Effective communication is central to community policing programmes, helping build trust between citizens and law enforcement agencies. While that can still mean a friendly chat with your local policeman while out shopping, the authorities are also keen to apply modern technology to community policing, an issue that lies at the core of the **INSPEC²T (Inspiring CitizeNS Participation for Enhanced Community PoliCing AcTions)** project's research agenda. The project aims to provide a comprehensive tool to facilitate communication between law enforcement and the community, especially in the framework of the various community policing programmes that are being implemented in different EU member states.

The level of citizen involvement varies across these different community policing programmes, ranging from simply providing information right through to influencing local strategic priorities. The common thread across these programmes is the need for efficient communication between citizens and the police, which can help ensure the police operate in a way that reflects local priorities. When law enforcement agencies establish more efficient and effective channels of communication with local communities, then they can assess risks, and build a deeper understanding of what is happening in that community.

This forms the backdrop for the project's work in developing a sustainable community policing framework, aiming to design, develop and test a set of technology applications. One important component is a mobile application for two way communication, based on existing social media platforms, which will provide an effective way of reporting information. Through the use of mobile application people won't have to ring an emergency number, whereas they can instantly text the details of an event, or send a picture or video. The application also offers protection against hoaxers providing misinformation. "It can correlate events and information an in order to validate information, the proof from other people and other sources are needed.

INSPEC²T is also developing several other technology applications and modules to further enhance community policing. This includes a public portal with almost the same functionalities as the mobile application, a private portal for LEAs, and interface to Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems for bidirectional information exchange; the project's work provides a solid foundation for efficient reporting and analysis of information. The project consortium is also working on Case Based Reasoning and Multimedia Analytics, aiming to provide tools to the Police for analyzing information. For instance, the pictures to be analyzed from the Multimedia Analytics component may come from an uploaded picture from the public portal, not just from the Mobile App.

INSPEC²T allows the police to target their resources more efficiently, an important consideration at a time of economic uncertainty when law enforcement budgets are being squeezed. One of the main advantages of the INSPEC²T platform is its modularity. For instance, if a police department owns a sophisticated CAD system, this could be easily plugged in to the platform and used to exchange data. With more data available, police can build a more detailed picture of crime and disorder in the local community, and potentially even identify threats to law and order before they occur. The INSPEC²T system has the ability to identify the geo-location of an event, whether the information has been provided by text, or if it's in a picture, image or video. The police can then analyze that data and identify the areas that are more vulnerable to crime, and reorganize their strategy and operating plans.

There are clear operational benefits for the police from the INSPEC²T system, yet this must also be balanced with a respect for civil liberties. Alongside their technical work in developing the system, the INSPEC²T project also considers the wider social and legislative context in

which it will be used. The goal is to develop an effective solution, based on existing legislation in EU Member States around protecting individual liberty and freedom of expression. Alongside providing the means to report incidents, the system also encourages regular communication between citizens and police. INSPEC²T solution offers community engaging communication where virtual communities can be created, including both citizens and police, to discuss issues, plan activities and raise awareness.

Another important element is that people can provide sensitive information without fear of being identified and potentially subject to reprisals, an issue of which the project is well aware. Therefore, people can provide information related to threats or incidents without giving any personal data.

The overall INSPEC²T solution is already tested in three cities (Belfast, Valencia, Engomi) and yet will be tested and validated in another two cities (Preston and Groningen), each with different policing traditions, priorities and Community Policing maturity levels. In some cities, volunteers and NGOs already play a major role in policing, while in others citizens are less engaged; this diversity will be a strength in terms of testing, evaluating and improving the INSPEC²T system through these Test Cases.

INSPEC²T solution deals with the issue of community policing which takes on even greater importance in the context of the high levels of migration that some European cities have experienced over recent years, from both inside and outside the EU. People arriving from different countries may have different perspectives about the rule of law and the role of the police.

Encouraging citizens to get involved in community policing programmes and communicate with law enforcement agencies is an important element of this wider agenda. Serious games and gaming platforms are being used in the project to raise awareness of community policing and deepen community engagement. INSPEC²T solution passes key messages about interaction between law enforcement and citizens. This also acts as a way of training citizens and police in the use of social media and smart mobile applications, further strengthening relationships between the community and LEAs towards the Next Generation of Community Policing.