HECTOR

Project Magazine

Project Phase I (Anticipate): Security Planning

1. Introduction

The first pillar for the implementation of the project consists of understanding the working environment and the connection between the tourism product and security. For this reason, at this stage, interoperability actions of consortium members, data analysis and technical training of others have been implemented. All actions focused on the procedures (design and implementation) of security measures in tourist sites – infrastructure, so that there is a common ground and a clear focus on the future of the project.
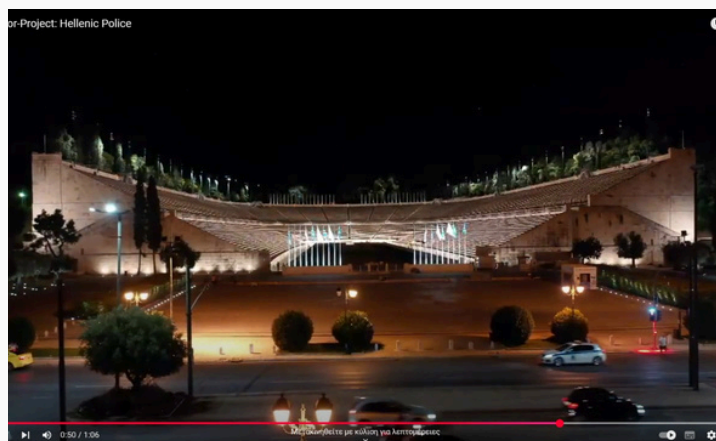
Digital Awards

The creative nature of the project, the innovative way of dealing with security challenges and the modern problem-solving methodology utilizing new technologies, attracted the interest of the evaluation committee of the National Digital Awards. Finally, the HECTOR project was awarded the first prize, in the category entitled "Best New Idea", in the "Citizen Security" policy field, highlighting the importance of the initiative in this thematic section.

Welcome Video

The HECTOR project, aims among the others, to bring together different stakeholders, including policymakers, tourism operators, private security companies, law enforcement agencies, municipalities, academia, and tourists, under a common goal for security. Following the approval of project funding, a promo video was created in order to raise public awareness through an open and participatory call for cooperation in the project.

2. Content & Project Progress

The elaboration of theoretical approaches and tools adapted to the needs for tourism security, the training of mixed on field teams, the completion of 10 vulnerability assessments in emblematic sites, are the overview of the actions of the first phase of the project. After its completion, not only security challenges were identified by the facility managers, but also critical data was collected for the creation of the Tourism Security Model Plan.

Project Kick Off Meeting

On December 14-15, 2023, the HECTOR research project kick-off meeting was held at the Training and Education School of Northern Greece of the Hellenic Police in Veria.

In the context of the kick-off meeting, the project management team of the Hellenic Police presented the overall overview of the project and explained its general and specific Objectives within the European Union, a section that was also attended by the Project Officer Mr. Patrik DE BEKKER of the European Commission.

This was followed by a brief presentation of the partners participating in the consortium, during which developed their experience and role in the project implementation. Also, the work packages, the deliverables - milestones, and the general scheduling of the project (Work Breakdown Structure) were presented in detail. At the same time, a panel discussion followed between the partners on the structure and its actions.

Security Risk Assessment Group Manual

The SRAG manual is dedicated to provide an intricately structured framework for conducting Security Risk Assessments (SRAs) tailored to the dynamic tourism sector. Its mission is to empower industry professionals, security teams, and stakeholders by synthesizing best practices from prominent institutions worldwide into a cohesive and actionable strategy. With a predominant focus on man-made threats, especially with a focus on terrorism-related risks, the manual acknowledges the profound and continually changing impact these threats exert on tourist destinations.

Moreover, it equips professionals with the appropriate tools and knowledge to identify and assess a broad range of threats, both natural and man-made, with a particular focus on the complexities of terrorism. Integrating globally recognized best practices and methodologies in risk assessment offers a structured framework for evaluating and mitigating potential risks. This comprehensive approach includes practical guidelines, checklists, and tools that aid stakeholders in making informed security decisions.

Quick Guide for safeguarding Touristic sites & Events

The Quick Guide is a comprehensive tool, based on the VAC of the European Commission that blends general security concepts with specific, actionable steps. It's aimed at equipping those responsible for the safety of touristic sites with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively manage and mitigate security risks, thereby contributing to a more secure and resilient tourism industry in Europe. This is mainly adapted to the following categories:

Shopping areas, such us malls, main shopping streets in the city centre, Christmas markets etc.

