



Hello and Welcome!

HARMONISE Newsletter – April 2015

Welcome to our first HARMONISE Newsletter! This monthly Newsletter will seek to provide news and views on the HARMONISE project and on the evolving field of urban resilience. Please feel free to get in touch and have your say!

The HARMONISE Project, funded under the EU 7th Framework Programme, commenced in June 2013 and will conclude in June 2016.

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HARMONISE; EU FP7 project no. 312013

About Us

The HARMONISE project is coordinated by Future Analytics Consulting; an Irish based urban planning and research consultancy. The consortium includes 12 partners across Europe including universities; municipal partners and research and technical organisations.

Building Safer Places

What We Offer

- A Shared Holistic Concept for Greater Urban Security and Resilience
- Tools for Delivery of Improved Urban Security and Resilience
- Case Study Application and Scenario Modelling
- An evidence base for Evaluation, Adaptation, Implementation and Integration Process
- Resilience Education & Training



Interview

This month we interview **Dr. William Hynes** – coordinating partner in HARMONISE and a key partner in a number of Built Environment research projects. In future Newsletters we will interview other urban resilience ‘thought leaders’ to gain insights into this exciting field and to find out just what makes them ‘tick’!



Dr. William Hynes; Future Analytics Consulting Ltd.

The interest in urban resilience seems to be growing. Why do you think that is?

Over the past two decades, concepts and practices of urban resilience have been increasingly utilised by planners and other built environment professionals, as they attempt to create safer and more sustainable places. The growing public, political and academic interest in concepts such as urban resilience can at least partly be seen in the light of the economic crisis of the late 2000s, and a number of recent extreme weather events such as Hurricane Sandy. The unfortunate rise in terrorist activity across a number of cities worldwide has also played a part.

Such events have triggered the emergence of a number of notable innovative resilience approaches, including the recruitment of chief resilience officers in a number of cities worldwide – the first of which was appointed in San Francisco in April 2014. This particular development has been stimulated by the Rockefeller Foundation’s worldwide challenge ‘100 Resilient Cities’. There has also been a renewed focus on the need for more integrated decision making models. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the city of New York looked to other cities for best practice examples in resilient water management. There has certainly been a lot of progress in the field of resilience in recent years – but more can be achieved.

As an urban planner, what sorts of trends do you see?

This rapid expansion of cities is exposing a larger number of people and critical infrastructures to the threat of disasters and crisis events and posing additional challenges for the design, planning and management of urban areas. Within this context, the enhancement of urban security and resilience has become a far more urgent and significant task, necessitating more innovative and integrated approaches to urban development.

In terms of the emergence of ideas and practices of resilience within academic and policy debates – we have seen that practices are highly specific to institutional contexts and the emergent security risks faced in particular countries and their urban areas. For example, in the UK, the USA and New Zealand, resilience became a highly politicised policy rhetoric in the wake of natural and human induced disasters (most notably 9/11, 7/7 in London, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Sandy in 2012, and the Christchurch earthquake in 2011) and concerns that the infrastructural system and institutional frameworks in situ were ill-prepared to cope with similar future events. These differences in the way ‘urban resilience’ is understood and applied is important, and yet such differences are rarely alluded to in current resilience literature. Further empirical work in this area is needed – and indeed this is a gap that HARMONISE seeks to address.



‘There is a real gap out there for an Urban Resilience ‘catalyst’ to break down barriers, build consensus and drive positive change HARMONISE was designed for this role’

What has surprised you most about working urban security?

Recent work in enhancing the resilience of critical and other large scale urban infrastructure has focussed on embedding the ability to ‘bounce back’ or, more correctly, ‘bounce forward’ into urban systems and emergency management procedures. From this we can identify a number of separate interventions that have been, and continue to be, used to enhance the safety, security, and ultimately the ability of cities, and their associated social, economic and institutional systems to cope and respond in an event of a disaster, attacks or other security challenges.

These urban security measures typically relate to territorial, design and planning, governance and technological interventions which have become prominent in policy debates and approaches as cities are increasingly scrutinised through the lens of ‘resilience’.

So, it is the diversity, range and varying definitions of resilience type approaches that is surprising – and even more so, it is surprising that no comprehensive, holistic approach has been developed thoroughly within this context of significant ‘sectoral’ progress.

