

CITY OF MÁTÉSZALKA

**Szabolcs 05 Regional Development
Association of Municipalities**

Integrated Action Plan

Mátészalka, 31/03/2022

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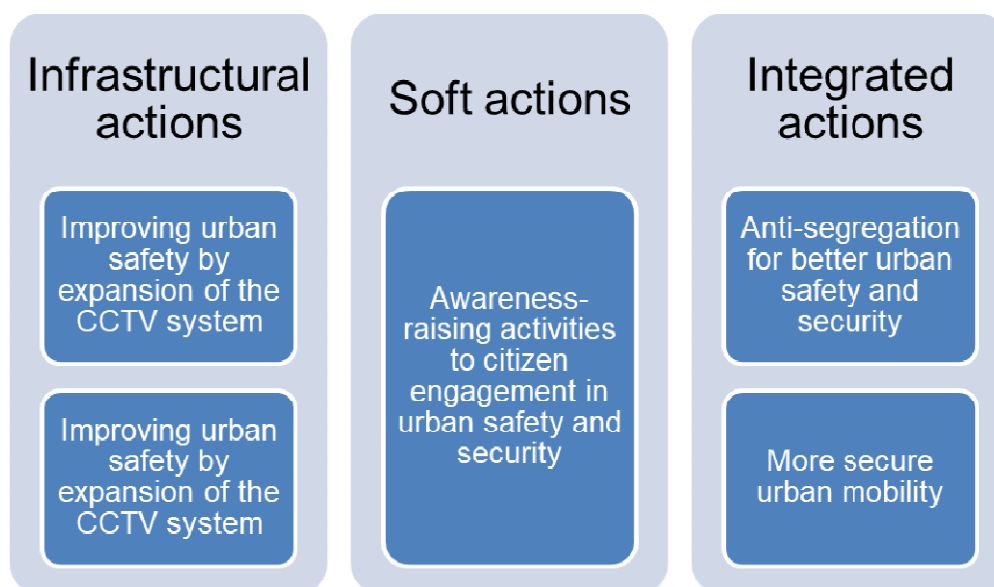
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1 Executive summary

The UrbSecurity project – co-financed by the URBACT Programme of the European Union – focuses on co-creating an integrated approach towards urban safety and security. The Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities (SZRDA) acts as Hungarian partner of the project. It elaborates its Integrated Action Plan (IAP) based

- on transnational change of experiences, knowledge sharing, and common methodology development activities,
- as well as on cooperation of URBACT Local Group and implementation of a Small-scale Action as a pilot activity in the city of Mátészalka, which faces various challenges in connection with urban safety and security.

The overall goal of the IAP is to improve urban safety and security as well as the inhabitants' sense of security in Mátészalka. To achieve this goal, we will focus on two main intervention fields: 1) physical environment and 2) behaviour that directly or indirectly can influence this crosscutting issue. Actions of the IAP relate directly to these two key focus areas and include different types of interventions.



2 The context

SZRDA is an association of 44 municipalities in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, in north-eastern part of Hungary representing all settlements in this area. The centre of the region is the City of Mátészalka known as “City of Light” - the IAP focuses on this town. Mátészalka has a population of 15,874 people with approx. 20-30% of Roma people.

The **indicators** regarding urban safety and security show an improving trend:

- Number of registered crimes is 344 with a high success rate of investigation (71.6%; improved by 14.6%).
- The number of crimes committed in public spaces decreased due to more successful investigation and more intensive police presence. This type of crime fundamentally influences the subjective sense of security among the population which can be improved by 24-hour coverage.

- Theft is the most common crime in Mátészalka (113) followed by assaults (31) and vandalism (17).
- High-crime locations in the city: train station, inner city, clubs, bigger retail units.
- Traffic control and safety:
 - high volume of transit traffic;
 - regular road traffic control on main road outside and inside the city;
 - harmonizing motorized, cycling and pedestrian traffic, awareness raising activities; site-visits for updating of traffic rules;
 - the number of traffic accidents has slightly increased (from 34 to 43);
 - in some cases, sidewalks/pedestrian crossings are not lit well.

