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# Annual Report 2024



Text editor  
**Sara Houweling**

Design  
**Vivian Gravenberch**



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# Foreword

In 2022, three professionals from completely different disciplines came together with a shared vision: to combine their multidisciplinary backgrounds to create safer and more secure spaces for everyone. In that first year, the Dutch Institute for Safe & Secure Spaces (DISSS) directly contributed to both national and international projects dedicated to supporting more safe and secure spaces. DISSS laid the foundation for what would become an institute active all over Europe in security research and innovation. What started as a collaboration between three individuals quickly grew into a dynamic organisation, driven by the belief that we could make a significant impact on public safety and security. A mission was born, and that same drive continues to power our work today.



As we reflect on our journey and look toward the future, we recognise the profound impact each of our partners and supporters has had on creating a more resilient society. Your trust and collaboration have been instrumental in our ability to focus on our mission and help support safer and more secure spaces in the Netherlands and throughout Europe.

Thank you for being part of our mission to make spaces safer and more secure for all.



# Summary

A team of dedicated professionals. A network of national and international partners in research and innovation, law enforcement, academics, governmental organisations and civil society organisations. Supporting public, private and personal space. In the air, at sea and on land. Conducting research. Publishing reports, podcasts and videos. Hosting and organising workshops, webinars and training sessions.

*DISSS is what we do to create a more safe, secure and resilient society.*

## Vision

Everyone deserves to flourish in liveable, safe and secure spaces. As a non-profit organisation, DISSS is strongly committed to making a positive impact on the safety and security of our society.

## First Mission

Growing and supporting an empowered, inclusive, safe and secure society. This is what we work on every single day. We establish positive change by placing human beings and their natural behaviours at the heart of our activities.

We aim to bridge the gaps between multidisciplinary stakeholders. Moreover, we strive to make the outcome of our efforts visible and tangible.



# Goals

## Building bridges:

Organising, facilitating, realising, generating and managing successful innovative solutions in the public, private and cyber security domain, which are relevant to society and contribute to a safer society

## Building communities:

Connecting and creating support among stakeholders of DISSS in a sustainable way by networking and collaborating according to the multiple-helix principle

## Building knowledge:

Setting up a high-quality knowledge centre within the DISSS Foundation for open technology, social innovations and security

## Building innovations:

Initiating and conducting scientific research within the field technological and social innovations for security issues



**Building resilience:** Developing and testing new technological and social innovations within the field of safety and security. Attention is paid to knowledge combining scientific domains such as information technology, (behavioural) psychology, criminology and investigation, location-based services, data science, and other disciplines

## Building innovations:

Initiating business development and management organisations for innovations (co-)developed by the foundation



# DISSS is our team

## *Board*



**Anna van der Stok**  
Director Operations  
and Programs



**Peter van de Crommert**  
Director Strategy and  
Innovations



**Vivian Gravenberch**  
Director Research and  
Marketing

## *Advisory board*



**Afi de Haan-Oubaibra**  
TUE



**Sven Hamelink**  
Netherlands Police



**Leon Verver**  
Netherlands Police



**Marc Schuilenburg**  
Erasmus University



## *Experts*



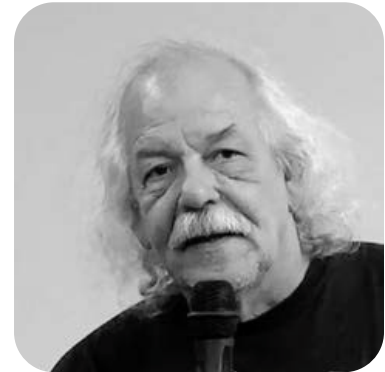
**Paul van Soomeren**

Expert Crime  
Prevention Through  
Environmental Design  
(CPTED) and Security by  
Design



