PSC Europe
Public Safety Communication Europe

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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TO BE UPDATED

FOREWORD

As 2024 unfolded, it became evident that this year has been pivotal in advancing public safety and communication across Europe, keeping the PSCE community busy with many different activities and projects. With rapid technological advancements, evolving security challenges, and growing demands for resilience, our work has become even more critical.

This report highlights the strides made in fostering innovative communication solutions, enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, and addressing emerging public safety needs. 2024 marked an important year for the future of interoperational and interconnected broadband communication systems with the contract awarding of the **EUCCS Preparation** call for tender, the favourable changes in the political landscape supporting the activities of the programme as well as the intensification of the activities of the EUCCS Preparation Operational Team.

In parallel, our contribution and support to projects that PSCE is a partner in continued: from designing and operationalizing a large awareess campaign for the **EITHOS project** which is developing a novel Identity Theft Observatory System, empowering European citizens, Law Enforcements Agencies (LEAs), and policy-makers to further contribute to the prevention, detection, and investigation of online identity theft (OIDT) related crime, to employing its expertise to contribute towards embedding sociological perspectives into to technological development with the project **6G4Society,** to continuing disseminating the results achieved so far by **FIDAL Project** in the application of Beyond 5G technology in the fields of Media and PPDR. Finally, during the last year of the **CORE project,** concluded in September 2024, PSCE intensified its dissemination and communication activities with the aim to leave a legacy for the project beyond its lifetime cycle.

As of October 2024, PSCE added into its portfolio the **SAFEPLACE** project funded under the Civil Security from Space programme from the European Space Agency.
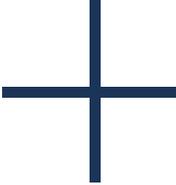
WHAT IS PSCE?

OUR AIM

The aim of the Forum for Public Safety Communication Europe (**PSCE**) is **to foster, by consensus building, excellence in the development and use of public safety communications and information management systems as well as to improve the provision of public safety services and the safety of the citizens of Europe and the rest of the world**.

OUR STRUCTURE

OUR BOARD

On 12 June 2023, **the General Assembly endorsed** the election of Mario Drobics as new Chair of the Research Committee and thus as Board Members:

David Lund - **President** *(2022 - 2026)*
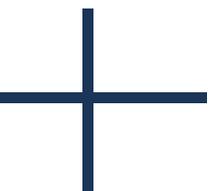
Charlotte Roesener **- Past President** *(2021 - 2025)*

Mario Drobics **- Treasurer** *(2023 - 2027)*

Uwe Kippnich **- Relation and Communication Officer** *(2019 - 2024)*

PSCE Board

PSCE ACTIVITIES

NEW MEMBERS:

PSCE was pleased to welcome an addition to its community with the admission of DIGIGRAM. For nearly 40 years, France-based Digigram has developed professional audio IP solutions to empower industries, emergency services and defense communications systems, as well as transportation networks.

Their solutions are designed for mission-critical applications to enable our customers to take their audio transmissions to the next level, ensuring efficiency, quality and reliability when it comes to safely and seamlessly accomplishing life-dependent missions.

Representatives from DIGIGRAM were also invited to present at the PSCE Winter Conference in Brussels to introduce the organization to the existing Members.

COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC:

PSCE continued to provide regular communication and updates to its Members through its main channels: Flashnews, Newsletters, Website News and social media post. From the start of the year a total of 8 Flashnews and 4 Newsletters have been released. Social media interaction from the LinkedIN community has been steady and consistent with the highest interactions (>300) recorded prior to the start of the PSCE Spring and Winter Conferences.

PSCE CONFERENCES:

The Spring Conference was held in Vienna in June 2024 hosted by the Austrian Ministry of Defense (Members of PSCE) and the Winter edition organized in Brussles at the Maison des Associations Internationales (MAI). As per the PSCE tradition, this was an opportunity for PSCE Members to come together to discuss relevany topics currently dominating the field of public safety and security. Both events welcomed high-level political intervention as well as presentations from speakers within and outside of Europe.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON EC WHITE

On 21st Februrary, the European Commission launched a broad consultation of Member States, civil society, industry, and academics, to collect their views on the scenarios outlined in this White Paper *'How to master Europe's digital infrastructure needs?'.* The Paper analyses the challenges Europe currently faces in the rollout of future connectivity networks and presents possible scenarios moving forward. Several PSCE Members actively participated in the consultation which closed on 30th June 2024.