Key **achievements** of the municipality so far:

- Decreasing number of crimes committed in public places,
- Improved investigative efficiency,
- 47 CCTV cameras on popular public places for criminal investigation and traffic control: mobile app to watch the cameras in real time,
- Crime prevention as a key issue, programs for drug prevention/against deviant behaviour,
- Social integration of Romas by implementing complex rehabilitation projects,
- Renewal of some underused and neglected places/buildings – positive effects on liveability,
- New LED public lighting as a cost- and climate-effective solution,
- Due to cameras and regular patrols, better situation in the train station as one of the most 'infected' areas of the city,
- High level of cooperation of the relevant stakeholders.

Main **challenges** in the city regarding urban safety and security:

The key challenge is that some districts and public places are habitually abandoned (mainly from Saturday afternoon to Monday morning). Some of them are underused which deteriorates the cityscape, social cohesion, and local identity, too.

Some other problems can be identified, too:

- Despite the various social programmes of the municipality, there are latent and real conflicts in connection with social cohesion and integration;
- The partial lack of capacity of public security bodies makes it difficult to solve safety and security problems.
- The level of cooperation and citizen involvement in connection with urban safety and security is inappropriate.
- There are urban districts with a higher level of crimes.
- Public cleanliness: illegal landfill and littering occur in some parts of the city; selective collection is not solved – lack of motivation.
- 500-600 people live in a segregated area with poor living conditions and at risk of poverty.
- The subjective sense of security is not assessed and analysed among the local community.
- Citizen involvement into urban safety and security could be increased.

Expected **changes** after implementation of the IAP:

- a more conscious public attitude towards urban safety and security,
- a more cohesive local community,
- reduced number of crimes committed in public spaces,
- decreased number of traffic accidents.

3 Scope of the IAP

The targeted area of the IAP is the city of Mátészalka which has a public safety and crime prevention concept for the years 2020-2024. The scope and the objectives of the IAP show coherence with the concept and can be directly or indirectly derived from it.

The overall goal is to improve urban safety and security as well as the inhabitants' sense of security in Mátészalka. To achieve this goal, we will focus on two main intervention fields: 1) physical environment and 2) behaviour that directly or indirectly can influence this crosscutting issue. Actions of the IAP relate directly to these two key focus areas.

- 1) Making urban environment safer and more attractive:** Urban planning is a key tool to create a liveable milieu for citizens, thus creative placemaking and urban safety go hand in hand. Urban design contributes to safer public spaces in many ways:
 - better visibility of places ensures natural surveillance and safe routes for pedestrians;
 - people use more frequently an attractive, aesthetic, and properly maintained place as a welcoming and inclusive community space, and, in consequence, human presence can keep criminals away;
 - traffic signs and traffic calming measures have to be clear and unambiguous,
 - compliance with the rules and community standards have to be regularly monitored.
- 2) Crime prevention by and with local inhabitants:** the overall objective cannot be reached without engaging and involving the users of the city. A strong community shows empathy and understanding, which can indirectly prevent crimes or at least mitigate the incidence of them. Organizations responsible for public safety and citizens have to work together to induce favourable behavioural changes in society.



4 The IAP co-production

4.1 Co-creative process of the IAP

The IAP has been created as a result of a process based on two pillars. On the one hand, **thetransnational partnership provided lots of inspiration and information:**

- we used the experiences and best practices of UrbSecurity partners (among others) about
 - nudging techniques that can be very effective in influencing behaviour schemes (Mechelen),
 - communicating with and involving the local citizens into improving urban safety and security (Madrid),
 - urban planning as an essential tool to create a liveable and safe environment (Longford),
 - analysis and evaluation of local problems and challenges (Michalovce),
- in addition, the Lead Expert's thought-provoking thematic presentations focused on specific topics needs to be addressed in Mátészalka and in our IAP.

On the other hand, **URBACT Local Group members contributed to the process with a number of thoughts and ideas** about main urban safety and security challenges in Mátészalka, focus and activities of Small-scale Actions, objectives and actions of the IAP. The ULG has the following members:

- Chief consultant of the mayor,
- Financial and administrative managers of the project,
- Different departments of City of Mátészalka (mainly urban planning, urban development, project management office etc.),
- Local department of state police,
- Authority for public spaces,
- Associations for public security (volunteers) at local level,

- Educational and social institutions,
- Urban development experts.