If you could change one thing about urban resilience - what would it be?

Urban resilience is typically presented as the capacity of cities to withstand and rebound from disruptive challenges – however, despite the growing prominence of the concept, there remains a lack of a mutually agreed upon definition of ‘urban resilience’ across different disciplines and between academia and practice. The flexibility of the resilience concept is one of the reasons it has become so popular politically, but there is a danger that without a shared understanding of what ‘urban resilience’ means in practice, the concept will be reduced to just another ‘buzzword’ of little practical relevance. Indeed, despite significant progress in the urban security domain, to date, there is no comprehensive, holistic approach to improve the resilience and security of critical large scale urban built infrastructure. The HARMONISE project, recognises and aims to address this need.

The general aim of HARMONISE - A Holistic Approach to Resilience and Systematic Actions to Make Large Scale Built Infrastructure Secure - is to develop a comprehensive, multi-faceted, yet mutually reinforcing concept for the enhanced security,

resilience and sustainability of urban infrastructure and development.



What's your personal philosophy on what should be done about urban resilience?

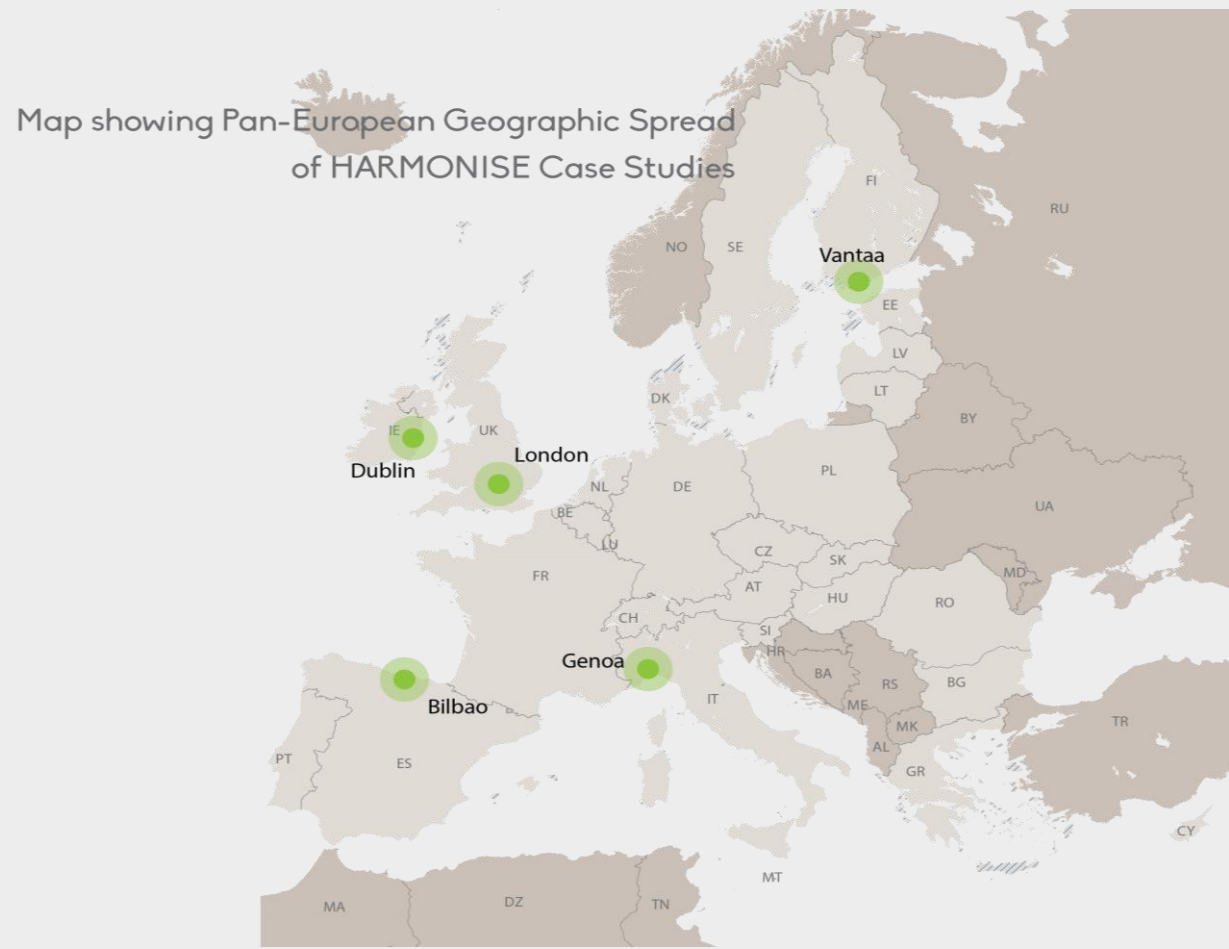
The successful integration of urban resilience into overarching national, regional and local policies involves a range of stakeholders operating at multiple scales, dealing holistically with different issues and providing integrated governance or response. National policies and associated responsibilities for dealing with disruptive challenges (which in effect build urban resilience), differ between nations and are influenced by historic policy developments and national governance structures. At the same time the organisational and governance structures which are in place to implement



