



## Conclusions

# *International Congress on Public Safety in a Diverse Society*

October 19th to 22nd  
Segovia and Madrid  
IE University

Over 100 experts and participants from different countries took part in the *International Congress on Public Safety in a Diverse Society* debating and reaching agreements on guidelines for a public safety facing the challenges and opportunities in our increasingly complex, diverse, global, changing, interconnected and technological societies. The contents of the conclusions were previously worked on in a series of processes merging at the Congress: Participative research processes among professionals, experts and members of highly diverse communities (such as that of Madrid Central District), bibliographic studies and studies of international challenges and good practices including field trips to over 10 countries, discussions and joint interdisciplinary reflection in various cities and countries as part of the *International Conference* process... All this was brought together, discussed, and agreements were drawn during the International Congress with an approach based on social diversity as a universal value allowing us to collaborate between cities and countries in order to move forwards in the effective and universal protection of the rights of each and every one in the world.



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### Summary of Conclusions

Among all Congress conclusions, what stands out is the need to progress in terms of pro-active and community policing models. These are needed in prevention as well as in fighting crime, by focusing on the community as a whole, including all members, and by encouraging them to participate in designing and implementing safety policies based on processes which generate mutual trust. Public safety fulfils a basic human need and is a common good we must all be involved in. Safety is more than just the absence of crime, it is the opposite of insecurity and we should focus on promoting and strengthening the networks and chains of public safety values working at ground level through sustainable safety models.

Institutions and social organisations should be co-ordinated cost-efficiently and effectively within the neighbourhood, generating methods to guarantee the rights of all individuals and groups, and specially those with most needs, fewest resources, most vulnerable and at risk, and most invisible. Based on inclusive criteria within our diverse society, public safety must reach each and every citizen. At the same time, work at local level should have a global view and there should be inter-territorial and international understandings focusing on integral human safety.

Justice should take more into account the citizen's context in order to provide solutions more closely adapted to their problems. It should involve the community more and work more closely with public safety agents at ground level. We also need to pay more attention to the problems faced by victims as well as offenders during legal procedures.

Public safety resources in a given territory need to be organised, rationalised and optimised taking full advantage of collaborative and co-ordinated work between departments and institutions with inter-agency teams and leadership facilitating internal and organisational changes contributing to horizontalising, de-concentrating and simplifying structures and processes. Organisations should adopt updated and scientifically supported methods and criteria in internal processes including selection, training, promotion and performance assessment at different levels while promoting transparency, equality and non discrimination within the organisation as well as beyond it.

As a general conclusion, an approach based on a diverse society offers a great opportunity to define safety methods founded on the respect and protection of the same rights and freedoms for all, adapting ourselves to the specific characteristics and needs of each individual. This



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approach would allow us to agree upon methods of working together between cities and countries without cultural or social barriers. We need to design methods capable of incorporating all cultures and social categories as we will otherwise be discriminating and adding to insecurity. There is no excuse not to learn from each other and to collaborate to advance in public safety models for all.

### **Conclusions per Thematic Areas (Panels)**

The communications and the discussions held in each Thematic Panel led to conclusions on the key points and challenges in those important issues which need to be addressed in our diverse societies as well as possible ways of dealing with them. The Panel coordinators later came together and synthesized the conclusions from each Panel. The resulting list of Panels Conclusions (issues, challenges, and recommendations) below contributed to the summary of the Congress Conclusions above and may be well understood as a development of them.

#### **POLICE MODELS**

- We need to attract the community to involve it more in the design of safety policies.
- Community, proximity or neighbourhood policing should be a reference of model to attain implicative processes.
- Institutions and social organisations should make more effort to do their joint work at ground, neighbourhood level so as to cost-efficiently and effectively address public safety.
- Public safety as a field of work not only of police departments, but also of the community and social organisations.
- A public safety adapted to the needs of each community should be the subject of debate, making the community participating in defining a safety model responding to those problems closest to the people, those of a day-to-day basis, and the common offences most affecting the community (minor offences, misdemeanours, antisocial behaviour, etc.)
- We need to address issues on public safety which don't always fall into the traditional philosophy. For instance, littering, even if it may be a frequent problem in a



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neighbourhood, is not always considered because we frequently relate safety to serious crimes or offences.

### **THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

- Over the past years the concept of safety evolved from a military safety approach to a concept of integral safety in which the individual's safety is taken into account as well as State security. In this approach, barriers between external and internal national dimensions of safety have been lifted. This distinction loses all meanings if we consider terrorism and organised crime, illegal trafficking and migration, and risks of different types of pandemics which directly affect individuals and community.
- A sociological diagnosis on negative vectors of the change of globalization in our cities, the impact of the economic crises, the failure of the education system, and the deterioration of co-existence constitute a core point in defining the risks and challenges at global and local level society must face to develop a new ethic capable of shaping co-existent and public safety in our cities.

### **JUDICIAL AND PENITENTIARY SYSTEMS**

A few challenges:

1. There is a high probability of reoffending/ re-incarceration following release from prison.
  - Inmates have to be well prepared to re-enter to their community while they are still in prison and they must be supported by parole officers and other community agents within the community of re-entry when they are released.
2. Prosecutors and judges must have a greater role regarding community problems and not only deal with "their cases".
  - They must be encouraged to involve communities to identify advantages and problems, to find solutions to local problems and to use a variety of alternative means to incarceration when cases go to trial, alternative means adapted to the case really restoring justice, safety and re-integration of all affected persons.



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3. The justice system must recognise the differences between minors and adults.
  - It must understand and address problems of juvenile delinquency by forcing them to take responsibility for their actions and then provide more flexibility within the system for minors.

