



CEASEFIRE: Advanced versatile artificial intelligence technologies and interconnected cross-sectoral fully-operational national focal points for combating illicit firearms trafficking

D9.2 – Dissemination and community building reports. Initial.



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Executive Summary

Deliverable 9.2 has been generated in the context of **T9.1** (“*Dissemination activities and public outreach*”) and **T9.2** (“*Community building and liaison with relevant projects*”) of the CEASEFIRE project. As such, it aims to provide a comprehensive report on the CEASEFIRE dissemination and community building strategy, as the latter has been designed and implemented during M1-M18 of the project’s lifetime. These activities contribute to CEASEFIRE results reaching a relevant audience in the LEA community, business, academia and general public, as well as to creating the desired impact within the wider security ecosystem.

T9.1/T9.2 is led by HUA/PSP, respectively, with both tasks lasting for the entire duration of the project (M1-M36). The purpose of this document is to provide an initial report on T9.1 and T9.2 activities regarding project dissemination, communication and outreach, with a special focus on reaching relevant external stakeholders, such as European LEAs, EU/international bodies and SMEs engaged in security-related innovation or operations that pertain to the project’s goal of facilitating the fight against firearms trafficking.

This report describes the main CEASEFIRE communication instruments designed by project partners and published, with the support of screenshots and images taken from the on-line channels and from the Dissemination Pack. The Web site, available since M3 at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/> (see D9.1), is the main communication channel developed and used by the CEASEFIRE consortium. Equally important are the project’s social media accounts in popular platforms, as well as the *CEASEFIRE Community* mailing list that has been set-up in the context of the project. This Community also includes a set of “sister” R&D projects that have been contacted, with the goal of engaging in joint dissemination efforts and exploiting potential synergies. Additional outreach avenues that have been exploited are: i) scientific publications relevant to the research conducted within the project, and ii) participation in – or organization of – physical/virtual dissemination events that bring together many relevant stakeholders from across Europe.

The Dissemination Pack prepared for the CEASEFIRE project (since M3, subsequently refined) includes: a) the official logo of the project, b) a PowerPoint presentation with the most relevant information about the project’s aims and vision, c) a text document presenting the project’s goals and activities in journalistic style, and d) a comprehensive infographic presenting the project’s motivation, aims and vision. Four project newsletters, addressing both external relevant stakeholders and the general public, have also been disseminated periodically up to now, with their publication frequency expected to step up during the second half of the project. The CEASEFIRE website, social media, Community mailing list and Sister Projects have all been exploited as dissemination avenues.

Deliverable 9.2 is an initial version of the CEASEFIRE communication, dissemination and outreach report. The final version (i.e., Deliverable 9.3) will be released in M36, covering the relevant activities that will take place during M19-M36 of the project’s lifetime. This future work will concentrate on further expanding the project’s Community membership and social media appeal, continuing to submit relevant scientific papers, deepening the cooperation with Sister Projects and organizing various CEASEFIRE-themed events for external stakeholders and the general public.

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List of acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
EACTDA	European Anti-Cybercrime Technology Development Association
EC	European Commission
EFE	European Firearms Experts
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
ENLETS	European Network of Law Enforcement Technology Services
EU	European Union
EUROPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
iARMS	Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency
NFFPs	National Firearms Focal Points
PSO	Project Security Officer
R&D	Research and Development
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1. Introduction

The trafficking of illicit firearms represents a complex transnational phenomenon with far-reaching implications. The CEASEFIRE project is implementing a multifaceted and multidisciplinary strategy, concerning the innovative use of cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information & Communication Technologies (ICT), criminological analysis, as well as operational LEA training, in order to boost LEA capability in tackling firearms trafficking criminal activities. Thus, regarding dissemination, communication, outreach and community building, the CEASEFIRE consortium is targeting all groups of relevant stakeholders that are likely to affect or to be affected by the project's activities, such as LEAs, European/international bodies/associations of LEAs, SMEs active in security innovation, academic researchers, etc., that specialize in combatting illicit firearms trafficking.

