

# SAFE LIVING RYS

**crime prevention and  
security problem solving  
in multi-apartment buildings**

**including follow-up scheme DrugsOut,  
and perspective on unauthorised entries  
in connection with legislation**



The multi-apartment buildings are often represented by anonymous atmosphere without adequate control of the residents rights and responsibilities. The law enforcement becomes very difficult task in such anonymous conditions.

Our projects incorporate organisational and technical methods of multi-apartment building security and create groundwork for activities leading to necessary supportive legislative changes.

**Safe Living RYS**

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**DrugsOut**

11

**Unauthorised entries into multi-apartment buildings**

14

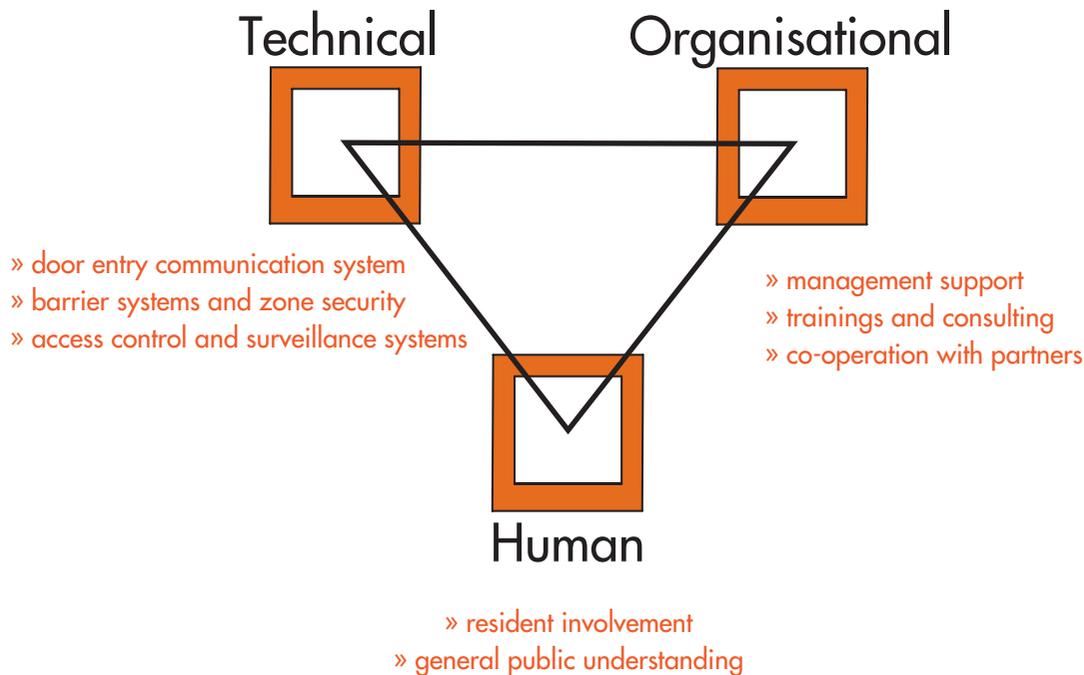
# SAFE LIVING RYS PROJECT

The main idea of the project is to keep the potential offender as far from residents as possible, to stop such an individual at the main entrance and not at the apartment door.

*SAFE LIVING RYS is a project focused on crime prevention and security-problem solving in larger housing estates with mostly prefab multi-apartment buildings. The targeted buildings are typical for the post-socialist countries' architecture of 70 and 80-ties of the past century with condominium type of ownership.*



# Three supporting pillars



*The idea to keep troublemakers out of the apartment buildings has become the starting point for compiling the basic construction of the project with three supporting pillars; technical pillar built upon technical solutions; organisational pillar which includes management support and training for owners committees and building managers; and the last but very important is the human pillar which represents the residents involvement and general public understanding.*

# Why it all began?

**The ownership in many apartment buildings has changed into a condominium type where apartments are owned by the individual residents, sharing common areas of the building.**