**Bram van Dijk**

Expert Crime  
Prevention and Youth



**Tinus Kanters**

Expert Smart Cities and  
Crowd Management

## *Staff*



**Wendy Sieben**

Office Assistant



**Sara Houweling**

Communications Expert



**Gert Smit**

Financial Controller



**Melissa Somhorst**

Project Controller and  
Administrator



**HJ van der Tak**

Legal Advisor

# Our methods & milestones

## We connect dots:

<b>Policy makers</b>	...	<b>Stakeholders</b>
<b>Citizens</b>	...	<b>Authorities</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	...	<b>Execution</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	...	<b>Solutions</b>
<b>Social innovation</b>	...	<b>Technology</b>
<b>Academic research</b>	...	<b>Practical tools</b>

## Have a look at our products and services:

- Programme & project execution
- Training, research & innovation services
- Knowledge building & sharing
- Community building & coordination services
- EU & Netherlands fund advisor for and with our partners







# Projects in 2024

Together with our partners, we have dedicated our expertise to various national and international projects related to safety and security. Keep reading to learn more about our projects and output.



... IS WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN 2024

## MARIT-D

The MARIT-D project is a collaboration between Dutch, Belgian, French, Portuguese and Spanish authorities. The project is developing an intelligence-led, data-driven approach to tackle maritime trafficking. This approach includes a refined detection tool. The project's findings, including this tool, will be shared across EU Member States via EUROPOL's Innovation Lab, facilitating further cross-border collaboration.



## MARIT-NL

The MARIT-NL programme is a collaboration between multiple organisations in the Netherlands, including law enforcement, as well as research and technology organisations and governmental institutions. Within MARIT-NL, multidisciplinary specialists are developing an intelligence-led, data-driven approach to tackle trafficking. DISSS is aiding with funding opportunities, communication and dissemination and the realisation of a scientific network related to smuggling.



# Projects in 2024

## STARLIGHT

Law enforcement agencies typically rely on data-rich environments. This provides the opportunity to adopt artificial intelligence tools and capabilities that improve investigatory practices and limit the criminal misuse of AI. Through STARLIGHT, law enforcement agencies will collaboratively develop their autonomy and resilience in the use of AI for tackling major criminal threats.



## Innovatielandschap Oost-Brabant

This project provides a comprehensive analysis of the high-tech industry and innovative companies in East Brabant, Netherlands. It emphasises on key sectors including robotics, quantum technology, and automotive, and examines their significance to law enforcement and various other industries.

## Traffic Safety Improvement in Utrechtse Heuvelrug

The Municipality of Utrechtse Heuvelrug is making an ongoing effort to enhance traffic safety in the region. Comprehensive research has been conducted to address cut-through traffic and improve security for vulnerable road users in rural areas.



GEMEENTE  
UTRECHTSE HEUVELRUG

DISS is represented in this project by the Project Manager for Rural Area Road Safety. Key focus points of the project include efforts to decrease the amount of cut-through traffic in the area, whilst increasing road safety for slow traffic including cyclists.



# Deliverables

In the past year, we have continued our commitment to creating accessible and impactful resources for security practitioners, the general public and other stakeholders. This commitment has resulted in various deliverables including videos, a handbook, open-source research articles and a podcast series. Many of these resources were created in partnership with other experts or partner organisations. Our approach emphasises the fact that every citizen, regardless of their identity or background, deserves to live and work in safe and secure spaces. As such, we strive to share our knowledge and insights in different ways which cater to different needs, as well as making our materials publicly available as much as possible.

