

Urban Security Governance

The case of Piraeus' Local
Council for Crime Prevention



● **Key Words:**

#crime prevention

#governance

#institutional bodies

#citizen participation

#co-production of policies

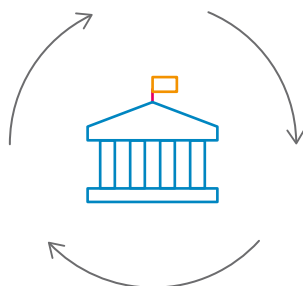
“There is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime and victimisation, but also promote community safety and contribute to the sustainable development of countries.”¹

Urban security is not only a matter of state actors or local authorities. Preventing and mitigating incivilities and crimes at the local level requires **involving all the relevant stakeholders** – public and private, as well as citizens, their representatives, and civil society organisations. Thus, **a sustainable urban security governance should provide a platform for exchange and dialogue and be built on the principles of co-production of policies and partnerships** between different stakeholders.

Urban security councils serve as such a platform on the local level. They may vary in structure or legal status, depending on the local, national and EU-level requirements. They may also have different objectives, ranging from co-defining the priorities of a security strategy and information sharing to crafting recommendations based on urban security audits, setting communication guidelines and supporting evaluation procedures².

Citizens’ involvement in the co-production of urban security policies is of particular importance in the context of increasingly fragmented social ties, growing suspicion towards authorities, and polarisation.

An example of such a structure is the Local Council for Crime Prevention (LCCP), established within the *BeSecure-FeelSecure* (BSFS) project (2019-2023)³ in the Greek city of Piraeus, whose example can be replicated elsewhere.



¹UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime: UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC Resolution 2002/13.

²European Forum for Urban Security (Efus), *Methods and Tools for a Strategic Approach to Urban Security*, Efus, 2016, p.13

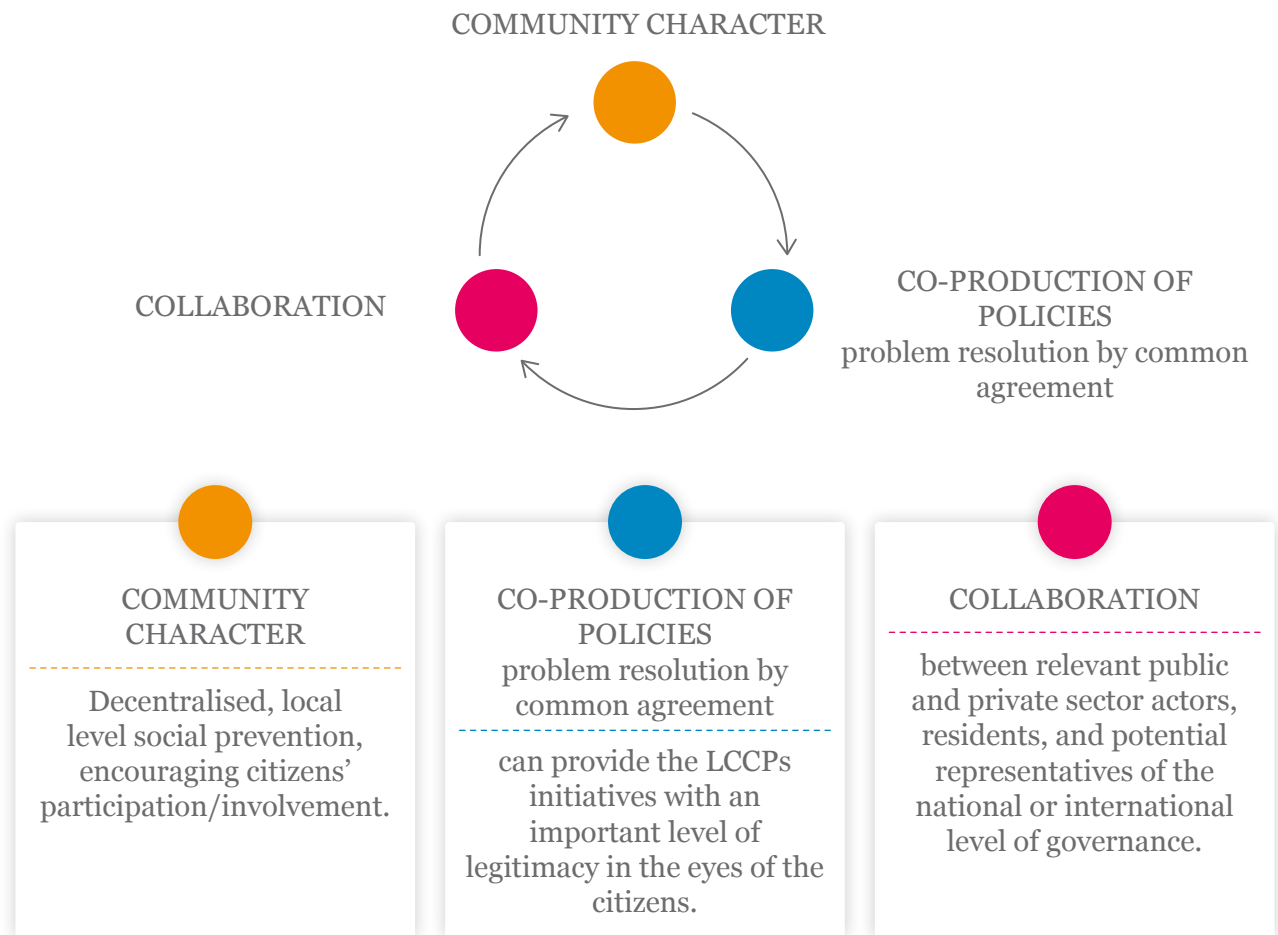
³The BSFS project (2019-2023), co-funded by the EU Urban Innovative Actions, aims to develop a governance structure, innovative ICT tools; as well as social and spatial interventions, such as awareness raising actions addressed to youth about bullying and cyber threats; training sessions on urban security for shop owners, public servants, and other relevant stakeholders; image management and target hardening based on the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design model, to reinforce urban security in Piraeus.