*After political changes in 1989 in Slovakia, also the changes in ownership of apartment buildings came along. The ownership of many apartment buildings changed into condominium type, where each apartment is owned by the individual resident with shared ownership of common areas of the building. The first owners' associations were established represented by the owners committees, which had to learn how to take care of the apartment building, its management, and maintenance and also how to improve and sustain the safety and security of the residents.*



# Anonymity and poor security

**The housing estates suffered from excessive anonymity, widely spread property and drug-related crimes and weak protection of the apartment buildings against unauthorised entries.**

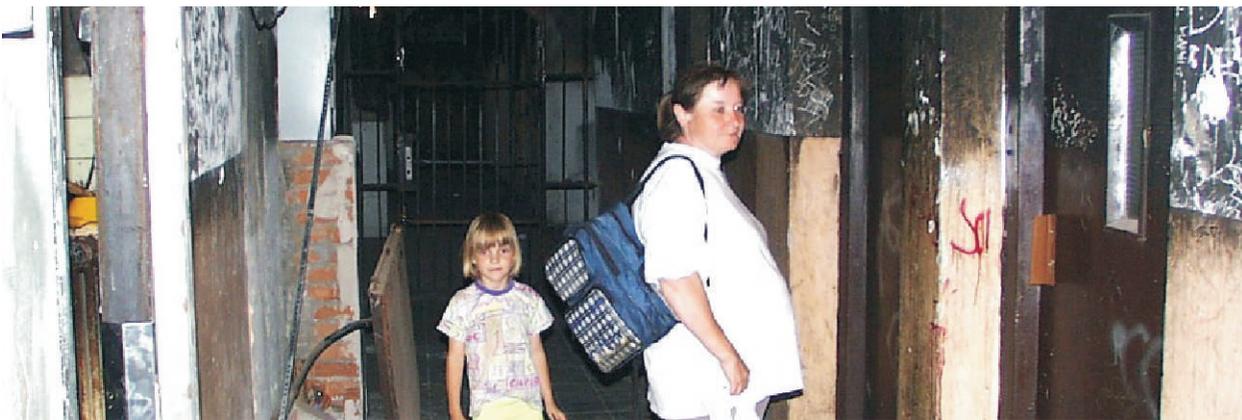
*The excessive anonymity in the large housing estates and widely spread property crimes, especially breaking and entering, theft, vandalism but also violent crimes, domestic violence, assaults, rape and obtrusive drug-related crimes negatively affected the residents and reflected badly on the community life. The weak protection of the apartment buildings against unauthorised entries attracted homeless, burglars and troublemakers to come right inside the buildings, where they found their hideouts but unfortunately also the objects of their criminal activities.*



# How it all began?

**It all began in one of the largest housing estates in Europe - in Bratislava Pertzalka, in an apartment building trying to tackle with arson, drug dealing, breaking and enterings and poor human relations.**

*It all began in one apartment building in Petržalka. Petržalka is one of the largest housing estates in Europe with concentration of 130 000 residents spread in the area of 29 km<sup>2</sup> and with the country's largest fluctuation of inhabitants and as a consequence of that the great anonymity. Since we had a long-time experience with technical solutions of multi-apartment building security, the residents of this particular apartment building asked us to help them with handling their problems that varied from arson, drug dealing, breaking and enterings and other sorts of criminal abuse and also poor human relations among the residents.*



# Pilot implementation

## interior of the building



before



*The preparation of the pilot technical and organisational implementation of security measures took place from 2000 till 2002 when the installation and repair works were finished. Up until now the taken measures have positive effect, but it is also the result of the tireless interest of the owners committee to uphold the good level of safety and security in the building. We keep supporting them with innovative solutions for the hardware and software tools of access control and of course new approaches to management support which we instantly try to improve.*

Working on the pilot implementations we realised how important it is to use the knowledge of the residents about the life in and around the apartment building, the habits and behaviour of the individuals and compile all these information into the technical solutions, positioning and operating modes of the access control and surveillance systems. But also we had to make sure that the information gathered from the systems would be used effectively for purposes of building management and the law enforcing authorities.