Until the end of March 2022, seven ULG meetings were organised where the stakeholders got to know the results of the project so far and the experience derived from the transnational partnership and discussed the local tasks and issues in connection with urban safety and security.

Moreover, we used the **public safety and crime prevention concept of Mátészalka** as an indispensable input, which was created by the local department of state police together with the expert of the municipality.

All of this information were used for planning and implementing the SSA as well as to elaborate the IAP.

4.2 Introduction of the SSA

The Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities as the Hungarian partner implemented **a complex SSA** based on the challenges identified during the previous phases of the UrbSecurity project in the City of Mátészalka. One of these challenges is that some districts and public places are habitually abandoned and underused, which deteriorates the subjective sense of security. These facts justify the choice of the SSA intervention site which is the so-called Reverence Park near to the city centre.

The title of the SSA is “Improving urban safety in the Reverence Park”. It aims to develop cost-efficient and climate-neutral public lighting: using solar LED streetlamps together with the additional soft activities. The Reverence Park was revitalized with spatial planning (in the framework of a project co-financed by the EU) such as planting, paving, placement of street furniture and creating a community space. However, the park was underused – mainly in the evenings because of the lack of the public lighting.

URBACT Local Group decided to improve citizens’ perception of urban security and safety connecting with the reconditioned Reverence Park. The optimal location of the streetlamps was marked by urban planners in September 2021. The awareness-raising event was held on the 13th of October 2021 with the participation of local students, the mayor, ULG members, and other relevant stakeholders from the city.

In addition, an easy-to-use e-learning material was elaborated that can be presented in primary schools and high schools of the city to enhance the knowledge and to foster dialogue about urban safety and security in the local community.



This pilot project can be a model for further actions within the Integrated Action Plan (e.g. for actions 1 and 3) – detailed in Chapter 5.

4.3 Risk analysis

To ensure the smooth implementation of the IAP, we have to identify those potential factors that can jeopardize the achievement of the goals, expected results and the intended impacts. The following table presents the main risks, probability of their occurrence, and the extent of the negative effects.

Risk	Probability of occurrence	Extent of impacts	Risk mitigation measures
The most important actors cannot be identified	low	high	Maintaining the ULG group activities Asking ULG members to recommend other relevant organizations to be involved
Low level of engagement of local stakeholders	low	high	Maintaining the ULG group activities Highlighting the advantages of being involved into the actions
Growing poverty triggers a higher number of crimes against property	low	medium	Implementing appropriate measures for people living at risk of poverty
Increasing transit traffic causes a higher number of accidents	high	high	Implementing traffic restriction measures (lower speed limit, speed bumps, roundabouts, coordination of traffic lights, etc.) Regular control of traffic infringements
Insufficient financial resources for implementing activities	medium	high	Using EU and state support Planning low budget interventions with active participation of local stakeholders and inhabitants
Disinterest of inhabitants in urban safety and security	medium	medium	Implementing awareness raising events Encouraging community cooperation
Expanding underused and abandoned public spaces	low	medium	Making public spaces more secure, attractive, and vivid

5 Actions

Actions identified during elaboration of the Integrated Action Plan can basically be classified into three categories:

- infrastructural interventions create safer urban environment,
- soft measures influence behaviour of users of urban spaces,
- integrated actions include both physical and social activities to achieve better results in connection with urban safety and security.

Infrastructural actions

Making public spaces more secure, attractive, and vivid

Improving urban safety by expansion of the CCTV system

Soft actions

Awareness-raising activities to citizen engagement in urban safety and security

Integrated actions

Anti-segregation for better urban safety and security

More secure urban mobility

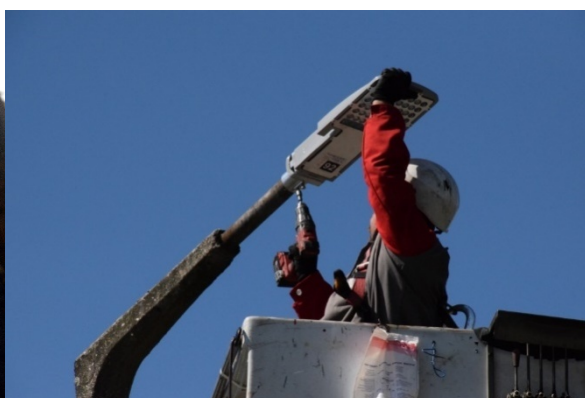
5.1 Making public spaces more secure, attractive, and vivid



