

## JOURNAL

## PROJECT

To-nite - Community-based urban security

📍 Turin, Italy

## TOPIC

Urban security

EDIT 03 MAY 2021

BY VALERIA FERRARIS,  
UIA EXPERT

# Tonite Journal 1: the first year of the project

See on UIA  
website



Tonite project aims at improving urban security perception at night-time by providing new services with the citizens' engagement and more pro-active administration in analysing data. In the first journal of Tonite, Valeria Ferraris UIA Expert reports on the progress made in the first year of implementation,

## Executive summary

This report analyses the first period (September 2019 – December 2020) of Tonite project in Turin, one of the three projects selected under the new UIA domain of security. Security is a challenge for cities and a topic that moves up and down the priority list of the political agenda of cities and governments.

Tonite aims to improve the night-time security perception of public spaces in two areas of the city of Turin. It promotes an inclusive concept of security connected with the quality of life and the liveability of the city.

First, the report presents the European policy context in which Tonite project has been inserted. Security is a priority in the EU agenda and a relatively new topic for the Urban Agenda. As Tonite project focuses on security perception in public spaces, the new Thematic Partnership on security in public spaces is particularly relevant.

Then, the project Tonite and the partnership involved in the project are briefly outlined. The two core sections discuss the steps taken so far by the project and the implementation challenges. In 2020, the project created the conditions to carry out all foreseen activities and tackle all emerging challenges. To be successful the project needs organisational innovations within the public administration to make the urban data platform a viable tool for the daily work of public officers and a new relation between citizens and administration.

Therefore, special attention needs to be devoted to cross-department working and to the participative approach towards co-implementation, keeping in mind that the Tonite approach aims to implement something more than mere participation.

## The Policy context

Today, more than two-thirds of the European population lives in urban areas and this trend continues to grow. Not only does a majority of the population live in cities, but cities are also expected to play a key role in the economic and social development of the European Union. Cities are places where both problems concentrate and solutions are found; for this reason, they deserve special attention as laboratories for addressing urban challenges and identifying best practises to contribute to the European strategy for sustainable local development.

Security is one of the challenges cities have to tackle. The [European Agenda on Security](#) launched in 2015, strengthened the tools that the EU provides to national law enforcement authorities to fight terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime, based on shared principles such as compliance with fundamental rights, transparency, accountability, democratic control, and application and implementation of existing EU legal instruments.

The strong links between EU external and internal security and their impacts at regional and local level make urban security still a relevant political issue as the Covid-19 pandemic has shown. In addition, urban security is a complex and multi-faceted concept that covers various forms of threats and risks as well as citizens' perceptions. Both these dimensions – actual and perceived risks – need to be taken into account by the European, regional and local authorities in order to contribute to improve the quality of life in urban areas.

The issue of security in cities is high on the EU political agenda and European actions in this field are quite recent. One of the most remarkable initiatives is the [Urban Agenda for the EU](#) launched in May 2016 with the Pact of Amsterdam. The need for an EU Agenda is rooted in the increasing recognition that cities face specific challenges such as urban poverty, poor air quality, affordable housings, and they cannot be left alone. By focusing on the three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation (Better regulation, Better funding, Better knowledge), the Agenda provides a new multi-level working method promoting better cooperation among the Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders in order to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the European cities, regardless of their dimension. The relevance of the Agenda lies on the integrated approach but also on the mechanism of the Thematic Partnership recognised as the main instrument to contribute to the concrete implementation of EU and national policies.

One of the priority themes that has been identified to work on through a Thematic Partnership is that of security in public space, which represents a critical aspect for a city and its citizens. This is particularly relevant for local authorities and all local stakeholders with responsibilities for security matters as it will help understand how to protect public spaces while reinforcing social cohesion, inclusion and a feeling of security and resilience between citizens. The Partnership Security in Public Spaces established in 2019 and coordinated by the city of Nice, provides a remarkable contribution to the progress of the Urban Agenda for the EU and for the progress in the policies to be taken. The [Orientation paper](#) presented in May 2019 and the new [Action Plan](#) released in November 2020 contain concrete measures on how to face global and local challenges to create safer cities and public spaces and to bring concrete European added value.

