New tools to prevent and fight organised crime and terrorism
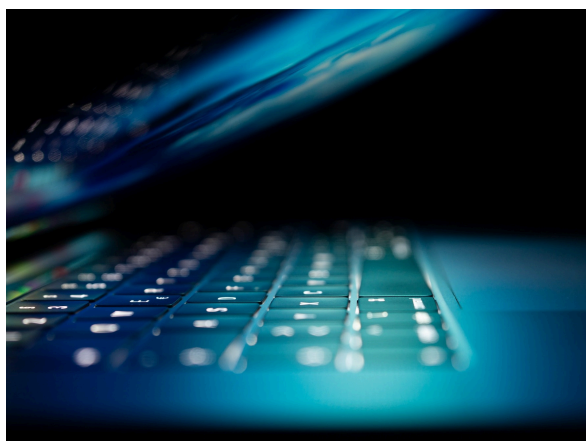
The results of the European project PROTON have been presented in Palermo.

👤 SOCIETY   🔒 SECURITY

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On the 17th and 18th of June, the Municipality of Palermo and Mayor Leoluca Orlando hosted in the local Gallery of Modern Art the presentation of the preliminary results of the European research project PROTON. Such results, called PROTON-S and PROTON Wizard, are analysis models and an informatic platform paving the way towards a new approach on fighting against organised crime and terrorist groups. PROTON-S and PROTON Wizard are based on an innovative integration of social and computer sciences, and address mainly policy makers and local, national and transnational security agencies. The goal is to offer new science-driven tools to test the effectiveness of prevention and control policies against organised crime and terrorism and the recruitment of new members. Palermo has played an active role in PROTON, as both the local Municipality and University are part of the project consortium.

PROTON is an initiative funded by the European Union. The project is coordinated by Transcrime (the Joint Research Center on Transnational Crime of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan) and is run by a consortium of 21 members from ten European countries, along with Switzerland, Israel and the United States. The consortium includes research centers, institutions and law enforcement agencies. The heterogeneity and large scale of the consortium have been two key ingredients for the development of PROTON-S and PROTON Wizard.

PROTON-S has developed a number of simulated societies based on ABM (agent-

based models). In such societies it is possible to implement policies aimed at reducing the recruitment to criminal and terrorist groups, thus testing their effectiveness. The results of the simulations are displayed on PROTON Wizard, which enables a direct and intuitive use of PROTON-S by end users, i.e. the members of the institutions developing policies against organised crime and terrorism. The two tools will provide indications on the most effective or improvable aspects of the adopted prevention policies.

Currently, there are no tools for fighting organised crime and and terrorist networks such as PROTON-S and PROTON Wizard. The use of simulated societies for testing the effectiveness of security policies is not the only innovation delivered by the project. PROTON goes beyond the most traditional approaches from two points of views. On one hand, PROTON-S simulates the recruitment mechanisms to organised crime and terrorism based on complex social, economic and psychological factors, and not on statistical methods leveraging previous behaviours and events. This enables the modelling of complex dynamics and to test the impact of specific interventions. On the other hand, PROTON deals with the realistic case of dynamic criminal organisations, which can grow or reduce based on the society in which they operate. This way it is possible to go beyond the state of the art, based on the unrealistic assumption of static and preexisting organisations. Another important novelty introduced by the project are the analyses of the social, psychological and economic aspects leading to the possible recruitment of individuals to a criminal or terrorist network. Besides their relevance to the academic community, these studies have provided key inputs for the development of PROTON-S, enabling the design of simulated societies that can provide reliable representations of the real ones.

With the presentation of PROTON-S and PROTON Wizard, PROTON has successfully achieved the objectives set at the beginning of the project.

Mots-clés

organised crime, terrorism, security, ICT, crime

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PROJET

Modelling the PRocesses leading to Organised crime and TerrOrist Networks

PROTON

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