This document presents the relevant dissemination, communication and community-building activities that have taken place during M1-M18 of the project, as an initial phase of the execution of the developed outreach plan. The first version of this plan was charted in M3, along with the activation of the project's Internet presence venues (WWW site, initial social media accounts) that have been demonstrated in D9.1, but it is being periodically refined. The actual relevant activities that shall take place during M19-M36 of the project's lifetime will be reported in the final version of this report on M36, i.e., in the future deliverable D9.3.

According to the CEASEFIRE outreach plan, there are **three dissemination phases** for the project: a) CEASEFIRE branding and setting-up of dissemination avenues (M1-M12), b) intense on-line and physical dissemination to relevant end-users (LEAs, LEA associations), industrial (security-oriented) and academic communities (M12-M36), and c) presence in relevant exhibitions/trade fairs and organization of live CEASEFIRE system demos (M24-M36). Finally, according to the outreach plan, **communication efforts**, targeting the general public, and **community-building efforts**, targeting external stakeholders of the wider security ecosystem, are progressing in parallel throughout all three dissemination phases.

The **industrial communities** of interest have been identified in a preliminary fashion as the communities of:

- a) LEA software developers,
- b) Cybersecurity practitioners,
- c) Digital forensics software developers,
- d) Big Data analysts,
- e) AI developers.

However, this list is to be updated based on the findings of **T1.5** (“*Innovation Management*”) and **T9.4** (“*Market analysis and business model definition*”), as reported in D9.6 (“*Market analysis and exploitation plan. Initial.*”). The **academic communities of interest** have been identified as:

- a) Criminologists,
- b) AI scientists and data scientists,
- c) Blockchain and cryptocurrency analysts.

Finally, the **end-user communities of interest** have been identified as:

- a) NFFPs, police units (e.g., firearms, organized crime, cybercrime, counter-terrorism, etc.), border guard corps, customs authorities and forensics agencies,
- b) Judicial authorities, public prosecutor agencies,
- c) International LEA, security and relevant policy organizations/groups/communities (e.g., EUROPOL, INTERPOL, the EU Policy Cycle–EMPACT Firearms, EFE, ENLETS, i-LEAD, ILEAnet, etc.),
- d) LEA training agencies (e.g., CEPOL).

The dissemination, communication and community-building activities that are reported in this document, as envisioned by the outreach plan, are the following ones:

- The project's Web site, available at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/> since M3.
- The project's social media accounts: LinkedIn, Facebook (since M3), X/Twitter (since M17).
- The Dissemination Pack, which has been internally utilized and exploited for project dissemination purposes since M4. This includes means designed and published for creating a common and clear graphic layout of the project and for creating a project brand, supporting therefore the dissemination activities carried out by the project consortium.
- The periodic project newsletters: 4 have been published during M1-M18 and widely circulated using all available dissemination avenues.
- Presentation of CEASEFIRE’s aims and results at conferences, seminars, events and workshops that target the European security ecosystem.
- CEASEFIRE events.
- Presentation of CEASEFIRE results at scientific conferences.
- Publication of CEASEFIRE results in academic journals.
- Creation and maintenance of the CEASEFIRE Community mailing list.
- Interaction and liaising with Sister Projects.

All of the above activities are taking place in the context of T9.1 (“*Dissemination activities and public outreach*”) and T9.2 (“*Community building and liaison with relevant projects*”) of the project, which are being led by HUA and PSP, respectively. All consortium partners participate in T9.1, while CERTH, HUA, UCSC, FORTH, IANUS and FMI participate in T9.2, besides PSP. Both tasks last throughout the entire project lifetime (M1-M36).

