



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

1st International Conference on Public Safety

International Congress on Public Safety in a Diverse Society

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International Guidelines on Public Safety in a Diverse Society

1. Principles

The progress in our democratic states and the rule of law must be able to respond to the diversity of needs and resources. Public safety is a key element in order to make this possible. The increasing globalisation of communications, new technologies and social mobility over the past 20 years has led to an increase in social and cultural complexity, particularly in big cities across the world. This creates a challenge in terms of guaranteeing everyone's rights, but it is also an opportunity and a resource for co-existence and human development. The field of public safety is emblematic in that failure to protect everyone's rights would make co-existence extremely difficult where as success would turn it into a driving force for integration and social development. As things stand, public safety in a diverse society is fundamental in making co-existence in diversity - one of man's main aspirations - possible.

Current urban communities are intrinsically diverse, international and interconnected, and this affects us all on an international level. Solutions must therefore be found on the basis of understanding and joint international effort. The intrinsically global nature of a diverse society means that we need to generate a joint debate and reflection at international level in order to reach consensus on the protection of each and everyone's rights, on each individual's responsibilities and on the type of international co-operation we want in fields related to public safety. Currently, progress and innovation is being



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made in various countries amidst growing globalisation with the boom in new communication technologies making now an ideal time to address the role of public safety in our global, diverse and highly technological society.

2. **Objectives**

General:

To promote a joint analysis and definition of principles and guidelines on how to protect human and civil rights among all citizens, social agents, cities and countries.

Specifics:

- Create international processes involving more countries and cities including joint reflection on public safety models adapted to a complex, diverse, changing and interconnected society.
- Provide applicable guidelines to the various bodies working in public safety and related services (prevention and support), thereby enabling cities and countries to adopt inclusive and extensive approaches to overcome the problems related to models designed for a homogenous society.
- Enable international co-operation on the basis of mutual understanding.

3. **Background**

Over the past decades, many countries have achieved major progress in the field of public safety using methods centred on the community. From the former, purely reactive methods focusing on the offender, we have shifted towards community approaches focusing on people's safety as a basic need. More pro-active and preventive methods have been incorporated. Moreover, individuals', groups' and communities' particular characteristics are increasingly being taken into account. Different cities and countries have adopted programmes or established units centred on diversity within the organisation as well as among those they serve.

On the other hand, diversity is still being considered in a very restricted sense in most places and diversity programmes most times only focus on certain "different" groups or communities. There is a narrow notion of diversity meaning different cultures, ethnicities,



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religions or origins. However, diversity should be understood in a broader sense, in its wealth of social and cultural characteristics (related also to age, ideology, beliefs, economic aspects, different capabilities...). Besides, there are still major differences among countries in regards to how diversity is addressed. In many of them it is ignored at various levels as the concept of equal rights is still being confused with equal needs or resources. In other places communities' rights and duties are simply disregarded as a concern of public safety bodies basically centred on fighting crime and criminals. These narrow approaches in current, open, and changing societies made up of member from different cultures, ideas, and conceptions on public safety, with a plurality of needs and resources, make the work in public safety very difficult. It may lead to increased segregation among groups and social categories or to an attempt to homogenise society on the basis of ignoring the "others", seeing diversity as a threat to "national values" which leads to marginalisation and public unsafely.

Focusing on diversity is an opportunity to improve professionalism and effectiveness in our work. We need to protect the same rights for all by providing a service adapted to the needs of each and every one. A diverse society also provides an opportunity as a "vaccine" to prevent excluding identities, spatial and social segregation based on supposed cultural or ideological homogeneities, social rifts and marginalisation of individuals, groups, and communities, key problems origin of public insecurity. The diversity "mine" is therefore a rich and intelligent source of contributions for integral safety and co-existence. At the same time, a diverse society approach means that we have to stop thinking of how to adapt services to a few cultures or social categories as this would imply discrimination, segregation and public unsafely.

We need to come to an understanding and consensus on a public safety model among all and for all. This is why, in this globalised, open and highly mobile World, we need shared frameworks among citizens, public services, cities and countries in order to promote public safety and a positive co-existence. All this can be made possible if we count on social diversity as a universal value, a common resource among all cities and countries.

4. Preparatory Process

The preparatory process for these Guidelines has consisted in merging a series of studies and analyses:

1. Analyses of needs and proposals in terms of public safety practices within a participative study on the progress of public safety methods in Madrid's Central District. Public service professionals from different agencies and institutions (local police, social services, education, health, urban planning, environment, NGOs...),



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- as well as experts from different countries and fields and a Citizens' Participation Forum made up of residents and businessmen and women took part in this study. The study resulted in the design of an integral public safety model which is continuously being improved thanks to the feedback provided by experts, professionals and citizens. (You can view the model at <http://safetyinnova.ie.edu>).
2. International study of good practices in public safety within the research project of the Public Safety Community Programme and in which experts and entities from Spain and abroad took part.
 3. Preparatory meetings on key issues in various countries were organised by professionals in different fields. During these meetings participants analysed and defined the sort of public safety model needed in their cities. Meetings were held in Belem, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo (Brazil), Cicero (Illinois), Groningen (Netherlands), Barcelona and Madrid (Spain). Experts from different countries also filled in questionnaires on the same issues.
 4. Working Groups were held to prepare for the International Conference. Members included the meeting organisers, Madrid's Central District's Mixed Commission made up of representatives of a Panel of Experts, a Citizens' Participation Forum (also from Madrid's Central District), and an inter-agency group of professionals working at ground level. This is the group working on the draft International Guidelines aiming to integrate the conclusions on needs, challenges and proposals at local level (Madrid's Central District) with the experiences, recommendations and good practices from other countries were drafted.
 5. International Conference (within the International Congress). During this Conference, the draft Guidelines were discussed in order to reach a consensus on them.
 6. Presentation and dissemination of the Guidelines among national and international institutions.

