

## SecurePART

### First period results

#### ENGLISH SUMMARY

#### Introduction

The First Period Results is a document from the SecurePART project that aims to improve the accessibility of the project's findings and support engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the EU security research programme. Whilst this summary here highlights some of the main findings, the document provides more detail and presents findings in diagrammatic form.

'Security' in an EU context is understood as including all research and development of technologies and knowledge for building capabilities needed to ensure the security of European citizens from threats (such as terrorism, natural disasters and crime) while respecting fundamental human rights.

CSO involvement in security research enables solutions to be developed that are: (i) better suited to those tackling problems on the ground; and (ii) less likely to undermine basic human rights. CSOs also bring a different perspective to security research—currently applied research tends to be focused around industry interests and the development of technological solutions to security issues. CSO participation in security research can also help engage other stakeholder groups and foster trust between groups.

In order to understand and help increase the participation of a range of CSOs in security research, SecurePART seeks to achieve four main objectives:

1. To understand CSOs and CSO networks, and foster their improved collaboration with other stakeholders, including: technology developers, public security providers, policy makers and researchers
2. To explore opportunities for funding offered within the EU security research programme, and enable the EU Commission to overcome barriers to CSO participation
3. To develop a strategy and action plan to help increase CSO involvement in the delivery of security research projects and in shaping the EU research programme.
4. To promote a more inclusive, responsible and legitimate approach to security research and innovation

#### Defining CSOs

CSOs are broadly defined as not-for-profit, non-governmental organisations that are a vehicle for citizens to collectively express and pursue public interests—potentially for the 'public good'. Debate often arises about whether particular organisations conform to the spirit of the CSO definition because they: (a) focus on the interests of a specific group—rather than the interests of the wider public; (b) were founded to promote the then government's agenda; (c) also promote commercial business interests; or (d) choose to define themselves differently. Indeed, some organisations explicitly reject terms such as NGO or CSO, preferring to be classified as 'research institutions'—a term that suggests a commitment to independence and scientific inquiry.



## CSO participation in EU-funded security research

SecurePART conducted an online survey of CSOs to find about their participation in security research. While the majority of CSOs comprise only a small number of employees and have limited budget, it is the larger CSOs with multiple staff and international offices that are most likely to participate in EU-funded security research. Compared to other stakeholders, however, CSOs are in a minority on security projects, comprising less than 5 per cent of project coordinators and partners. CSOs are also underrepresented within the working and advisory groups that shape the EU's research and innovation programme. CSOs may be well-placed to understand societal problems, and have demonstrable skills in research, engagement, advocacy and lobbying, but they are currently not involved in the design and delivery of the EU security research programme.

## Engaging CSOs

As a results of interviews, workshops and an on-line survey, SecurePART has found that CSOs are interested in participating in EU-funded security research. Around fifty per cent of CSOs responding to the online survey expressed an interest in security. The most common topics of interest to CSOs are civil rights, minority rights, privacy, environmental risks, cybersecurity and health risks. Furthermore, CSOs are interested in topic domains covered within the EU's security research programme, including crisis management, infrastructure protection, counter-terrorism, physical protection and border control.

The size, structure, objectives and scope of CSOs can sometimes constrain their ability to participate in EU-funded security research, however.

EU security funding supports European collaborations to pursue security issues that are often broadly defined and relevant across borders. The majority of CSOs, in contrast, focus on addressing specific objectives within a local, regional or possibly national context. In addition, the high-tech, industrial character of the research programme and its perceived role in marketing security technologies, raises concerns for CSOs committed to civil and minority rights.

CSOs able to identify relevant topics within the funding programme may be unable to join a funding proposal due to their lack contacts with organisations in the security research field. It can also be difficult to understand an EU funding programme that is complex, jargon-ridden and all but inaccessible to European research funding 'outsiders'. Added to this, applying for EU funding is also extremely time consuming with relatively low success rates.

While security research projects have much to gain from the participation of CSOs, SecurePART found that CSOs may be deterred from further involvement in case they become diverted from their core objectives. This may be in part due to the staff time involved in dealing with the administrative requirements imposed by the EU Commission.



## Learning from other fields

The SecurePART consortium recognises the criticisms directed at the European security research programme, in relation to the problematic issues within this domain, including international politics, privacy, and human rights. However, SecurePART suggests that much can be learned from other science and technology fields where steps have been taken to engage citizens and reduce the democratic deficit.

Electrical power engineering, for instance, has developed a culture of civil society dialogue, starting 40 years ago with the anti-nuclear energy movement and continuing to present day with opponents to wind power generators and high-tension power lines. The chemical industry is conscious that its economic success also depends on social acceptance. Research and innovation in genetic engineering has a high impact on society and efforts have been made to engage CSOs—with some mixed results.

SecurePART research has identified a range of methods to improve communication to citizens and CSOs, including: consensus conferences to enable dialogue between experts and citizens on controversial topics; demonstration projects; Participatory Technology Assessment, where a range of stakeholders identify potential problems and develop solutions; and open days for the public. There are cases where differences of opinion have undermined citizen dialogue and engagement, but generally the development and application of such methods is viewed positively.

## Plans for the second year

SecurePART is committed to increasing awareness amongst CSOs of opportunities to participate in EU-funded security research and will be highlighting the benefits of involvement in the EU Commission Horizon 2020 research programme over the next year of the project (2015–16). The project is in the process of developing, delivering and publishing: communication activities; interactive, multi-stakeholder actions and foresight events.