after

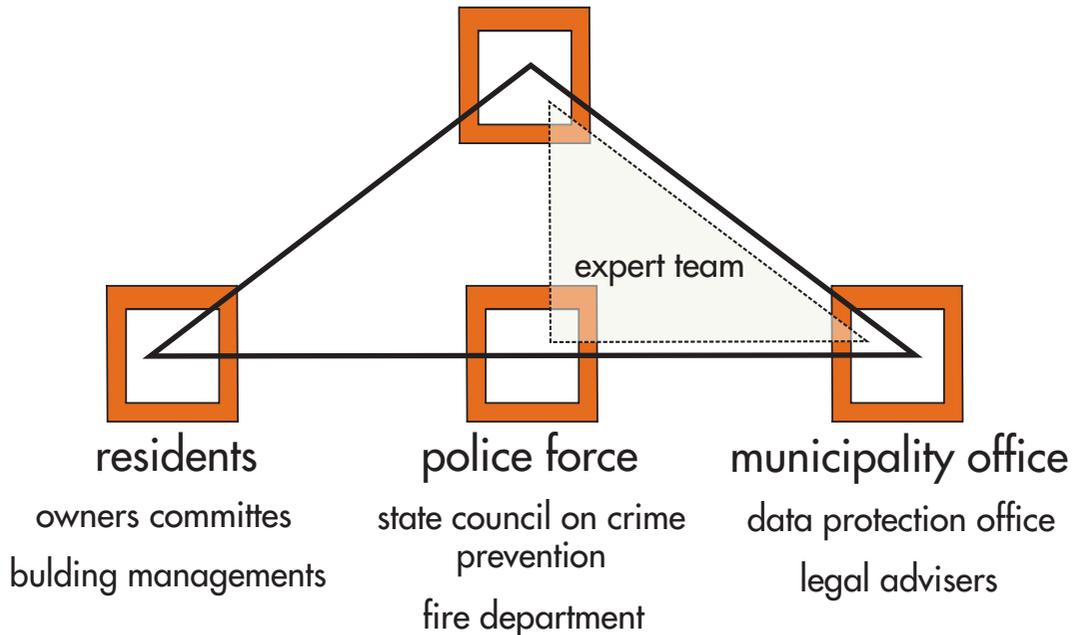


# Where is project implemented?



*The targeted area is the mentioned residential Petržalka (Bratislava) and the apartment building with average of 64 up to 120 flats. As a result of successful pilot implementation the project has disseminated in a very natural way among the estate residents with help of small but very well targeted publicity. Later the project spread outside Petržalka to other Bratislava districts and to other larger Slovak cities as well. At the present time there is over 1000 apartment buildings involved in the project using the set of technical solutions, management methods and following security and safety recommendations that project offers.*

# Who are our project partners?



*The most important partners in the project are the residents of the multi-apartment buildings. Of course, we have developed professional partnerships, we co-operate with local police departments, municipality offices, fire departments and we have a great support from the State Council on Crime Prevention of Slovak republic. Based on our initiative, the State Council established an **Expert team for crime prevention and safe living** in 2008.*

The main goal of the Expert team is to focus on recognizing the causes of criminal activities and propose the appropriate crime prevention measures for apartment buildings, uphold the reasonable changes in legislation and its harmonisation and provide the necessary professional assistance to the residents and building managements.

# Co-operation with Police

The co-operation with the local Police departments has very specific character, it includes

- **registered access of Police officers into the secured apartment buildings** with a possibility to control the time and date of the police officers entries, this can be checked by the owners committees or building managers;
- **signposting the apartment buildings with a special registered sticker** “This building is under closer Police watch”, with very good preventive effect;
- **annual meetings of police representatives with members of the owners committees** to discuss the problems in the neighbourhood;
- **presence of local police officers at the tenants meetings** due to resolve the hot problems quickly;
- **assisting to crime investigation**, this is based on good and well managed communication with owners committees, building managers, installer companies and the ability to use effectively installed technical equipment and set security measures. We set up also a special web site for registering the electronic identifiers used in the secured buildings. This site has helped in several cases to identify the offenders or victims , or it just helped to return the lost property to the owner, e.g. lost or stolen keys, handbags etc.

„This building is under closer Police watch“



# DRUGSOUT SCHEME

The apartment building, so called „Pentagon“ in the city district of Bratislava – Vrakuna with catastrophic conditions of safety and security has become an object of DrugsOut scheme.