ACTION NAME	1. Making public spaces more secure, attractive, and vivid
Problems/ Challenges addressed / Scope of the intervention / Profile of the area addressed	<p>The key challenge in the city regarding urban safety and security is that some districts and public places are habitually abandoned (mainly from Saturday afternoon to Monday morning). Some of them are underused which deteriorates the cityscape, social cohesion, and local identity, too. This problem occurs primarily in or near the city centre that makes streets, squares, and parks deserted. The main causes of this phenomenon are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public spaces are not attractive enough, • some buildings and parks are in poor condition, • public lighting is not effective enough, • relatively low level of subjective sense of secure, • individualized social structure, • relatively low level of social cohesion. <p>In this action, we intend to focus on physical renewal of underused and neglected places or buildings that will have a positive impact on the liveability of Mátészalka.</p>
Intended result/ Expected change / target groups addressed	<p>Rehabilitation of some districts in an integrated and well-thought manner contributes to the attractiveness and liveability of the city. Design principles have to be considered that increase also the subjective sense of security among users of the urban space – mainly among local citizens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring visibility in public spaces,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easy to clean facades, • planting indigenous species in parks, • safe crossings, • using climate-neutral public lighting, • optimal placement of comfortable street furniture. <p>As a consequence, Mátészalka will be a more liveable small-sized city and citizens will have stronger local identity.</p>
Key activities / Key partners	<p>Key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying urban districts to be rehabilitated • Careful planning of interventions needed – with the involvement of local community (encouraging public participation) • Reconstruction of public buildings • Renewal of public places in or near the city centre • Revitalization of urban greenery <p>Key partners: internal and external urban developers and planner, landscape designer, local inhabitants</p>
Urban dimension(s) addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Prevention • Perception of safety
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term
Resources	<p>It depends on the type, volume, and the exact location of the intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary 2021-2027 • Interreg A (cross-border) programmes of the EU • State-level financial support • Own contribution of the municipality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing inappropriate locations for the investments (low) • Hard to find financial resources to plan and execute the investments (high) • Hard to encourage local citizens to participate in the planning process (medium)

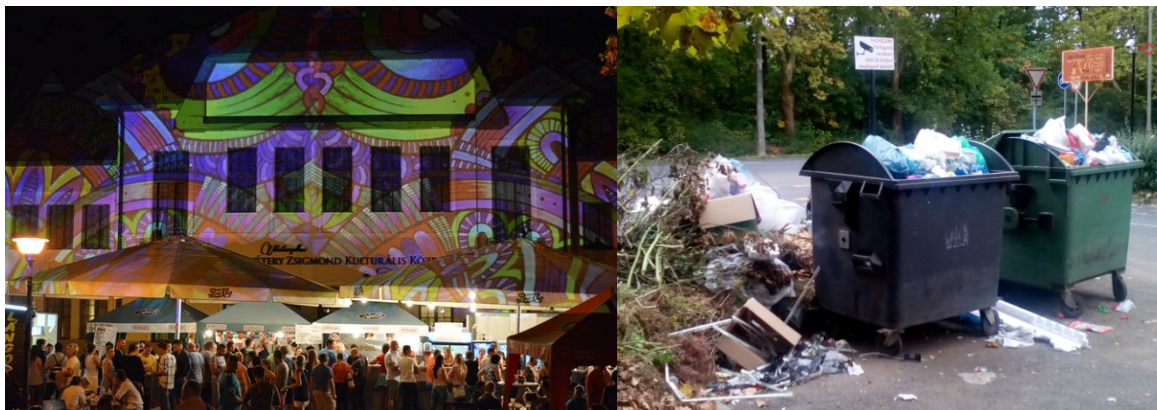
5.2 Improving urban safety by expansion of the CCTV system



ACTION NAME	2. Improving urban safety by expansion of the CCTV system
Problems/ Challenges addressed / Scope of the intervention / Profile of the area addressed	<p>The CCTV system with 47 cameras is one of the most effective and successful solutions in connection with urban safety and security in Mátészalka. This measure has decreased the number of crimes committed in public places. Civil guards use a mobile application to watch the cameras in real time. However, based on the needs of the inhabitants, new cameras should be placed in various parts of the city. Optimally, 8 more people would be needed for 0-24 surveillance.</p>