### **NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATIONS**

- Communication and trust between people (with particular attention to minorities) and the police has to be improved in most cities and countries;
- Communication does not only involve offering information, but also requires an effort in order to understand and reach the needs and problems of others.
- The concept of participation may lead to tensions; therefore, collaboration must be based on an increased mutual communication and understanding.
- People should be directly involved in public safety, for example, by encouraging other members of the community to get involved, by providing information on the community problems and needs, and collaborating hand in hand with the police, making use of new technologies.
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### **ROLES OF NON POLICE/JUDICIAL SERVICES**

- COMMON CHALLENGES:
  - How to create security among all on the basis of inter-disciplinary approaches and the involvement of the society.
  - How to address feeling of insecurity to contribute to improve public safety (fear of crime affects criminal behaviour), allowing it to be well adjusted to safety measured by other means.
- COMMON LINES OF ACTION:
  - Combining actions in the physical and social context, reflecting and including social activities and solutions at local level.



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- Considering the improvement in the quality of public spaces as a means of social inclusion and public safety.
  - Promoting social participation and integration via community mediation or proximity agents and inter-agency teams.
- CHALLENGES:
- Real interdisciplinary work via mutual appreciation of professionals involved.
  - The horizontal aspect and mutual knowledge between professionals.

### **VULNERABLE AND AT RISK GROUPS. VICTIMOLOGY**

- We need to work on crime prevention with relation to vulnerable and at risk groups from a holistic approach involving various sectors and entities.
- Safety is not only a problem of crime, it is a multi-territorial, multi-area phenomenon dealing with social, economical and urban imbalances which alter safety to the most vulnerable (women, the elderly, children and disabled persons).
- In order to protect, suppress and pursue the crime when necessary, we need to work at the levels of organisational structures and processes.
- Reaching an optimal network work at local level is of a key importance, not only so that safety is more participative and public, but also in order to manage and monitor negative discretionary on public safety agents. Police ought to be motivated, but also monitored.

### **GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE**

- Public safety must inevitably be seen as public policy based on a strategic approach in which “acting together means thinking together”.
- The territory is the frame for implementing these policies: the neighbourhood is the scenery of an integral public safety and the international context is the scenery of the local policies – in other words, global symptoms and problems have local solutions based on global visions.



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- Local safety should be based in the inevitable interaction between police and social agents from different areas and organizations by means of:
  - The quality of services, accessibility and capacity to respond according to public needs;
  - The preventive and proactive approach as a need and reference for changing cultural paradigms and police structures, with new management tools to improve public service and peaceful co-existence.
  - People and community should be at the top and centre of services and organization structures and processes, with inter-organizational management models integrating resources in the relationship between individuals and community through fostering community networks, inter-agency teams, and collaborative leaderships.
  
- Challenges:
  - How to rationalise, integrate and co-ordinate resources across the territory in effective models.
  - To involve and encourage public participation in safety policies better.
  - Managing diversity as an opportunity.
  - Efficiently communication and information.
  - Relying on collaborative internal and external leadership within and between organizations.
  - To develop new professional profiles and social agents with adequate capacities and training to be able to work at ground level with community approaches. This should include legal workers, urban planning, health and education professionals and so on.
  - To integrate policy decision-making structures in the debate on changing the safety model.

### **PREVENTION PRACTICES AND PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY**

Key issues to address from preventive approaches:

1. Getting closer to the conflict:
  - Providing the necessary tools.
  - Providing victim support (frequently forgotten)
  - Encouraging accountability.



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- Working through networks.
  - Eliminating the sense of impunity.
  - Immediacy in responding.
2. Improving public life:
    - Strengthening protecting factors.
    - Family support.
    - Psychological intervention.
    - Socio-educational activities.
    - Enhancing collective mental hygiene.
    - Create structured leisure activities.
  3. Promoting extra-judicial solutions:
    - Mediation.
    - Restoration.
    - Social-laboral integration.
    - Sensitizing (developing compassion, forgiveness...).
  4. Fostering positive parenting:
    - Enhance positive family co-existence.
  5. Accepting that DNA is not a stigma
  6. Offering work:
    - Work normalisation.
    - Eliminating self-fulfilling prophecy on failure
    - Make people feel useful.
  7. Cutting off early involvement in criminal careers:
    - Preventing premature emotional hardening.
    - Putting an end to drug abuse.
    - Avoiding truancy.
    - Encouraging moral and ethical development.
    - Confronting contradictions.
    - Exorcising unacceptable habits.
    - Deactivating short-circuited thoughts.



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### 8. Educate, educate and educate

#### Forensic sciences panels

- All those practitioners who work with people involved in legal proceedings on a professional level should receive special training to do so.
- Cases of particularly vulnerable victims, stressful situations, or potential cases involving formerly aggressive actors should be brought to light and re-integrated as early as possible.
- Early diagnosis and treatment processes should be carried out in cases of psychiatric pathology leading to social exclusion or disorders related to drug use.
- Any claim should always be treated as a problem, be it because it is true or because it is the patenting of a problem.

#### General conclusion

A diverse society approach offers a great opportunity to define safety methods based on the protection and respect of the same rights for all, without any prejudice with regards to specific characteristics or needs. It therefore enables us to move closer together and agree on work methods among cities and countries without the limits a dominant culture may impose. Diverse society as a principle does not allow us to adapt our methods to a few cultures as we would then be discriminating and increasing insecurity. A diverse society is a universal value and a plurality of resources that allow us to learn from each other, and to collaborate at local and international levels providing public safety among all and for everyone. It is an opportunity for public safety to protect human rights and freedoms in a diversity of cultures, societies, and countries, contributing to make them really universal.