaign will be carried out by the **Community Engagement Hubs (CE Hubs)** representing a novel approach to strengthening the security framework within the European tourism sector.

These hubs will create a core of key stakeholders to promote a culture of preparedness and awareness, establishing a coordination group for the Raise Awareness Campaign. The CE Hubs are designed to facilitate the exchange of best practices, improve communication skills, and provide comprehensive security training, aiming to foster a proactive and cohesive community capable of addressing and mitigating security threats effectively, giving the opportunity also to create a security tourism network. The HECTOR project, through the European Raise Awareness Campaign, is committed to enhancing the safety and security of public tourist spaces by educating and engaging communities across Europe. The campaign will leverage an array of communication materials and digital tools to spread its message far and wider.



Additionally, the project plans to involve citizens directly through **the safeEU Platform**, an application for mobile phones, enabling their active participation in safety and security initiatives. This comprehensive approach is a significant advancement toward a more resilient and secure tourism industry in Europe.

Moreover, an innovative **Joint Training Programme for the Tourism Industry** is on the horizon focusing on delivering knowledge to more than 900 participants. This programme is designed to strengthen the resilience and security of European tourist destinations, involving a varied group of participants from municipalities, law enforcement, private security firms, tourism operators, and tourist guides. This collaboration aims to build a mutual understanding and shared knowledge among all involved parties, ensuring a comprehensive grasp of roles and response procedures.

The training curricula will address key security challenges within the tourism sector, **covering topics like managing C.B.R.N.E.* threats in public spaces, countering non-cooperative U.A.V.s****, understanding the responsibilities of Security Managers, enhancing security awareness among tourism industry staff, identifying and mitigating insider threats, and developing effective crisis response and recovery plans. Expert consultations will inform the training content and materials, ensuring they are both relevant and impactful.

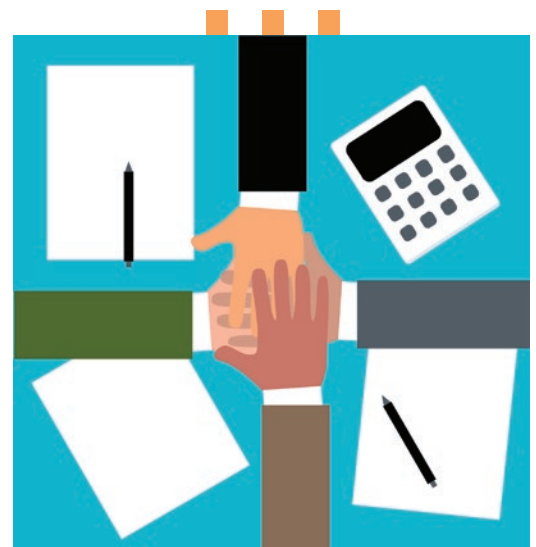


* Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive (CBRNE)

** Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)

Phase IV (Respond): Interoperability and Collaboration

Finally, the project will create a Security Model Plan for Tourism Infrastructure in Europe, providing procedures, recommendations, good practices, and guidelines. The model's effectiveness will be tested through a Multiagency Cross-Border Counter Terrorism Exercise, evolving during different phases, and critical events in five countries. The exercise scenario will essentially cause a theatre of operations, with the development of critical incidents that require a high level of cooperation (private and public entities) and interoperability (between countries).



Dissemination – Communication & Visibility

Since the emphasis during the project is to raise awareness and strengthen the level of cooperation and interoperability, a number of supporting actions will take place - apart from the central ones described in the core of the project - in order to achieve the mission of shielding public spaces, which will in fact be translated into a number of EU languages. Such actions are:

-  3 Awareness Videos, on suspicious behavior, suspicious items and insider threat, providing knowledge both by citizens / tourists and tourism operators
-  Leaflets and Brochures, both for the threats landscape against public spaces, and with simplified security advice, placed in touristic points of interest
-  Social Media Channels & Viber Community, for quick information / advice of interested parties
-  Podcasts, to connect tourism and security with alternative approaches
-  Network of Operators, so as to create a central network in the tourism sector for the exchange of good practices and knowledge in the field of security.



Conclusion

As a main outcome of the project, potential grave disruption of the above activity by terrorist attacks can produce unforeseen consequences both within the economic sphere, and to the level of trust of the public to the Governmental-European capabilities to protect, including the Touristic Sites and Events.

Security is a matter of all of us, as is the future of Europe, for this reason the initiatives against terrorism and the protection of our past, require cooperative schemes of synergies as HECTOR represents this philosophy.



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Qs & As



<https://www.hector-project.com/project>

If all this is not enough for you, you can see the top 10 questions about the project or get in touch with us.

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