At the local level, security is very much interlinked with many societal issues and public policies in different domains: city resilience, mobility, urban planning, social cohesion, liveability and quality of life, attractiveness, well-being, health, and leisure. Large cities have to cope with criminality activities often enhanced by concentrated societal issues. New challenges also emerge and evolve rapidly because of external factors and/or phenomena. An example is the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and how it has affected (and will affect) the perception and usage of public space by citizens and communities.

Until recently, different security threats in an urban environment have been considered separately. Many cities are now considering all these issues together to find more suitable and efficient solutions for optimizing resources and reducing potential risks. More coordinated measures aimed at protecting citizens, public spaces and assets within urban spaces from human and natural threats are needed. The involvement of citizens in this process is essential to improve the security and resilience of urban spaces, anchoring security as a fundamental pillar of the smart city.

## The Tonite concept

Local Authorities are fundamental for multilevel governance of the urban security topic, even if Italy is a country where the public order competencies are the responsibility of the central State (Art. 117 Ital. Cons.). Moreover, in 2017 the law decree no. 14 outlines a complex strategy aimed at raising the level of security of cities, focused on the removal of those factors that may be a threat to the liveability of urban environments. This national strategy is based on two important concepts: the **integrated security**, seen as a set of interventions guaranteed by the State and the regional and local authorities, to contribute to the implementation of a unitary system; the urban security as a **multi-dimensional concept** and a public good based on the quality of life and of the urban spaces.

In this framework, the project Tonite is connected to the Italian strategy for urban security because it is consistent with the approach that defines security policies as an area of institutional cooperation and gives an increasingly

active role to citizens and local communities, as active players in the security domain.

Tonite aims to improve the **night-time security perception of public spaces** in an area of the city of Turin along the Dora river, in particular in the area named Aurora and in the area around the new University Campus. By doing so, the project will contribute to the quality of life and the liveability of this area of the city.

This project is carried out with an inclusive approach, involving the local community and stakeholders, fostering social innovation and urban regeneration to promote urban security.

ToNite project includes four main activities:

1. **Ethnographic and social research activities** in the target areas aimed at understanding the citizens' perception of urban security and engaging local stakeholders;
2. **Development of an urban digital platform** to analyse existing and newly established data about urban insecurity in the city and provide the public administration with a new tool to support the decisions;
3. **Urban regeneration interventions** along the Dora river;
4. **Development of projects and services** capable of generating social impact involving local communities chosen through a tender procedure.

In addition, impact assessment of project actions carried out in the areas of the project and communication with citizens are two cross-cutting actions.

## The partnership

The **City of Turin** is leading a partnership composed by:

- **ANCI**, the National Association of Italian Municipalities whose purpose is to represent local authorities at the institutional level and to help local governments develop urban innovation strategies. In the project ANCI leads the communication activities.
- **Engineering Ingegneria Informatica**: company working in digital innovation. Its Open Public Innovation Lab involved in the project focuses mainly on service innovation in the context of Public Administration and it is the partner in charge of the development of the urban data platform.
- **Espereal Technologies**, innovative startup based in Turin and Cagliari that develops technologies and services for urban tourism and smart cities. It is involved in citizens engagement and in the development of technologies.
- **European Forum for Urban Security**, European network working on urban security and crime prevention bringing together around 250 local and regional authorities from 16 European countries. In the project, it is mainly involved in transferability and dissemination.
- **Experientia**, company with expertise in human-centred design and participatory methods. It leads the research activities and the building of the data conceptual model that guides the data processing of the platform.
- **SocialFare**, center for social innovation focused on capacity-building, community engagement and social innovation design. It is involved in the citizens engagement activities.
- **Torino Wireless Foundation**: organization composed by a wide partnership between public and private entities that aims at supporting the growth of the Italian ICT district and at increasing the competitiveness of companies of the sector. It is the partner responsible for monitoring and evaluation and it cooperates to build the urban data platform.

## Steps taken so far

The first months of the project (end of 2019- beginning of 2020) were dedicated to establishing a well-functioning collaboration among partners and to revising the project actions to create the best conditions to achieve the project goal.