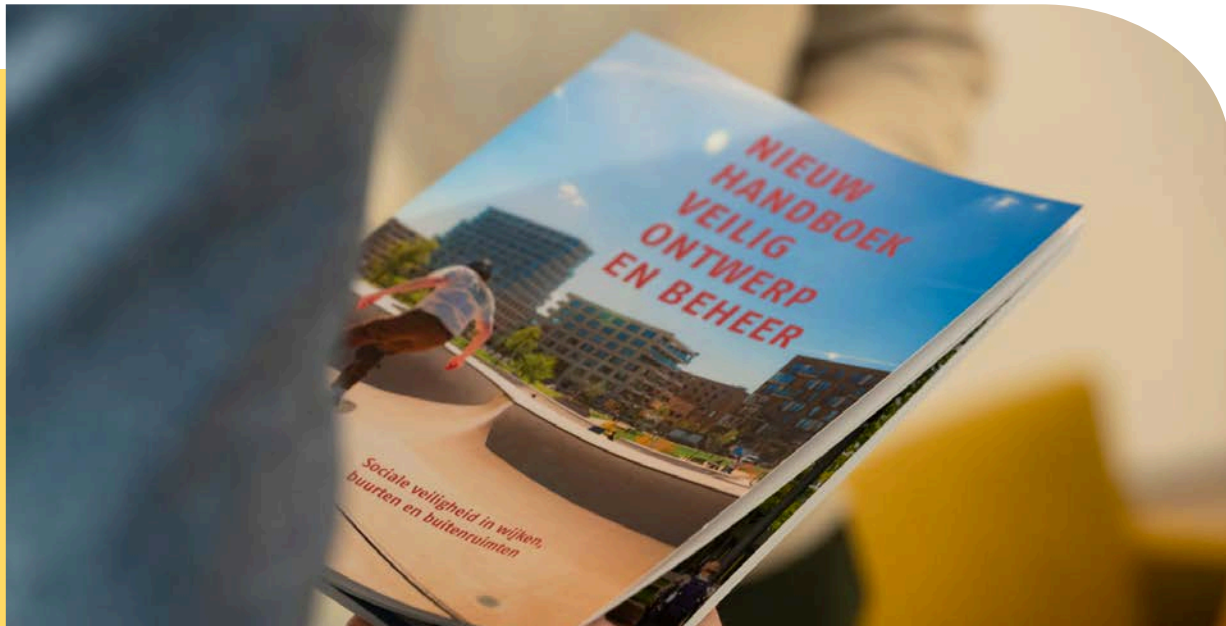
## Videos

In 2024, our online knowledge base contained videos on a variety of topics. You can find videos in English using the QR code below, on the following topics:

- maritime trafficking (produced as part of the MARIT-D project)
- using technology to protect public space before, during and after a terrorist attack (produced as part of the PRoTECT project)
- needs and best practices for quick response for operational centers (produced as part of the QROC project)

Additional video resources in Dutch cover strategies to address labour exploitation using the SENTINEL monitoring system.





# Handbook CPTED

A comprehensive guide focusing on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): this is what the Nieuw Handboek Veilig Ontwerp & Beheer offers, a handbook with practical tools for the implementation of CPTED principles.

The handbook, published in November 2024, is authored by Manuel Lopez and Paul van Soomeren of the Stichting Veilig Ontwerp en Beheer (the Dutch branch of the International CPTED Association). The book also includes contributions from Vivian Gravenberch and Sara Houweling. For more information, [click here](#) to visit the website of the Stichting Veilig Ontwerp en Beheer.

## Open-Source Research

This year, DISSS once more had the opportunity to (co-)author a number of research papers on safety and security. A variety of these research papers are available publicly and free of charge:

Apostolou, K., Gravenberch, V.V., Van der Stok, A., et al. (2024). Vulnerability Assessment for Places of Worship in the EU. In Gkotsis, et al. (Eds.) Paradigms on Technology Development for Security Practitioners. Security Informatics and Law Enforcement (pp. 357-369). Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62083-6\\_29](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62083-6_29)

Gravenberch, V.V., van Soomeren, P., Houweling, S., et al. (2024). Strengthening Local Authorities' Capabilities and Capacities Regarding the Protection of Public Space: A Co-Productive Approach. In Gkotsis, I., et al. (Eds.) Paradigms on Technology Development for Security Practitioners. Security Informatics and Law Enforcement. Springer, Cham. 12 [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62083-6\\_28](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62083-6_28)