Consultation Feedback

PSCE SPRING CONFERENCE WORKSHOP REPORT

June 2024, PSCE hosted a collaborative session during the 2024 Spring Conference. This innovative workshop focused on exploring technology risks in the field, specifically examining how cybersecurity and public safety risks emerge during disaster scenarios.

Approximately 60 participants were divided into random teams and tasked with selecting a disaster scenario, then developing strategies to ensure effective communication and resolve the crisis. The goal was to uncover implicit knowledge from participants based on their real-world experience in similar scenarios.

Workshop Report

CONTRIBUTION TO PROPOSALS

PSCE coordinated the preparation of two project proposals under the Call Support to Security Research and Innovation 2024 (HORIZON-CL3-2024-SSRI-01) that could complement the EUCCS preparation project. These two proposals detailed two pre-commercial procurements on two complementary topics: one on EUCCS Preparation coverage with 10 buyers and the second one on EUCSS Preparation Apps with 7 buyers. It is worth noting that these partnerships builds on the EUCCS preparation community of users, enlarging the group to two new countries (Germany and UK). The results of the evaluation of the 9 proposals submitted will be communicated by April 2025.

PSCE BI-ANNUAL CONFERENCES

1) SPRING CONFERENCE IN VIENNA (4 & 5 JUNE)

The Spring edition of the PSCE Conference was hosted by the Austrian Ministry of Defence and took place at the National Defense Academy.

The event gathered 80 participants from across Europe and beyond, from heterogeneous backgrounds including practitioners, researchers, industry, civil servants, and representatives of the European Commission such as DG HOME.

80 PARTICIPANTS

During the event, delegates had the opportunity to hear from high-level talks from experts in the field of Non-Terrestrial Communication and participate actively in a collaborative session, as well as engage in dynamic exchanges in the sponsors and exhibition area. During the evening the attendees had the opportunity to continue the discussions during a social dinner in a warm and cozy atmosphere.

In the realm of large-scale events – among which the French Olympic Games 2024 – where challenges can be intricate and unpredictable, effective safety management is of utmost importance. Bringing together a spectrum of stakeholders, including solution providers, public authorities, and practitioners, the PSCE Conference becomes a focal point for dialogue and exploration of innovative approaches.

The conference was also the occasion to provide the audience with a comprehensive update on BroadEU.Net, following the BroadWay technologic journey, towards governance for a Pan-European Mobile Broadband Network for Public Safety.

Conference Report

Conference Video

2) WINTER CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS
(4 & 5 DECEMBER)

The 2024 edition of the PSCE Winter Conference gathered a total of 99 participants engaging in two days of dynamic discussions and presentations. The event took place in Brussels on December 4th and 5th at the Maison des Associations Internationales (MAI), the conference delivered a comprehensive agenda featuring high-level interaction and engagement, culminating in the official announcement of the winning suppliers of the **EUCCS Preparation Program**, formerly known as BroadEU.Net.

99 PARTICIPANTS

Day I started with some reflections on the lessons learnt from the management of large-scale events that took place across Europe in 2024.The day continued with presentations on the Pan-European Critical communication and Information Exchange and standalone presentations on key topics in the field of public safety. Day II opened with a dedicated session organized by FIDAL on the current technologies for PPDR that the project is exploring.

The day concluded with the highlight of the event: **Preparing the European Critical Communication System.** The scene was set with an introduction from Alice Mezzetto, Assistant to Max Brandt (DG HOME, European Commission) on the political context supporting the EUCCS Preparation. David Lund, programme coordinator, intervened with an overview of the steps expected for the upcoming year (2025-2026).

Finally, the four winning contractors Airbus, Frequentis, Leonardo, and Teltronic were called to the stage to share with the audience their motivations for their involvement in the Programme and their planned activities for the months to come. The Conference concluded with a presentation from the Bavarian Red Cross presenting the activities of the EUCCS Preparation Operational Team which is laying the ground for the operations in preparation of the full deployment of the EUCCS expected by 2030.

THE FIDAL PPDR WORKSHOP

The event was an opportunity for the participants to hear about some of the technologies that FIDAL project is exploring in the vertical of Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR) through examples shared from key FIDAL Use Cases as well as a selection of projects under the current winners of the first FIDAL Open Call.

FIDAL projects also had the opportunity showcase first hand some of the technologies during the Demonstration and Poster session during the two days of the Conference.

