Security in Public Space - Role and Tasks of Cities
Guiding considerations of the German-European Forum for Urban Security e.V.

Life in a big city offers many advantages. The dense coexistence of living, leisure and cultural facilities, shopping, places of learning and education, various forms of work but also inner city space and environmental sites are an expression of urban life in a productive competition of cities for increasing quality of life.

Attractive city life is not without presuppositions. Many ideas, efforts and resources are needed to adapt the 'artwork' city to the necessary global changes. An increasingly important prerequisite for peaceful and equitable coexistence in conurbations is the issue of security and order. Urban security encompasses a wide variety of tasks, and involves a variety of actors in its creation and maintenance. **In principle, security is a federal government task, but in public debate cities and municipalities are the first points of contact when it comes to maladministration.**

The concept of public space is of particular importance and enjoys a special status in the field of urban security. As a place of communication, encounter, political demonstration, the performance of art and culture and various amusements, it is indispensable for urban life. At the same time, public space is vulnerable. More specifically, the presence of terrorist attacks poses a particular threat to urban coexistence, impedes and prohibits fearless movement on the streets and squares of our cities. Cities and their citizens cannot and will not accept this.

The member cities of the German-European Forum for Urban Security (DEFUS e.V.) have agreed on a number of guiding principles in light of the challenge of terrorist attacks in our cities, which will form the basis of our further efforts to secure public space:

- Cities should remain open and accessible to everyone at all times. The raising of 'city walls' and the 'closing of the city gates' are not compatible with the image of a pluralistic and open society.
- The production of security for public space is a common challenge. The police, cities and other state institutions as well as scientific and private actors are called upon to develop solutions that effectively create security while satisfying the demands of an open society.
- Citizens are entitled to enjoying public life in the streets and squares of our cities without fear. Police forces and city services must minimize potential risks of injury by terror and violence in life and limb. **However, absolute security is incompatible with a free society.** An attitude that is equally characterized by attentiveness to unusual environmental changes as well as resilience in case of an attack must become the basis of a social consensus. This is the only way to prevent the actual goal of attacks, which aim to limit free and open social life through fear. Promoting such a stance and raising awareness for the challenges at hand within the population is also a state task.
- The prevention of radicalisation as well as political and religious extremism is a key factor in the long-term security of public space. **A holistic approach combining preventive urban development measures with social and political prevention measures is the prerequisite for the creation of real and perceived security in public space.**
- Cities need **dynamic security strategies** that do not only respond to past events, but rather anticipate future scenarios of danger and develop appropriate measures to prevent potential threats at an early stage. A 'getting ahead of the situation' is certainly a challenging goal, but it must be a measure of our actions in view of the catastrophic effects of terrorist action.

- **Terrorist prevention measures to protect public space should not be exhausted in the en-masse installation of bollards in our cities.** Such measures can only address one very specific terrorist attack scenario, and they require great financial and personnel effort. Other solutions integrating innovative ideas from the fields of urban design and digital/smart technology must be developed in model experiments. From an emerging instrument box, cities can develop their individual solution strategies.
- **The defense against terrorist attacks is not an original task of cities. In particular, the financial burdens that come with e.g. securing major events, must not be left to the cities alone to handle. In addition, cities need further topical support from other levels of government, for example from state-level prevention committees, which should be further developed and strengthened.**
- Municipalities expect that norms and standards for the certification of corresponding flexible and permanent structural security systems be rapidly established and continuously developed.

These guiding principles are the result of an exchange of DEFUS members with specialist speakers on 2 March 2018 in Essen.

Member list as of February 2018
• City of Augsburg
• City of Dusseldorf
• City of Essen
• City of Freiburg
• City of Gelsenkirchen
• City of Göttingen
• City of Heidelberg
• City of Karlsruhe
• City of Cologne
• District of Lippe
• City of Mannheim
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• German Congress on Crime Prevention
• State Prevention Council Lower Saxony