policy also vary across different national contexts.

Therefore an understanding of the varied institutional contexts in which these activities take place is critical in developing a more holistic solution to urban resilience across the EU and internationally: e.g. how different stakeholders are integrated in the development and implementation of policy; how policy is adapted and operated at different spatial scales; how such policies are co-ordinated across different spatial scales to ensure holistic governance.

Within HARMONISE, ongoing engagement with stakeholders across five European case study cities seeks to ensure that we contribute to the development of a more holistic and practice focussed concept of urban resilience – which is cognisant of key contextual (disciplinary and geographic) constraints and opportunities across Europe.



The HARMONISE Case Study Cities



Tell me about some of the people you've met while working on HARMONISE?

As I explained previously, over the course of the HARMONISE project, the consortium will participate in a number of important stakeholder engagement workshops across our five HARMONISE case study cities – Dublin; London; Genoa; Bilbao and Vantaa. These stakeholders are primarily built environment professionals, ranging from planners, architects and engineers to building managers. As part of our own stakeholder engagement meetings in Dublin, we have also met with law enforcement officials, leading European spatial planning academics, and individuals representing local businesses in the city. We intend to seek feedback from a wide range of individuals and organisations to ensure that the project develops a holistic concept which is truly applicable to all stakeholders involved in the planning, management and operation of large scale urban built infrastructure across Europe.

What else can you tell me about HARMONISE?

The HARMONISE project has recently reached its mid-point, and is now in its

important second phase. This phase comprises of the HARMONISE platform and tool deployment exercise – whereby the HARMONISE interactive, online platform and suite of tools will be applied and tested in our five case study cities.

The HARMONISE Platform contains a wealth of information and tools specifically designed to enhance the resilience of large scale urban built infrastructure. The platform can be used to carry out a thematic search for guidelines or tools to match users' individual requirements. From planning and designing new urban development projects to operating and managing existing large scale built infrastructure, the platform offers tools for all stages in the lifecycle of built infrastructure. The platform will guide users through an innovative search process designed to promote holistic decision making at each stage of the resilience cycle – from mitigating or preparing for threats and hazards to responding and recovering from crisis events. The platform offers tools relevant to a wide range of built environment professionals from planners to urban designers, engineers and building maintenance managers.

The HARMONISE tools span a range of topic areas, from planning and design guidance; to risk assessment and crowd monitoring tools. There is a real gap out there for an Urban Resilience 'catalyst' to break down barriers, build consensus and drive positive change HARMONISE was designed for this role.

We would welcome the participation of any interested parties during this testing phase. If you would like to learn more, please visit

www.harmonise.eu or contact me at william.hynes@futureanalytics.ie



What we have been up to!

The HARMONISE Consortium have been extremely active – disseminating the key emerging messages at a variety of events addressing a broad range of stakeholder groups.

Get a flavour of the ongoing activity:



HARMONISE Participation in the thematic lab “City Operating System - a technological platform for a smart city” Bologna 2014



HARMONISE at BASE LONDON 2014
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86LsuRxPD0U>

For more on the HARMONISE Project – Please watch our video:
<https://vimeo.com/119563223>



HARMONISE at Future Securities Berlin 2014

**THANK YOU FOR READING –
SEE YOU NEXT MONTH!**