The PPDR workshop was divided in three key thematic each of which was followed by a Q&A sessions:

- Real-time incident detection
- Situational Awareness
- Augmented and Extended Reality

The workshop generated a high level of interest from the audience and the presentations provided an opportunity to receive constructive feedback from actors not involved and/or not acquainted with the projects. Some of the questions brought up during the Q&A covered aspects such as the scalability of technologies and investment needs, approached to prioritize information received from the field (situational awareness), the type of support needed at the policy level to ensure the operationalization of such technologies.

| Conference Report | Conference Video |

3) 2024 PROJECT WEBINARS

Over the course of the last year, PSCE supported the organisation of various webinars and workshops across different projects, for a total of **12 events organized:**
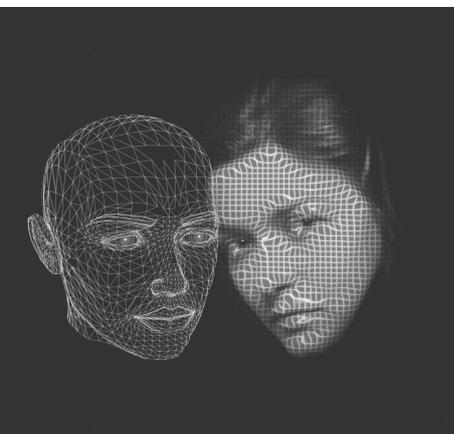
EITHOS:
- **Webinar #2 (Joint webinar):** *FCT and BM synergy workshop* (March 2024)
- **Webinar #3 (LEAs)**: *Psychosocial Dimensions of Online Identity Theft: A Victimology Perspective* (April 2024)
- **Webinar #4 (General Public):** *Psychosocial dimensions of OIDT* (April 2024)
- **Workshop #2 (LEAs):** *Tackling Online Identity Theft* (November 2024)
- **Workshop #3 & #4 (Students):** *Raising Awareness* (November, December 2024)

FIDAL:
- **Webinar #3:** Advancing PPDR: Innovations Examples from the SNS Community (November 2024)
- **Workshop #1 (joint w/ 6G4Society):** Embracing Key Values and Key Values Indicators: How can SNS projects drive sustainable change?
- **Workshop #2:** PPDR Workshop

CORE:
- **Webinar #5**: Fighting Misinformation in Risk Communication (February 2024)
- **Webinar #6:** Three years of CORE: our key takeaways to Policymakers (June 2024)
- **Workshop #2**: Stakeholder Forum (September 2024)

BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS

BROADEU.NET NEW IDENTITY: EUCCS PREPARATION

BroadEU.Net was established as a programme with the aim to move forward the work accomplished by its predecessor projects, BroadMap and BraodWay, namely to provide the **support needed to prepare the technologies and the operational procedures to establish the European Critical Communication System (EUCCS)**.

2024 marked the achievement of critical milestones for the programme: at the political level, the newly appointed President of the European Commission, Mrs. Von der Leyen mandated the new Commissioner for Home Affairs '***to develop and deploy a new European Critical Communication System to be used by public authorities in charge of security and safety***'. In addition, Special Adviser Suali Niinistö has recommended the completion of EUCCS in his report '***Safer Together Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness'***

Given the strong political support witnessed, a decision was made to rebrand BroadEU.Net to **EUCCS Preparation.** The mission of the programme has always been to lay the groundwork for EUCCS and the rebranding choice represented a reflection of this goal as well as the intention to better align with the strategic priorities of the EC. The first contract period concludes on 30th June 2025, 8 instances of the 3GPP standardised Mission Critical Services (MCX) will be managed by 8 of the EUCCS Preparation partnering authorities. These systems will be evaluated by a series of tests and evaluation activities to assess the functionality, and initial interconnection, between contractors' solutions.

At the procurement level, a Call for Tender was launched in August 2024 and in December the four winning contractors (Airbus, Frequentis, Leonardo, Teltronics) were announced.

Representatives of the four industries were also invited to share their motivations for their involvement in the EUCCS Preparation during the PSCE Winter Conference in Brussels.

At the operational level, the EUCCS Operational Team (OPT) has conducted preparatory work throughout the year which has culminated with the in-situ realization of a tabletop exercise (TTX) organized prior to the start of the PSCE Conference in Brussels.

With a larger number of countries involved (16 compared to 11 in BroadWay, PSCE, as coordinator of EUCCS Preparation and as lead procurer, is expected to intensify its efforts towards the achievement of the programme's objectives.

EUCCS Preparation

FIDAL:FIELD TRIALS BEYOND 5G

FIDAL has recently entered its third and final year of activities.

Throughout 2024, PSCE coordinated a series of regular meetings with FIDAL partners to discuss the potential of selected technologies to be included in viable business models for future market exploitation. Following a successful application to the Horizon Results Booster, this process was accompanied for several months by an allocated expert; three partners are currently working on a detailed Business Plan. Further communication activities are planned to ensure the dissemination of the exploitation process and results widely.