Moreover, the **engagement of local community** has been taken as a priority since the beginning of the project, taking into account that the most relevant actions of the project required the active involvement of citizens. Different types of participatory workshops and tools, storytelling, and the use of the Telling Stone smartphone application across the duration of the project will guarantee citizen engagement.



One of the workshop organised in 2020

Progress has been made for all the main project activities.

### **Ethnographic and social research activities**

A stakeholder mapping was the first action taken, in order to have the needed knowledge of the target areas. The mixed methodology research (in-depth interview, online survey, urban walks) has been discussed in three workshops (two for the area of Aurora and one for the area of Campus Luigi Einaudi) with local stakeholders.

The Covid-19 outbreak impacted research activities by requiring the project to move the survey promotion online, limiting the engagement of those suffering from the digital divide (elderly people in particular). Research results showed that the physical status of the spaces highly influences the perception of insecurity combined with socio-cultural factors of the local communities, as individuals and as organised groups.

### **Development of an urban digital platform**

A first analysis of the data available across the city departments was carried out and a social analytics software component able to extract users' opinions from social networks was developed. In addition, a needs analysis of the public officers was conducted in terms of what the urban platform should provide and which digital interface and user's profile could be implemented.

### **Urban regeneration interventions along the Dora river**

A workshop was organised to collect insights for urban infrastructure interventions near the University Campus and an agreement was signed with the University of Turin. The administrative steps to reserve funds were completed.

### **Development of projects and services capable of generating social impact**

A tender was launched on 15 December 2020 for the development of projects and services capable of generating social impact and improving the perception of security and liveability of public spaces in the area along the river Dora at night-time.

Before the tender launch, an online (due to Covid-19) presentation of projects and promising practice carried out in other cities was organised with the aim to stimulate creativity among citizens and stakeholders who could potentially participate in the tender.

### **Covid-19 Challenge**

Bearing in mind the Covid-19 pandemic, this specific challenge should be taken into consideration. Tonite project has promptly reacted to the situation and put significant effort in keeping [activities running](#) and switching activities designed as face to face to online ones. All the partners were highly reactive and showed high resilience and ability to adapt. So far, the consequences on the activities have been limited.

However, Covid-19 has showed how insecurity feeling is the result of social construction. Citizens' perception and

media representation of insecurity changed over the last few months. Emergency health services is higher on the agenda and urban security seems to be losing relevance. As soon as the Covid-19 pandemic will be under control, the picture will probably change, and insecurity will be again a major issue. For a project dealing with perception, this should be taken into account in building models of intervention.

## Implementation challenges

### Leadership

The leadership of the city of Turin is a collaborative leadership that strongly involved the delivery partners in taking responsibility. The leadership of the Municipality is based on accurate project management and the effort to involve more departments of the city of Turin (see cross-department working challenge). Political leaders view the Tonite project as appropriate and support it. The results of the 2021 municipal elections should not impact the project due to the well-established governance of the project. The city of Turin has the clear intention to spread the ideas and goals of the Tonite project at the local, national and international level. Covid-19 has partially postponed mutual learning events with other UIA projects and the participation in events.

### Public procurement

Public procurement is a crucial issue in the project. The [tender for projects and services](#) will test innovative solutions of dissemination of the tender and of administrative and content support for potential participants. Even before the launch, a public event designed to stimulate creativity has been organised to engage local communities and stimulate tender participation.

While being a more traditional open tender procedure, the [urban regeneration tender](#) is based on an agreement with the University of Turin to guarantee that the renovation of public spaces will be accompanied by university services extended in the evening time. One event to collect insights for the urban regeneration tender was organised.

The city of Turin website dedicated to the tender process should be significantly improved to increase the visibility and transparency of this innovation.

### Cross-department working

The project is led by the UE funds and Innovation Department of the city of Turin. However, the success of the projects requires the active involvement of many departments. These include the Youth and Urban Regeneration Department, which is directly involved in the urban regeneration intervention, the Mobility Department; the Environment and Public Green Department; and the Urban Planning Department. In July, an inter-departmental working group was established which held the first meeting in September 2020. Cooperation among departments is required to provide data for the urban digital platform, and the use of the platform should become part of the working routine of the city departments. The role played by the municipal police department is also crucial, even though it is still not clearly established.