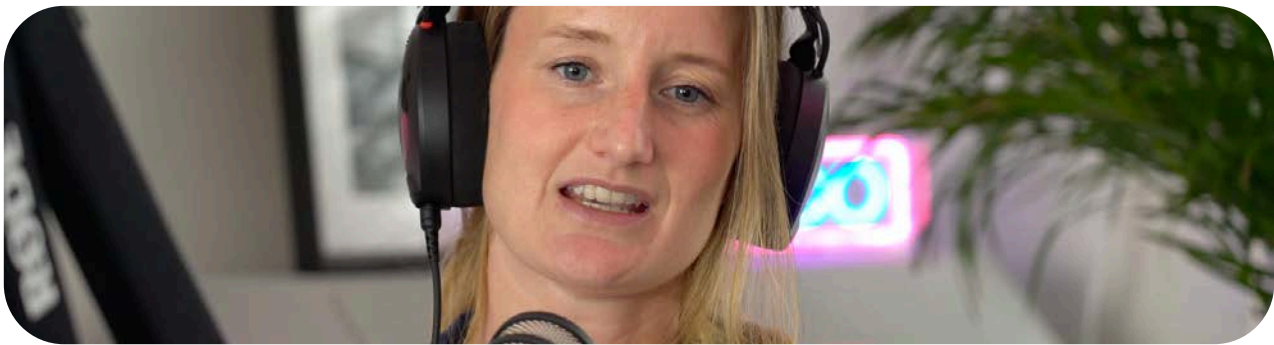
# Podcasts

For the MARIT-D project on maritime trafficking, DISSS has produced a podcast series dedicated to this topic. The series discusses the ins and outs of maritime trafficking, such as the impact of drug trafficking in particular, the ripple effect of undermining activities, as well as the global impact of maritime trafficking.

The audio podcasts can be found via [this RSS-feed](#) (or using the QR).



Prefer audio combined with video? You can find the video version of the podcasts on our [YouTube channel](#) (or by scanning the QR).



## Additional output and results

On top of the deliverables above which are publicly available, DISSS has been part of or organised multiple other research projects, workshops, training sessions and collaborations. These include but are not limited to:

- Research on Advanced Driver Assistance Systems
- Training on CPTED and our increasingly hybrid society for CEPOL, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
- Workshops for youth and youth workers in Mechelen, Belgium for the TRANSCEND project
- Written and supported multiple proposals for EU-funding programmes: Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV), Horizon Europe, Internal Security Fund

# DISSS is what DISSS'ers have also done



DISSS is not just active in the projects that we are a consortium partner or official partner in. Our members share a mission: we are committed to creating a more safe, secure and resilient society. As a result, you can find our members contributing independently or on behalf of other partners to various safety and security initiatives across Europe.

## AHEAD

The civil security transition into the 21st century has been accompanied by a technological boom and the emergence of technologies with seemingly infinite potential (AI, Big Data, Virtual Reality, 5G, IoT, etc.). Police forces and civil protection actors must anticipate these technological changes and turn the potential threats they raise into opportunities to ensure the safety of society. AHEAD takes a comprehensive approach when designing and implementing a sustainable framework for anticipating future civil security needs.



## ENACT

ENACT aims to develop a knowledge network for Security Research & Innovation (R&I) in the Fighting Crime and Terrorism area, to support EU-funded security R&I and boost the uptake of innovation. It brings together a unique consortium, including law enforcement agencies, universities, research centres, and industry organisations, to facilitate knowledge exchange, develop a structured knowledge base, improve market visibility, and ensure sustainability beyond the project duration.



# DISSS is what DISSS'ers have also done

Overwegingen bij een Rotterdamse  
Dance Parade in kaart gebracht



## Rotterdam Dance Parade

Will Rotterdam see another Dance Parade? This question has circulated frequently since the last event in 2009 - in the media, city council, and from the former organiser. The current coalition agreement has raised discussions about the potential impact of bringing back the Dance Parade, provided it could be organised safely and responsibly. The possibility and opportunities regarding a potential next Dance Parade were researched and reported by Tinus Kanters on behalf of ICEN Advies.