On the Dissemination and Communication aspect, PSCE intensified its activities to promote the progress of the project and showcase its advancements through various formats: project videos, participation to third-party events, organizations of webinars and workshops, newsletters and social media communication. Given the maturity reached, the project was also able to showcase several technologies and demonstrations in various platforms including the 2024 EUCNC & 6G Summit. PSCE has already planned the participation of FIDAL in a number of large-scale events for 2025 that will provide further visibility to the project.

Several communication activities were also planned around the promotion of the 19 winners of the first round of Open Calls. To provide more visibility to these projects, PSCE also organized a dedicated PPDR workshop where selected contractors were invited to present their solutions. At the same time, support was provided for the preparation of the second round of Open Call, launched in September 2024 and concluded on 10th December 2024.

FIDAL Project

CYBERSECURITY

EITHOS

EUROPEAN IDENTITY THEFT OBSERVATORY SYSTEM

Last year, EITHOS undertook several impactful initiatives aimed at raising awareness about online identity theft (OIDT) and promoting cybersecurity education. One of the key activities was the development and execution of integrated content outreach campaigns. These campaigns employed a coordinated approach across platforms like blogs, social media, videos, and emails, ensuring a consistent and engaging message to reach diverse audiences.

To foster public engagement, the project launched gamification activities, including a series of spoof email campaigns designed to test participants' awareness of phishing threats. These campaigns, spanning six months each, utilized carefully crafted fake emails to simulate real-life phishing scenarios, providing valuable insights into common pitfalls and helping refine strategies for public awareness.

The project published over 30 articles that addressed diverse aspects of OIDT . These articles, alongside a glossary and FAQs, served as accessible resources for the public to enhance their understanding of online threats.

In addition, the project leveraged creative media (e.g. digital posters, comic strips) to make complex topics more relatable. Notably, during the EU Open Days 2024, EITHOS hosted an interactive exhibit featuring a deepfake creation tool and cybersecurity quiz. These activities, complemented by victim-focused social research and illustrated educational materials, underscored EITHOS's commitment to fostering a more cyber-aware and resilient community.

EITHOS Project

CLIMATE CHANGE

FOR A MORE RESILIENT SOCIETY

CORE project came to an end in September 2024. During the last leg of this journey, PSCE worked alongside CORE partners to enhance its communication portfolio and ensure that D&C activities focused especially on the project's results and the legacy that it will be leaving behind to its stakeholders.

The work conducted by PSCE, in collaboration with CORE partners included: facilitating and promoting the presence of the project in a number of events (e.g.DRS CERIS, Disaster Expo Europe), developing a policy brief collecting all the recommendations developed in the frame of the comparative analysis of the CORE use case scenarios, elaborating a infographic summarizing all the types of recommendations that CORE has developed and contributed to, and producing a final project video presenting the key practical tools and frameworks developed by the project and that can be used in the future to inform, policymakers, researchers, and EU-funded projects.

In addition, every month PSCE attended the coordination calls with the Societal Resilience Cluster (SRC), gathering other DRS calls pojects. The engagement during these meetings led to the development of a common joint policy output policy brief that aimed to improve engagement and strengthen communication among citizens and authorities in Disaster Risk Management. The brief has been published in four languages and endorsed by DG HOME.

All the D&C material produced was presented at the project's final conference and Stakeholder Forum held in Rome in the premises of the Italian Red Cross.

CORE Project

TOPIC TITLE

SAFE PLACE

At the end of 2024, PSCE joined a new project consortim.

SAFEPLACE project is funded under the Civil Security from Space programme from the European Space Agency that intends to rely on, leverage and enhance existing capabilities to quickly develop solutions serving current civil security needs, while also fostering new innovative capabilities in the longer term.

SAFEPLACE has started in October 2024 and will run until September 2027. Its goal is to provide a service to support Rapid & Resilient Crisis Response and to create a Core Orchestration Platform of partner and third-party products and services. SAFEPLACE intends to develop an innovative system designed to enhance crisis and disaster management through advanced communication and information exchange. It aims to augment existing Crisis Management Centres by providing near-real-time data and facilitating communication between first responders and crisis managers. Leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as satellite communications (Satcom), Earth Observation, navigation data, IoT sensor networks, and artificial intelligence.