● Why LCCPs?



Local Councils for Crime Prevention are a decentralised and agile tool to address urban security-related concerns and challenges. They are an adequate and tested institutional setup to **encourage active community participation and citizen involvement in consultation, dialogue and co-production of crime prevention initiatives that seek to respond to every-day security challenges and concerns. As a common characteristic, these initiatives usually seek to decrease the level of fear of crime and insecurity while enhancing social cohesion.** Due to the active citizen involvement LCCPs are key pillars of a sustainable participatory policy framework.

● LCCPs tend to be structured around these pillars:



Due to different national and international contexts, there is no one-size-fits-all model for LCCPs. Thus, their *modus operandi* and composition should be tailored to the local legal and social reality.

Thus, **the creation of LCCPs and similar local level governance bodies should be *ad hoc*** - it needs to take into account the composition of society (socio-economic and ethnographic background, etc.), victims' needs (e.g. children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, social groups with low living standards, economic immigrants, illiterates, etc.) in light of the forms of criminality and legal traditions and requirements.

● **The case of Piraeus:**



Dense commercial areas – like the City of Piraeus, one of the largest ports in Europe – are vulnerable to inbound and outbound smuggling, as well as street and organised crime. Citizens believe that urban insecurity is one of the city’s main problems, which contributes to a sense of social and environmental degradation and low social cohesion.

● **LCCPs in Greece:**



According to the Greek legislation, Local Councils for Crime Prevention are consultative bodies with an opinion-issuing role that can be established in any municipality with a total population exceeding 3,000 residents. LCCPs have to have from five to eleven members with their mandates lasting for three years. Their participation is honorary.

The Local Councils for Crime Prevention are convened and chaired by the Mayor of the City or the proxy of the latter.

In Piraeus, the mission of this newly introduced instance consists of: making an inventory of crime at the local level; assessing the security situation and planning; organising, coordinating and implementing actions undertaken by the community’s respective bodies.

The LCCP’s activities are, for instance, built on the use of an innovative ICT tool, the Collaborative Urban Risk Management (CURiM) platform, which collects information on and enables the assessment of physical and cyber threats.