5. **Guidelines**

5.1. **Defining principles**

- 5.1.1. **Principle:** We understand public safety as the group of factors and elements in a given territory that allow for or facilitate the relationship between the public and its interpersonal and social contexts based on the respect of everyone's fundamental rights.
- 5.1.2. By factors and elements of public safety, we understand the causes, triggers, influences, manifestations, and consequences of the state of public safety in a



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given social and spatiotemporal context. These elements may be anything from needs and problems to formal and informal resources related to safety.

5.1.3. Public safety services are professional services whose mission it is to protect and promote public safety and to reduce the presence and impact of negative factors hindering public safety.

5.1.4. All professionals and individuals should play their part to improve public safety.

5.2. Public Safety Services

5.2.1. Principle. Public safety services are those providing professional support to all people. They focus on the different needs, problems and resources regarding public safety within a given territory in order to guarantee the same rights for all, and pay particular attention to individuals and groups with greater needs, who are more at risk, are invisible, or have fewer resources by improving inclusivity for all.

5.2.2. The organisation of public safety services will be centred on the relation with and between people in their social and territorial context. Resource management should be integrated at this relational level. This organisation will aim to bring public autonomy once the professional work has been carried out.

5.2.3. All levels and roles of public safety services should have a pro-active approach focused on the community context, on enhancing public safety elements and on preventing factors leading to insecurity. Services should be able to identify the relationships between public safety elements and address them in an organised way, referring to other services factors pertaining to different sectors, following up on those services, and carrying out general evaluations.

5.2.4. Public safety service providers (public safety agents or the police) working at ground level should have decision making and collaborative leadership capacities in order to initiate prevention and intervention projects on all sorts of factors and elements. Middle-level management will have to be able to program a medium term course of action on the relationship between elements. The high-level management will have to define strategies addressing key relations within the network of elements and their relationships going beyond their own territory. Crisis intervention agents and investigators, specialised or otherwise,



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should also work from pro-active, preventive and community approaches in co-ordination with the other agents.

- 5.2.5. All public safety levels, roles and services should be organised among themselves without overlapping, repetition or isolated work of services or agents.
- 5.2.6. Public safety institutions should provide optimal transparency in their services on the basis of a scientific and verifiable evaluation of their work that should also facilitate public monitoring of their services.

5.3. The role of other services and co-ordination among them

- 5.3.1. **Principle.** All professional services involved in addressing factors and elements which may cause, trigger, influence or be the consequence of the state of public safety should be involved in it.
- 5.3.2. All public services in different sectors should adopt pro-active models focusing on the community context, and co-ordinate themselves through specific procedures and defined leadership models. They should guarantee procedures reach the most needy individuals and groups, those most at risk, invisible, and with the fewest resources, working towards inclusivity for all.
- 5.3.3. Basic sectors which ought to have community roles related to public safety include at least: health , education, leisure, social , economic and employment , urban planning, housing, environment and public management services.
- 5.3.4. More cross-cutting, integral and inter-agency general leadership in a given territory will have to be taken on by main public management bodies at the closest level to a given territory. This leadership will have to organise formal and informal resources on the territory, enhance collaborative and co-ordinated work among services, and utilise pro-social relationships within the entire community. A main goal should be to provide people with autonomy in the use of available resources in their context.
- 5.3.5. All institutions providing public services should guarantee the proper internal organizational processes such as selection, training, promotion, and



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team work, enabling cost-efficient and effective work in the context of a given territory.

- 5.3.6.** All public and private institutions providing services should strive for optimal transparency in affairs such as budget, performance, policies, etc., on the basis of a scientific and verifiable evaluation which will also facilitate the auditing and public monitoring of these services.

5.4. Public participation

- 5.4.1. Principle.** The public has key roles in public safety, recognizing that some tasks should be performed by professionals.
- 5.4.2.** Authorities should promote a civic culture of safety so that people themselves participate actively in safety elements, especially in those that may cause or facilitate problems and solutions, strengthening pro-social behaviour and interpersonal and community support.
- 5.4.3.** Institutions and social agents should promote civic education allowing for the development of conflict resolution and problem solving competencies. Education should also enable people to distinguish situations which require professional intervention from those which do not.
- 5.4.4.** Public authorities should not neglect their responsibilities in public safety issues that may be addressed by people themselves; however, neither should they encourage people's undue dependence on safety services.
- 5.4.5.** Social agents, members of the public, and institutions should share leadership in establishing mutual support networks and collaborative groups working towards common governance for all.