Intended result/ Expected change / target groups addressed	<p>Public surveillance (in accordance with the law and human rights) is a very effective tool of crime prevention. It mitigates the risks to become a perpetrator or a victim of crimes. Due to the enlarged CCTV system,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of crimes committed in public places can reduce, the success rate of investigation can increase, the subjective sense of security can be improved.
Key activities / Key partners	<p>Key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of districts, streets and optimal locations of the new cameras in consultation with the residents, the police and the civil guards Procurement and placement of the cameras (optimally, in the frame of projects co-financed by the EU) Capacity building of the surveillance staff (optional, depending on availability of costs) <p>Key partners: police, civil guards</p>
Urban dimension(s) addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime Prevention Perception of safety
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term
Resources	<p>€ 3,000-10,000 (depending on the number of cameras)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary 2021-2027 Interreg A (cross-border) programmes of the EU State-level financial support Own contribution of the municipality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to find financial resources to procure new cameras (low) Hard to find financial resources to operate the CCTV 0-24 (medium) Choosing inappropriate locations for the new cameras (low)

5.3 Awareness-raising activities to citizen engagement in urban safety and security



ACTION NAME	3. Awareness-raising activities to citizen engagement in urban safety and security
Problems/ Challenges addressed / Scope of the intervention / Profile of the area addressed	<p>The level of involvement of local inhabitants into improving urban safety and security is relatively low both in Hungary and in the city of Mátészalka. One of the most important tools is the so-called civil guard system regulated by the Act CLXV of 2011 on Civil Guards and the rules on civil guard activities. However, it is essential to mobilize social capital among the citizens (e.g. Neighbourhood watch, intergenerational programmes, sport, cultural and other community development events, awareness raising and increasing tolerance and understanding, mentoring, presentation of success stories).</p>

Intended result/ Expected change / target groups addressed	<p>With a higher level of citizen participation, the following results and impact can be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of becoming of a perpetrator or a victim • Minimising tension within the communities • Building trust, making people feel that their voices matter • Enhancing the sense of sensibility and responsibility
Key activities / Key partners	<p>Key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying local opinion leaders • Creating conditions for communities to participate in the planning and implementation • Facilitating capacity-building initiatives for communities to participate meaningfully • Regular communication with the local community • Organising awareness-raising events among different target groups <p>Key partners: police, civil guards, local NGOs, schools, social workers</p>
Urban dimension(s) addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Prevention • Perception of safety • Social cohesion
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term
Resources	<p>€ 5,000-20,000 (depending on the number of the people involved and of the events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary 2021-2027 • Interreg A (cross-border) programmes of the EU • State-level financial support • Own contribution of the municipality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low willingness of the citizens to cooperate (medium) • Low participation in the awareness-raising program (medium) • Hard to find financial resources to organize events in connection with urban safety and security (medium)