*The most complicated case has been an apartment building, so called Pentagon, located in the city district of Bratislava – Vrakuna. The security and safety of this building was in catastrophic conditions. In 2006, when we were appointed by the local municipality authorities to prepare a project which got the characteristic name DrugsOut, there were 183 flats with 68 % of rent dodgers who owned 65.000 Eur on electricity, water and gas bill. Ironically, most of them were also the apartment owners. The devastation of common shared areas cost the building over 31.000 Eur.*



# "Pentagon" before DrugsOut scheme



*In period of 8 months of 2006, over 180 crimes were committed inside the building or its close neighbourhood. 427 persons were taken in for questioning by the police and there was drug dealing reported in 16 flats.*



# Changing "Pentagon" ...



*This scheme is implemented in very close co-operation with police and local municipality government especially due to very difficult neighbourhood. The scheme had several stages, in 2010 we will work on technical improvement of the installed systems and their resistance to very harsh physical attacks. We have also started a new scheme focused on the social prevention and with assistance of Expert team for crime prevention and safe living we are trying to initiate the legislative changes that would support our project activities.*

# Why are changes in legislation necessary?

After securing hundreds of apartment buildings, we have run into two fundamental problems of insufficient legislation.

1. disharmony of the **fire prevention** and **crime prevention** legal norms;
2. missing legal definition of **unauthorised entry** into the multi-apartment building.

*The security in the apartment buildings is dependent not only on the advanced technology but in first place on the abilities and wiliness of the residents to behave in a way that does not endanger their health, does not damage their property and does not decrease the standard of their housing. However, all their efforts, the effort of the police or municipality authorities must be in accordance with the law and with support of the law.*

*The insufficient legislation very significantly complicates introducing strict rules for access control in apartment buildings in practise.*

# What is the conflict between Fire and Crime prevention in practise?

**It is not possible to sustain sufficient security on main entrances used also as emergency exits.**

*The main entrance is used also as an emergency exit in many apartment building, many of them have one entrance only. It is impossible to use 100% access control on such entrances. The door must enable safe exit without any obstructions to any person inside the building in case of emergency. The problem is to create such security measures which will provide safe exit in emergency but not 24 hours a day when there is no emergency. The devices and systems of emergency exits installed are often and very easily misused.*



# Fire vs. Crime prevention

**If a person unauthorised to enter the apartment building commits a crime inside the building there is nothing stopping him from leaving the premises freely.**

*Despite very high quality access control system individuals with bad intentions get inside the apartment building. They get there very simply, walking in along with an elderly resident, along a child coming back from school, along a mum with a pushchair. These are the groups of residents who are not able to physically prevent entries of such individuals. If this individual commits a crime inside the building there is nothing stopping him from leaving the premises freely. There is nothing that would make him behave any different from a regular visitor leaving their friends' apartment.*





# Unauthorised entry in legislation

**The residents are not sure what their rights are or what the Police authority is in case of an unauthorised entry into common areas of the apartment building.**

The residents/owners of such secured apartment buildings regard the unauthorized entry as any intentional entry without authorisation. It can be either a forced entry or sneaking into to the building usually passing by the authorised person. The owners are not sure what their rights are or what the law enforcement authorities' rights are in case of an unauthorised entry into common areas of the apartment building. Whether the person who has entered the building without permission can be ordered to leave or be forced to leave the premises, how to regard the forcible opening of the main entrance door or any other forcible and damaging behaviour towards the owners property this person commits in order to accomplish unauthorised entry.



# What is the solution?

**It is necessary to prepare new laws that will take the development in the apartment building security into consideration.**

*The solution for both problems is a little complicated. It takes not just the very correct implementation of the existing laws but it is also necessary to prepare new ones that will take the development in the apartment building security into consideration. We have used all legitimate security measures including the co-operation with the police and fire departments, local municipality governments, in spite of all our activities the measures taken are not sufficient enough.*

Based on our initiative, the Expert team for crime prevention and save living has proposed amendments to property law concerning the shared ownership of apartment buildings and criminal law.





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