Nightlife areas, with a high density of bars, pubs and or/nightclubs, restaurants, coffee shops, small concert halls.

Cultural venues, such us museum, archaeological sites, historical landmarks etc.

Business venues, such us big hotels with meeting rooms, large offices, and conference centres etc.

Transport hubs, such as airports, ports & marinas, bus hubs, railway & underground metro stations, etc.

Squares, where many events take place, that are located next to important buildings, have regular big markets, festivals, etc.

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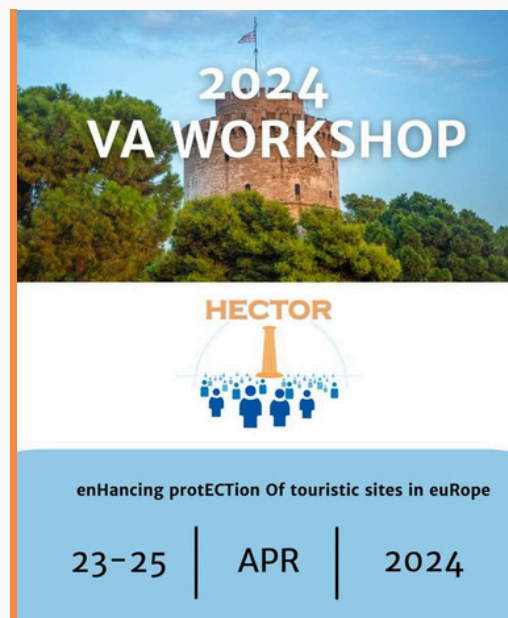
Security Skills Enhancement Training (VA Workshop)

On April 23-25 2024, the Workshop was held in Thessaloniki, in order to create a core team of interdisciplinary experts and train them in the use of VAC from DG HOME, as a Security Risk Assessment Group (SRAG) of selected trainees, assuring representation of a diversity of stakeholders (tourist operators, municipalities, tourist sites and revenues security managers, LEAs, etc.), having multilevel approach on security regarding touristic sites during the project's VA.

The WS was designed to provide both security basic principles and detailed guidance for implementing security measures, ensuring that they are customized to fit each touristic site's unique needs and characteristics, enhancing them specialized and precise instructions for securing touristic infrastructures. A step-by-step approach was followed, utilizing tailor-made tools and techniques. The WS was completed with "hands on" training – VA on site, as well as a Security by Design Table Top Exercise.

2024 VA WORKSHOP

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23-25 | APR | 2024

"The WS was designed to provide both security basic principles and detailed guidance for implementing security measures."

Vulnerability Assessments on Touristic Sites

On site vulnerability assessments (representing all the spectrum of the tourist activity) in ten (10) tourist sites, were carried out. The aim was to identify the weaknesses and propose measures to eliminate them preventing a potential crisis. As a secondary need covered, was to identify the challenges of the category to be represented and find best practices on the following stage / phase of the project in order to foster a unified and highly effective response mechanism to ensure rapid, coordinated, and efficient actions in times of crisis.

The selected sites are the following:

Athens International Airport, Eleutherius Venizelos, illustrating the complex security challenges faced by transport hubs across Europe. Serving as a vital crossroad for over 28 million passengers in 2023, the airport connects Greece to both international and domestic destinations, reinforcing its economic and social significance. Airports, as mix of public spaces and critical infrastructures, are essential to be protected not only for safeguarding passengers, personnel, and operations but also for ensuring the stability of financial networks, public trust, and the smooth functioning of transportation systems across the continent.

Port of Thessaloniki, is a vibrant urban hub that combines both maritime commerce and public access, making it a focal point of cultural and economic activity. In addition to facilitating significant commercial operations, the port also serves as a popular destination for tourists and locals, with public areas featuring shops, cafes, bars, and venues for live events, such as music performances. This blend of tourism, entertainment, and commercial trade created distinct logistical and security challenges.

Vieux Lyon (Old Lyon) and its pedestrian district, is one of Europe's most distinguished UNESCO World Heritage Sites, attracting numerous tourists annually. Renowned for its Renaissance architecture, cobblestone streets, and pedestrian-friendly areas, this historic district is a prime example of heritage tourism. As a UNESCO-listed site, it carries immense cultural and historical significance, requiring dedicated efforts to protect both its architectural integrity and the safety of its visitors. The preservation of Vieux Lyon's unique character is paramount, ensuring that its rich history remains intact while also accommodating the increasing number of visitors it attracts each year.