● **According to the existing legal framework, LCCPs in Greece:**



- ✓ Promote multisectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration
- ✓ Make an inventory of the forms of incivilities and crimes, assess crimes in their practical dimension, annually evaluate the implemented crime prevention actions
- ✓ Design, organise, and implement prevention policies and actions
- ✓ Assist the police and facilitate the cooperation between local authorities and the local and national police forces
- ✓ Submit proposals to competent authorities, such as ministries
- ✓ Suggest to establish information centres for victims and support their work

In light of these diverse and mutually reinforcing missions, the work of the LCCP, established in Piraeus under the guidance of the Laboratory of Urban Criminology of Panteion University in April 2020, has so far revolved around:



● **The main challenges of LCCPs in Greece:**

- ✓ Convincing municipalities and the relevant stakeholders, who can still be indecisive, about the utility of the above governance structure
- ✓ Motivating citizens to actively participate in the LCCPs work
- ✓ Regular, fluid internal communication with the stakeholders
- ✓ External communication on the LCCPs' concrete actions and achievements
- ✓ Lack of resources and staff

**Are there any LCCPs in your country?
How do they function and what is their composition?**

● Key elements to guarantee the effectiveness of an LCCP:

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- **Stability and continuity of work** - Will the LCCP function smoothly in the context of political changes and in times of crisis?
- **Coordination and cooperation with the stakeholders to be involved** - What form and regularity does the coordination with the different stakeholders take?
- **Composition** - Do the LCCP's members represent diverse urban security expertise (be it theoretical or practical)? Is the LCCP representative of the society (in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)?
- **Structure** - Does the Mayor promote the Council in a transverse way - without restricting the participation in the LCCP's work to a service or a sector of the municipality?
- **Training** - Are the participants and especially the technical team well trained?
- **Resources & Support** - Does the LCCP have the relevant human and financial resources to operate? Does it have the necessary political and technical support indispensable for its daily functioning?

● **LCCPs' work should be based on multistakeholder and cross-sectoral collaboration with:**



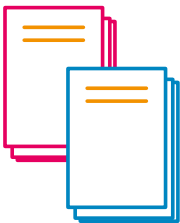
- **Similar Councils** of other municipalities and the neighbouring communities
- **Municipal Service** (e.g. security and tranquillity, gender equality, culture, tourism...etc).
- **Public Service** (e.g. healthcare, education, health services, etc.)
- In the case of Piraeus, the Institute for Crime Prevention, penitentiary and **therapy institutions**, such as Therapy Centre for Dependent Individuals (KETHEA), the Organisation Against Drugs (OKANA), the prevention and rehabilitation centres, social reintegration units, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)
- **NGOs** (e.g. SOS Children's Village)
- **Scientific, professional, and social institutions**, such as students' and parents' associations, therapeutic communities, Bar and Medical Associations that will enhance institutional capacity, community involvement, risk awareness and raise awareness.
- **First line practitioners** (e.g. police, teachers, social workers)
- **Media** (public and private, national and local, print and online – including media awareness programmes)
- **Urban designers** (e.g., for buildings, streets, infrastructure, public spaces)
- **Universities, schools** and other **educational institutions**
- **Social service agencies**
- **Private individuals** designated by local authorities, such as qualified professionals, as well as local agencies, regional authorities and associations.
- **Youth, cultural and sport associations**

● Other examples for Local Security Councils within the EU:

- Local Security and Crime Prevention Councils (France), where the number of inhabitants exceeds ten thousand
- Crime Prevention Councils (e.g. the example of the Crime Prevention Council of Lower Saxony) (Germany)
- Provincial crime prevention commissions (e.g. the example of Liège) (Belgium)
- Security Coalitions (Italy)
- Local Security Boards (Spain)

● Concrete actions and activities:

- Elaborate and monitor social actions (e.g. actions to raise awareness among youths about cyber threats) and spatial interventions (urban regeneration)
- Cooperation with the Victim Support Unit of Piraeus



A separate thematic Fact Sheet will be dedicated to concrete examples of the LCCP's actions in Piraeus and its cooperation with the City's Victim Support Unit.