5.4 Anti-segregation for better urban safety and security



ACTION NAME	4. Anti-segregation for better urban safety and security
Problems/ Challenges addressed / Scope of the intervention / Profile of the area addressed	<p>One of the most significant challenges of Mátészalka can be derived from the presence of and resentment about people living in poverty or at risk of poverty. This problem mostly affects Roma people whose share exceeds approx. 20% within the population. There is a district where Roma people live territorially concentrated, this segregated area has a bad reputation among the general public.</p> <p>The general challenges regarding them are as follows (we emphasize that the following statements are not true for all people with a migrant background or from a minority group, but general trends and phenomena have to be simplified to highlight the main problems):</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most of them has a low educational level and poor access to education, • their labour market indicators are disadvantageous (high unemployment rate, concentration in specific economic sectors, wage disparities, differences in working conditions), • they live in poverty or at risk at poverty, which goes hand in hand with inadequate housing conditions, • they are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of crimes, • their presence causes real or latent conflicts within local communities.
Intended result/ Expected change / target groups addressed	All the activities and interventions strengthen social cohesion and inclusion, reduce the degree of segregation, inequality and intolerance within the local community which is essential to achieve a higher level of urban safety and security – within the segregated area, the whole city, and its community.
Key activities / Key partners	<p>Key activities: The municipality and its community (including the minorities themselves) can use a variety of tools to address the problems and challenges identified above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One aspect is to ensure a better financial situation for the target group, because poverty means inequality, and they are sometimes linked to crime based on a simple cost-benefit analysis (e.g. specific education programmes in schools to prevent early school leaving). • It is very important to create a better understanding and tolerance within the local community – and it cannot be attained without commitment of both the minorities and the overall majority population (e.g. learning conflict management techniques). Social cohesion reduces risk factors by focusing on groups that are likely to be criminals or victims. • Implementing actions in strong and direct connection with urban safety and security is also essential (e.g. preventing anti-social behaviour and addictive disorders). • Public authorities have the opportunities (even if sometimes to a limited extent) to create a more liveable urban environment (e.g. improving the conditions in physically and socially segregated area, eliminating the segregated status). <p>Key partners: police, civil guards, local NGOs, schools, social workers, employers, minority organisations</p>
Urban dimension(s) addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Prevention • Perception of safety • Social cohesion
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term
Resources	<p>It depends on the type, volume, and the exact location of the intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary 2021-2027 • Interreg A (cross-border) programmes of the EU • State-level financial support • Own contribution of the municipality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low willingness of the citizens (both Romas and the members of mainstream society) to cooperate (medium) • Low participation in the anti-segregation interventions (medium) • Hard to find financial resources to implement the interventions listed above (medium)

5.5 More secure urban mobility



ACTION NAME	5. More secure urban mobility
Problems/ Challenges addressed / Scope of the intervention / Profile of the area addressed	<p>Although Mátészalka is not a big city, people living, working, learning in or visiting the city face relatively huge problems in urban mobility – because of growing car usage. A main road passes through the city, it is a transit route from and to Romania with significant freight traffic. It divides the city in two parts, that makes the mobility between different districts difficult.</p> <p>Comparing the similar cities in the region, Mátészalka characterized by poor indicators: number of traffic accidents has been increasing since 2016 and has the highest volume in the region. Accidents occur primarily along the main road and often affect cyclists.</p> <p>Although several projects have been implemented recently that focuses on traffic calming and traffic safety, building bicycle lanes, etc., urban mobility causes significant risks both for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians.</p>
Intended result/ Expected change / target groups addressed	<p>The Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan of Mátészalka specified tailor-made solutions to create a more flexible and safer traffic system. According to the positive scenario,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transit traffic decreases radically, the number of vehicles within the city stagnates or even decrease, alternative traffic modes come to the fore, the number of accidents falls back to a lower level, urban services are more securely accessible, harmony on the streets is achieved between motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.
Key activities / Key partners	<p>Key activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and eliminating the most dangerous road sections and crossings, Building roundabouts, Implementing traffic calming measures, Creating pedestrian-friendly network in the downtown, Building B+R parking facilities, Using warning signs and e-solutions to make streets safer (e.g. Smart crosswalk, light and sound signals, traffic count), Continuous control of traffic, Active prevention of accidents mainly by the police. <p>Key partners: police, civil guards, authorities responsible for road construction and maintenance</p>
Urban dimension(s) addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of safety Governance
Timescale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term
Resources	<p>It depends on the type, volume, and the exact location of the intervention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Territorial and Settlement Development Operational Programme of Hungary 2021-2027

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interreg A (cross-border) programmes of the EU • State-level financial support • Own contribution of the municipality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration of urban motorization (low) • Public opposition to the changes introduced (low) • Hard to find financial resources to implement the interventions listed above (medium)

6 Conclusions and next steps

Based on the experiences and knowledge gained from the Urbsecurity project, Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities will be able to ensure better public safety and security not only in the centre of the region, in the City of Mátészalka but also in the other 43 settlements of its territory. The results of the project and the Integrated Action Plan will be presented and discussed by the board of Association that includes mayors of the municipalities – this is an important tool for dissemination. ULG members intend to continue to cooperate on a case-by case basis. Szabolcs 05 Regional Development Association of Municipalities committed to participate in similar transnational projects to strengthen its cross-border partnership and to develop the methods and interventions towards improved urban safety and security.