Mykonos Town (Chora) is a world-renowned destination, attracting over 2 million visitors annually. Famous for its upscale luxury, vibrant nightlife, and its status as a high-end tourist hotspot, Chora offers a diverse range of activities that cater to all types of travellers. From its luxurious resorts and trendy nightclubs to its bustling shops, restaurants, and cultural experiences, Mykonos embodies the full spectrum of tourism, making it a prime location for both leisure and high-profile visitors. The increased foot traffic and lively atmosphere create specific challenges in managing public safety and security.

The Port of Varna and the old town is a key commercial hub and one of Eastern Europe's emerging seaside tourist destinations. This dual function is essential for business and leisure travellers and cruise passengers exploring the region. The combination of industrial areas and functions with public access areas—such as waterfront promenades, dining and event venues, and accommodation—underscores the port's importance as a multifunctional urban area.

Thessaloniki's Jewish community has a deep-rooted history that spans centuries, and the Monasteriotes' Synagogue remains one of its most important historical and religious monuments. While the synagogue is not frequently used for regular worship, it serves as a place of reflection and commemoration during special occasions, including visits from high-profile individuals and significant cultural or religious events. Due to its historical and symbolic value, the synagogue is vulnerable to various security risks, including vandalism, hate crimes, or politically motivated attacks, as well the under construction holocaust museum, provides an excellent opportunity for security by design, as it will be the beacon welcoming millions of tourists around the globe.

Limassol Marina, is a vibrant Mediterranean hub that seamlessly combines luxury residences, fine dining, and maritime activities, attracting affluent leisure tourists, yacht owners, and business travellers. The marina's unique blend of upscale residential living, commercial offerings, and public-access waterfront areas makes it a focal point for a diverse range of visitors. This dynamic environment presents distinct security challenges, particularly given the high-profile nature of the area and the range of activities taking place.

The Royal Apollonia Hotel, located in Limassol, Cyprus, is a prestigious five-star establishment renowned for its luxurious beachfront location and comprehensive amenities. The hotel caters to a broad spectrum of guests, including leisure tourists, business travellers, and attendees of conferences and events. Its diverse clientele and multifunctional spaces present a set of distinct security challenges. Moreover, the open-access nature of specific hotel spaces, combined with its prime location in a popular urban area, makes it susceptible to external threats, such as unauthorized access and public disturbances.

Kraków's Christmas Market. Krakow's Main Square a UNESCO World Heritage site, becomes the centre of the city's winter festivities during Christmas, attracting millions of local and international visitors. Known for its picturesque medieval architecture and festive atmosphere, the square hosts one of Europe's most iconic Christmas market, which showcases local traditions, arts, and food. However, the site's open-air design, historical significance, and high foot traffic present specific security challenges requiring careful consideration.

Acropolis archaeological surrounding, and specifically the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, situated at the base of the Acropolis in Athens, is a culturally and historically significant site, attracting thousands of visitors annually worldwide. The site faces unique security challenges as a venue for large-scale performances and a landmark in Greece's ancient heritage. While the amphitheatre is a central attraction, the surrounding area, especially the spaces leading to the entrance, is frequently congested, further complicating safety and security measures.

3. Networking & Synergies

The Hector project fulfils the European security agenda and the strategic priorities of the Union. Therefore, the project has developed key partnerships from the first phase to maximize it's efficiency and build a security ecosystem in tourism sites.

➔ **EUPSA:** Cooperation with European Protective Security Advisors ensures quality homogeneity due to expertise in vulnerability assessments and security planning. In addition to the active participation in the WS, a joint autopsy was carried out on security planning at the Jewish Synagogue of Thessaloniki as well as Security by Design at the under construction Holocaust Museum in Thessaloniki.

➔ **JRC:** The Joint Research Center is the innovation and technological support mechanism of the European Commission. In this context, a representative from the JRC participated in the WS by presenting innovative technological tools such as Vehicle SPEed Evaluation and Dynamics Assessment (V-SPEED) and Blast Load Assessment and Damage Evaluation (BLADE).

➔ **HRSN:** The High Risk Security Network gives the opportunity to network with all Member States by constantly interacting to ensure the correct orientation of the project to meet the needs of all countries.

➔ **Sister Projects:** Cooperation with funded projects (SPIRIT, HOTHREAT, PROSPERES) of the same theme was considered necessary in the HECTOR project, because research needs cover each other and there is an exchange of know-how at European level, promoting the result of both parties.

> "The project has developed key partnerships to maximize efficiency and build a security ecosystem for the tourism Industry."

HECTOR PROJECT

OUR CONSORTIUM

HECTOR brings together 18 beneficiaries from 5 countries

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