



ADVANCING
PUBLIC
TRANSPORT



→ Project Insights

SAFE BUS



→ Front cover for
the UITP SAFE BUS
guidebook.

The SAFE BUS project, led by UITP, is dedicated to enhancing anti-terrorism capacity and providing comprehensive training for bus managers and drivers. Recognising the pressing need to fortify urban bus transport systems against security threats, SAFE BUS has prioritised the development and dissemination of dedicated handbooks and e-courses to equip both bus managers and bus drivers with essential knowledge and skills.

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→ International expertise in action: panel discussion featuring experts from the UK, Italy, and the Netherlands at the SAFE BUS final event, tackling the challenge of implementing a successful security culture in organisations.



→ Knowledge Exchange #3, The Hague (8 November 2022):
bringing together security-focused projects to exchange
knowledge, experiences, and best practices.

The Challenges

Terrorism Threats

Urban bus networks are vulnerable to terrorism, due to their open nature and fast environment, necessitating robust strategies to mitigate risks and protect passengers

Training Gaps

Insufficient training for bus managers and drivers in recognising and responding to security threats poses a significant challenge

Knowledge Dissemination

Limited availability of comprehensive resources such as handbooks and training courses affects the capacity-building efforts of the PTOs

Our Approach and Key Achievements

Enhancing Capacity

- Developed strategies and best practices to enhance the anti-terrorism capacity, tailored to bus sector realities
- Provided targeted training programmes for terrorism awareness, threat assessment, and crisis management for both bus drivers and bus managers

Practical Tools for Learning

- Published comprehensive handbooks on security best practices, risk mitigation, and emergency procedures in English, and translated them into four languages: Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Dutch
- Created interactive e-courses covering situational awareness, insider threat detection, suspicious behaviour recognition, and emergency protocols

Collaborative Networks

- Fostered cooperation between transport operators, public transport authorities, and police services
- Shared best practices and case studies to encourage cross-field knowledge exchange and a sector-wide adoption



→ Workshop #1 of the SAFE BUS project: collaborative discussions and practical exercises on the SAFE BUS handbooks and e-training materials, covering cooperation, emerging threats, insider threats, and recommendations.

Impacts & Results

Increased Awareness

Heightened awareness among bus managers and drivers regarding terrorism threats and the importance of proactive security measures

Improved Response Capabilities

Enhanced capacity amongst stakeholders to identify suspicious activities, respond effectively to security incidents, and collaborate with law enforcement authorities

Wider Reach

Handbooks distributed to operators in multiple countries with just under 1,000 views on the website; e-courses attracting 1,100 learners with 100+ completed courses; almost 20,000 total views on the website up to June 2026

Reduced Vulnerability

Reduction in the vulnerability of urban bus transportation systems to terrorism through strengthened anti-terrorism capacity and improved security protocols

Positive Feedback

High participant satisfaction for relevance and practical application

Recommendations for the Future

→ Expand Training Delivery

Bus networks remain comparatively under-researched regarding anti-terrorism and major crime training capacities. Compared to rail and metro, available data is limited and training provision is inconsistent. While regulations are managed by local authorities and local contexts influence training approaches, a European training framework would facilitate access to high-quality, standardised security training.

→ Leverage Technology for Training

Training delivery could be enhanced through mobile applications and gamification. Given the shortage of drivers, it is essential to provide the required training while maintaining service continuity. Technology enables shorter, more frequent training sessions via mobile apps, which can be accessed during downtime between runs. Gamification features can increase engagement and support higher completion rates.

→ Formalise Cooperation

Strengthening cooperation between transport providers and police is critical for protecting public transport spaces. Evidence gathered during the project indicates that ongoing collaboration is among the most effective security measures. However, such cooperation is often voluntary and lacks a formal European framework. An EU-level recommendation to Member States and regions to establish structured cooperation would support consistent implementation across the sector.

→ Mandate Anti-Terrorism (or Major Crimes) Security Modules

Anti-terrorism modules should be mandatory in the security training of transport operators. Authorities could specify in procurement tenders the minimum number of hours dedicated to anti-terrorism content and behavioural assessment for both drivers and managers.

→ Broaden Coverage

Security training should also cover coach companies and cross-regional or cross-border bus services. While most current training scenarios focus on urban bus networks, coaches can also be used for terrorist activity and present specific challenges, including regulatory differences and language barriers. Key objectives should include enabling drivers to recognise suspicious behaviour, providing regular training, and maintaining ongoing cooperation with relevant police forces. Security considerations should also extend to shops and commercial premises in and around bus and train stations.

→ Ensure Sustainability

Long-term sustainability and knowledge dissemination require a central European permanent framework that can coordinate security training for transport providers. Without it, dissemination remains limited to individual partners. Continued funding, collaboration, and use of related project outcomes are essential.



→ SAFE BUS guidebooks for managers and drivers.

Conclusion

The SAFE BUS project has demonstrated that targeted, sector-specific training combined with cross-sector collaboration can greatly improve the resilience of bus networks to terrorism. By empowering those on the front line (drivers, managers, and operators) with practical tools and tested protocols, SAFE BUS contributes to the resilience of bus networks against security threats and builds long-term preparedness. Moving forward, sustained investment, innovation, and cooperation will be essential to safeguard Europe's public transport security and ensure that every passenger can travel with confidence.



E-learnings

www.uitp.org/uitp-academy/safe-bus-public-transport-security-counterterrorism



Handbooks

www.safe-bus.eu/handbooks-2



Best Practice

www.safe-bus.eu/solutions-and-best-practice



This is an official publication of UITP, the International Association of Public Transport. UITP represents the interests of key players in the public transport sector. Its membership includes transport authorities, operators, both private and public, in all modes of collective passenger transport, and the industry. UITP addresses the economic, technical, organisation and management aspects of passenger transport, as well as the development of policy for mobility and public transport worldwide.

This Project Insights was prepared by SAFE BUS, a project led by UITP alongside partners Arriva, Atac S.p.A. – Rome, CARRIS, and ZTM (The Public Transport Authority in Warsaw (Zarząd Transportu Miejskiego w Warszawie)).



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Legal deposit: D/2026/0105/23 - Rue Sainte-Marie 6, B-1080 Brussels, Belgium | Tel +32 (0)2 673 61 00 | info@uitp.org | www.uitp.org