## Stichting Veilig Ontwerp en Beheer

DISSS member Vivian Gravenberch applies her expertise in environmental criminology and geographical profiling at SVOB. As SVOB's treasurer, she contributes indirectly to developing safer urban environments by implementing CPTED principles and facilitating knowledge exchange between professionals.



Looking ahead, Vivian aims to become a Registered CPTED Expert in 2025. This certification will enable her to contribute more actively to SVOB's mission by sharing her expertise and helping develop innovative solutions for urban safety challenges.

# DISSS is our network

We are academics. We love knowledge built upon extensive research. But we also love practical solutions and tools. At DISSS, we bridge the gap between academic research and practical implementation. Our network consists of a diverse range of professionals, including academics, operators, analysts, and strategists from various sectors. We collaborate closely with law enforcement agencies, local, regional, and national authorities, as well as citizens and civil organizations.

Our partnerships extend to religious organisations and other research and technology organisations, creating a comprehensive ecosystem for developing evidence-based solutions. While we maintain strong academic foundations, we take pride in translating research into practical tools and solutions that make a real difference in creating safer spaces.

## *Some of our partners include:*



**Nordic Safe Cities  
Alliance**



**European Forum for  
Urban Security**



**Netherlands Police**

This multi-stakeholder approach ensures our work remains both theoretically sound and practically applicable, addressing real-world security challenges through collaborative innovation.





# Our location

DISSS is located in the Netherlands. Opportunities to connect often take place at our central meeting point in the historic city of 's-Hertogenbosch. Since many of our efforts involve international collaboration, our work also often takes place online or is combined with international travel.

## New products and services

Addressing labour exploitation, improving quick response for operational centres, protecting public space and place of worship, improving road safety. These are just some examples of themes DISSS has worked on in the past years. In the past year, we have added multiple solutions to our portfolio. Two of these new products and services are highlighted on the following pages.



# Training

Group or individual training: *inclusive and liveable public spaces.*



We have accepted the reality that accidents and incidents can happen anywhere, at any time. As such, many countries have varying requirements for company emergency response. But what if your organisation unexpectedly becomes a victim of a targeted incident, simply due to being in the wrong place at the wrong time in someone's thoughts?

Besides organisations or companies, public spaces globally also face common security challenges. These include sexual harassment, burglary, violence, vandalism, and theft. Such incidents can create feelings of insecurity and negatively impact the quality of life in communities and neighbourhoods.



This is no reason to become anxious. Rather, it is an opportunity to thoughtfully consider how your organisation, employees, and visitors can respond effectively in threatening situations. DISSS provides safety training for groups or individuals, based on theory and practice from fields such as criminology, security and urban planning. For more information, refer to [the brochure here](#) or get in touch with us directly.



# Digital Safe Cities



## *Addressing online hatred and polarisation*

The Nordic Safe Cities Alliance has developed a programme to analyse online public conversations at both local and national levels. This monitoring helps to identify targeted groups of online hatred, detect polarising themes, and understand which events trigger hostile content. Besides online monitoring, the Digital Safe City Programme also offers training sessions, empowering local professionals and municipalities with deeper insights into the challenges of online hatred within their communities. By providing new tools and understanding, the programme helps to strengthen digital prevention strategies and protect residents from harmful online content, ultimately working towards a more secure digital democracy.



DISS is the Dutch partner of the Digital Safe City Programme of the Nordic Safe Cities Alliance. Are you interested in addressing online hatred and polarisation in your area? Have a look at [the website of the Digital Safe City Programme](#) or get in touch with us directly.





# AND SO WE CONTINUE.

Driving innovation to protect public,  
private and personal space.

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Walpoort 10, 5211 DK, 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands

[DISSS.eu](https://www.diss.eu)

[Linkedin.com/companies/DISS](https://www.linkedin.com/companies/diss)

BTW number: NL863898269B01

Bank: NL95 RABO 0191 9642 55

KvK number: 86216643