The project use cases will be located in Belgium (Floods, Chemical Disasters and Earthquakes) and Spain (Wildfires).
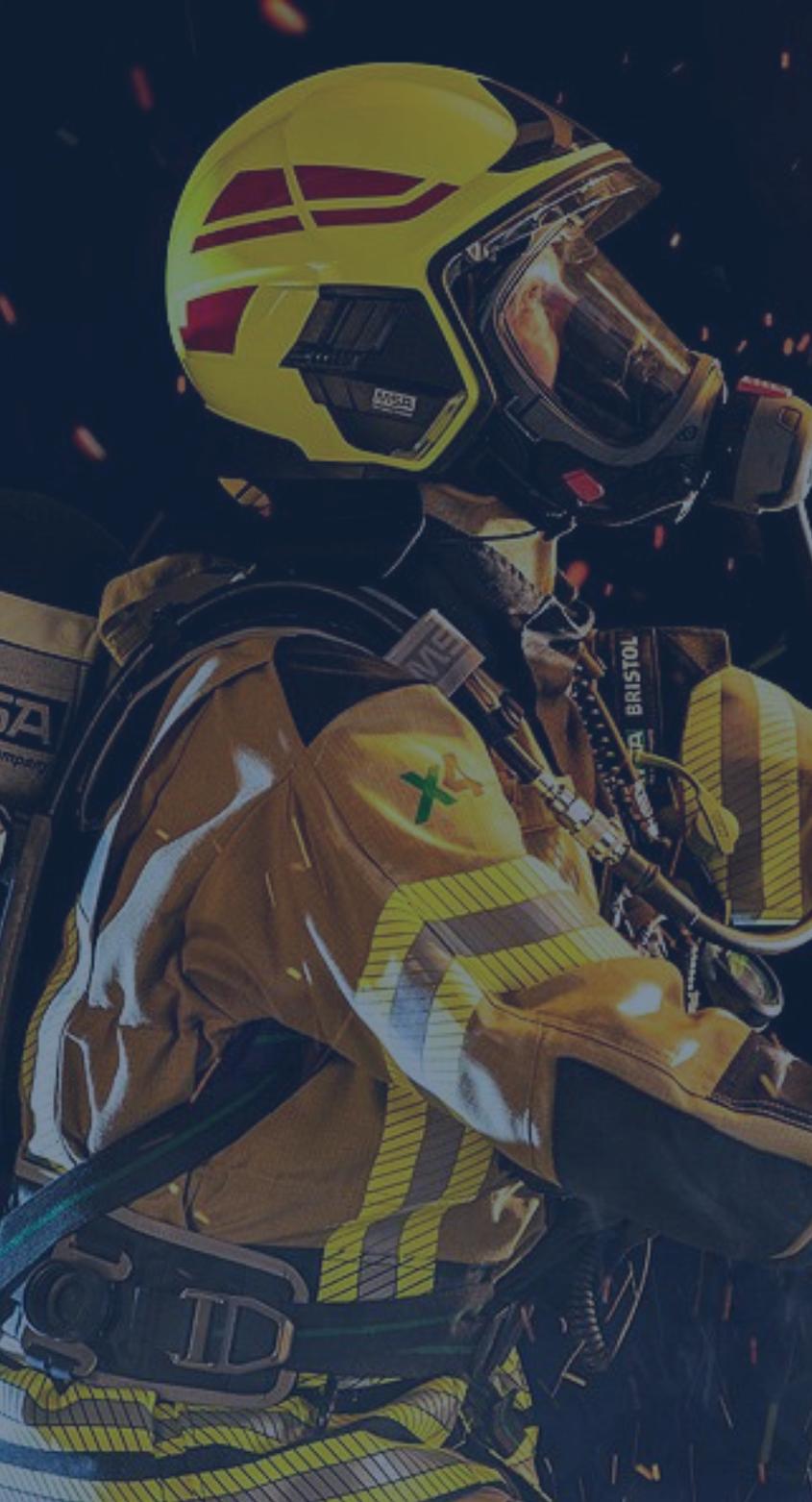
Project Launch

FUTURE PRIORITIES

For the upcoming year, PSCE is committed to fostering a more dynamic and engaging experience for our members. Our future priorities will be centered on enhancing collaboration opportunities with our Members. A key initiative will be the launch of member-driven webinars, providing a platform for knowledge sharing, industry insights, and collaborative problem-solving. Additionally, we will develop a comprehensive database that will gather easily accessible information on previous use cases and project results relevant for the field of PPDR. This will include best practices and success stories, enabling members to learn from past experiences and apply valuable insights to their own initiatives.

We will also inform Members of upcoming events at the EC level, including networking events, skill-building workshops, and digital engagement platforms that encourage active participation.

By prioritizing engagement, accessibility, and innovation, we will ensure that every member has the opportunity to contribute, connect, and benefit from the PSCE network and resources.

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