Further read: European Forum for Urban Security (Efus), *Methods and Tools for a Strategic Approach to Urban Security*, Efus, 2016



● Annex ● ● ● ● ●

In Greece LCCPs were created according to the provisions of the article 16 of the Law No 2713/1999. According to the article 2 par.1 of the Ministerial Decree 3002/1/14-f (Gov. Gazette No 12/14-1-2002) that was issued later, by the Ministry of Public Order on the “Regulating Matters for the Function of Municipal and Community Crime Prevention Councils and Their Cooperation With Relevant Authorities and Organizations”, LCCPs are “*de-centralized instruments of crime prevention policy*” that endeavour to handle the problem of criminality at local level with a principal aim to “*diminish or eradicate feelings of insecurity among citizens and to create a feeling of trust in the ability of the state to legitimately and effectively protect their social benefits*”. Moreover, the participation of a representative of the Hellenic Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation in the composition of the LCCPs was foreseen according to the art. 30§ 3 of the Law No 3448/2006. The establishment and operation of the LCCPs fall within the competence of the municipalities (art. 84 of the Law 3463/2006). The Local Councils for Crime Prevention are consultative bodies that can be established in any community with a total population exceeding that of three thousand (3000) residents. The Councils are composed of scientists and officers that have specific knowledge on crime and criminality, such as criminologists, juries, psychologists, sociologists, police officers, social workers, doctors as well as representatives of the various productive classes and social bodies. The members are at least five (5) and no more than eleven (11), their mandate lasts for three (3) years and their participation is honorary (art. 16 of the Law No 2713/1999).

The institution of LCCPs falls within the broader model of participatory criminal policy, thus promoting cooperation and synergy between central government, local authorities, citizens and various institutional and social stakeholders for the prevention of crime and the enhancement of citizens’ feelings of safety⁴. In this context, the main objective of the LCCPs is to strengthen of social cohesion and consolidate urban security through the organization and coordination of joint actions carried out by the community.

According to the framework of the Basic Principles for the Functioning of LCCPs, the latter have the responsibility of *studying and keeping records of criminality at local level as well as that of “designing, organizing, coordinating and implementing the relevant initiatives for the prevention or reduction of certain forms of lower to middle criminality by civic organizations”*⁵. In this sense, the LCCPs undertake actions such as: I. studying crime in its real dimension in certain municipalities, according to empirical data; II. mobilizing local actors, related communities, institutions and associations; III. suggesting the establishment of information centers for crime victims as well as activating and supporting their functioning; IV. motivating the participation of citizens and local actors; V. encouraging community mediation; VI. assisting the work of the police; VII. designing and implementing prevention programmes targeting certain groups; VIII. submitting proposals to competent authorities (e.g. ministries) for the conclusion of partnership contracts (e.g. prevention programmes); X. cooperating with executives in certain fields of crime; XI. drawing up reports on the developments regarding crime prevention in certain areas⁶.

So far in Greece there have been established around 100 LCCPs but only a small amount of them are operating due to a series of reasons such as the lack of knowledge and information about the institution, the lack of funding and coordination as well as the reluctance of some local authorities to assume responsibility for serious and complex issues such as crime prevention⁷.

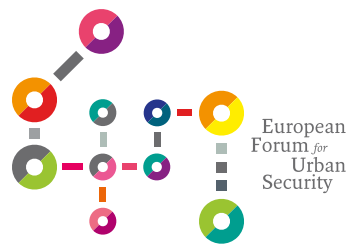
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⁴Zarafonitou Ch., “Community” forms of crime prevention and fear of crime. The Local Councils for Crime Prevention and the Neighbourhood Police Officer, CRIMINOLOGY, 2019, p. 45 (in Greek).

⁵Zarafonitou Ch., “New” tendencies in prevention policy in Greece: Local Crime Prevention Councils and the partnership model”, in A. Magganas (ed), Essays in Honour of Alice Yotopoulos-Marangopoulos, vol. II, Legal Library Publ. (Nomiki Vivliothiki), Athens, 2003, pp. 1563-1573, Zarafonitou Ch., “Local Crime Prevention Councils and the partnership model in Greece”, Community Safety Journal, 3 /2004, pp. 23-28. See also Ch. Zarafonitou, “Contemporary trends in community crime prevention in Greece”, Presentation at Meeting National Crime Prevention Councils 18/02/2020, Brussels.

⁶ See www.astynomia.gr and for further details regarding the function and principles of LCCPs see Chr. Zarafonitou, 2003, op.cit., p. 1568; Chr. Zarafonitou, 2004, op.cit., pp. 24-25, Ch. Zarafonitou, 2019, op.cit., p.45.

⁷Ch. Zarafonitou, 2019, op.cit., p.47.

Project Partners



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