### Participative approach for co-implementation

The active involvement of local stakeholders, citizens, informal groups, and non-profit organisations is a cross-cutting and distinguished feature of the Tonite project. The idea that citizens enjoy an active dialogue with the public administration and contribute to the decision-making requires a constant level of engagement. Many partners have shown expertise in citizen engagement and this should strongly support the participative approach in co-implementation. The smartphone application Telling Stone is the cornerstone measure to create and maintain the needed level of engagement. In addition, even in the development of the digital platform, citizens are involved as data producers thanks to the Telling Stone application. Sustaining the active involvement of citizens could represent a significant challenge.

### Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are perceived as major challenges in the project due to the objective difficulties in measuring the impact on the perception of insecurity and difficulties in controlling intervening variables. Significant effort has been placed in building a monitoring and evaluation model. The model measures the impacts of 1) citizens' perception of insecurity 2) cross-department collaboration 3) projects, services and urban regeneration of the target areas.

### Communication with target beneficiaries and users

Communication activities are accurately planned and show an integrated model between social media and more



traditional media outlets. Storytelling also is a distinguished feature of the project. This integrated model seems to be the best solution for a project strongly characterized by a participative approach in delivering actions. The involvement of the Anci and Efus should also guarantee communication at a broader level.



14 February Launch event

## Upscaling

The project is rooted in specific areas of the city of Turin and deals with an unstable object as the perception of insecurity. Dissemination to a wider audience should be easier to achieve thanks to Anci and Efus, which helps the upscaling process. Mainstreaming the Tonite approach towards other city areas or other cities requires accurate reflection to choose which direction should be taken. Due to the features of the areas involved, the mainstream towards other cities appears as the desirable direction. The reflection is far from being within the project agenda.

Challenge

Observation

Leadership  
Challenge level



Collaborative leadership that delivers results. The challenge is the maintenance of this level of leadership across the entire duration of the project.

Public procurement  
Challenge level



Tenders contain elements of innovation in terms of collaboration between the city and potential bidders and participation (tender for projects and services) and in terms of creating the conditions to succeed in urban regeneration project. The next two years will show the results of these innovations.

Cross-department  
working  
Challenge level



An inter-departmental working group has been established within the municipal system. Effective cooperation is the challenge of the project.

Participative approach  
for co-implementation  
Challenge level



Engagement of the local community is a cross-cutting dimension of all the activities. The challenge is how to maintain this level of engagement and to build new relationships between the municipalities and the local communities.

Monitoring and  
evaluation  
Challenge level



The accurate measurement of the impact of the project presents several challenges, mainly related to the perceptions of insecurity in itself. To define and then to choose how to measure the impact of the project is complex and risky.

Communication with  
target beneficiaries  
and users  
Challenge level



The Integrated communication strategy combines social media with more traditional communication channels and tools. The launch event on 14 February 2020 reached a wider audience. The main challenge will be to maintain high the level of interests and to deliver the key message of the project on the need to provide services to increase the public security perception during the night.

Upscaling  
Challenge level



Upscaling is in itself a challenge in a project on the perceptions of insecurity. Upscaling is not yet started and the next year will be crucial in defining the steps for upscaling process.

## Next steps and Conclusions

**2021 is a crucial year of the project** The public tender for projects and services will be concluded and the participation of local community as service providers will move the first steps. The first and major urban regeneration intervention next to the University Campus will be carried out by the end of 2021. The challenge of making this area multifunctional and lively at night as a democratic and cultural point of reference of the city needs to be met. In addition, 2021 is the year to build the urban data platform. Major issues such as data availability and cross-department collaboration will have to be overcome.

To sum up the results of the first period (September 2019-December 2020), the project is certainly innovative, well-run and has built the conditions to meet the expectations of a committed partnership and a strong orientation toward participatory approach.

The next report I will be published in spring 2022 and will focus on the project progress and challenges addressed in 2021.

See on UIA website