In the following sections, all of the above activities and communication channels of communication are reported and detailed. **Section 2** focuses on presenting the dissemination and communication material that has been drafted, as well as the main on-line dissemination avenues that have been set-up (WWW site, social media). **Section 3** details the dissemination activities that have taken place during M1-M18, including presentations and presence of CEASEFIRE in end-user-centered or academic conferences, workshops and seminars, publications in academic journals and events organized by CEASEFIRE. **Section 4** presents the community-building efforts that have taken place during M1-M18, including the CEASEFIRE Community mailing list and interaction with Sister Projects. Finally, **Section 5** summarizes what has been achieved up to now and presents the plans for future outreach activities, which are to take place during the period M19-M36 of the project’s lifetime.

It must be noted that, since CEASEFIRE is a security-sensitive project that may also involve personal data, all outreach material that is deemed as potentially sensitive is first reviewed by relevant project partner TRI and/or the CEASEFIRE PSO before being published, as needed.

1.1. Deliverable context

Keywords	Dissemination; communication; outreach; community-building
Objectives	D9.2 contributes to Strategic Pillar 5 of CEASEFIRE “ <i>Intense dissemination and community building activities, as well as preparation of comprehensive business plans of the project tools and services</i> ”. The Deliverable contributes to this by providing an initial version of the report on the project’s dissemination, communication and community-building activities, focusing on those that have taken place during M1-M18 of the project’s lifetime.
Work plan	D9.2 is developed in the framework of WP9 “ <i>Dissemination and exploitation activities</i> ”. In particular, it includes results of T9.1 (“ <i>Dissemination activities and public outreach</i> ”) and T9.2 (“ <i>Community building and liaison with relevant projects</i> ”), which are being led by project partners HUA and PSP, respectively.

	D9.2 is the initial version of the Deliverable, which will be updated on M36 with the final version (i.e., D9.3).
Milestones	N/A
Deliverables	D9.2 is an initial version of the Deliverable, presenting activities that took place during M1-M18 of the project’s lifetime. A preliminary version of one component of this document’s content, i.e., CEASEFIRE on-line presence, has previously been reported in D9.1 (M3). The final version of this document shall be submitted on M36.

1.2. Version-specific notes

D9.2 “*Dissemination and community building reports. Initial.*” includes a general overview of the outreach (dissemination, communication, community-building) and project branding activities that took place within CEASEFIRE during the period M1-M18. The final version of the Deliverable (D9.3) will report updates on these activities corresponding to the period M19-M36 of the project’s lifetime.

2. Dissemination and communication material and channels

This section details the main outreach material and avenues that have been set-up in the context of T9.1, during M1-M18 of the project's lifetime. These include the following items:

- The project's **Web site**, available since M3.
- The project's **social media** accounts: LinkedIn, Facebook (since M3) and X/Twitter (since M17).
- The **Dissemination Pack**, which has been internally utilized and exploited for project dissemination purposes since M4. This includes means designed and published for creating a common and clear graphic layout of the project and for creating a project brand, supporting therefore the dissemination activities carried out by the project consortium.
- The periodic **project newsletters**: 4 have been published during M1-M18 and have been widely circulated, using all available dissemination avenues.

All of the above are presented below, in dedicated subsections.

2.1. CEASEFIRE Web site

The project Web site, available from M3 at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/>, is being continuously updated throughout the lifespan of the project and serves as the major online communication channel. It has been designed as a central information place with key information about the latest developments and achievements of the project. The Web site has received more than 2600 total visitors during M3-M18 (*Relevant KPI: more than 2000 unique visitors per year*).

The CEASEFIRE Web site contains a short description of the project's goals and use-cases, a presentation of the project consortium, an archive of periodic news posts regarding the project's progress, a repository of the published dissemination & communication material (e.g., newsletters, blog posts), an archive with links to the published scientific papers derived from CEASEFIRE research, as well as a link to the CEASEFIRE Community Web page.

The CEASEFIRE Web site is hosted by CERTH and maintained/updated by HUA. Indicative screenshots follow below, in Figure 1 - Figure 6.

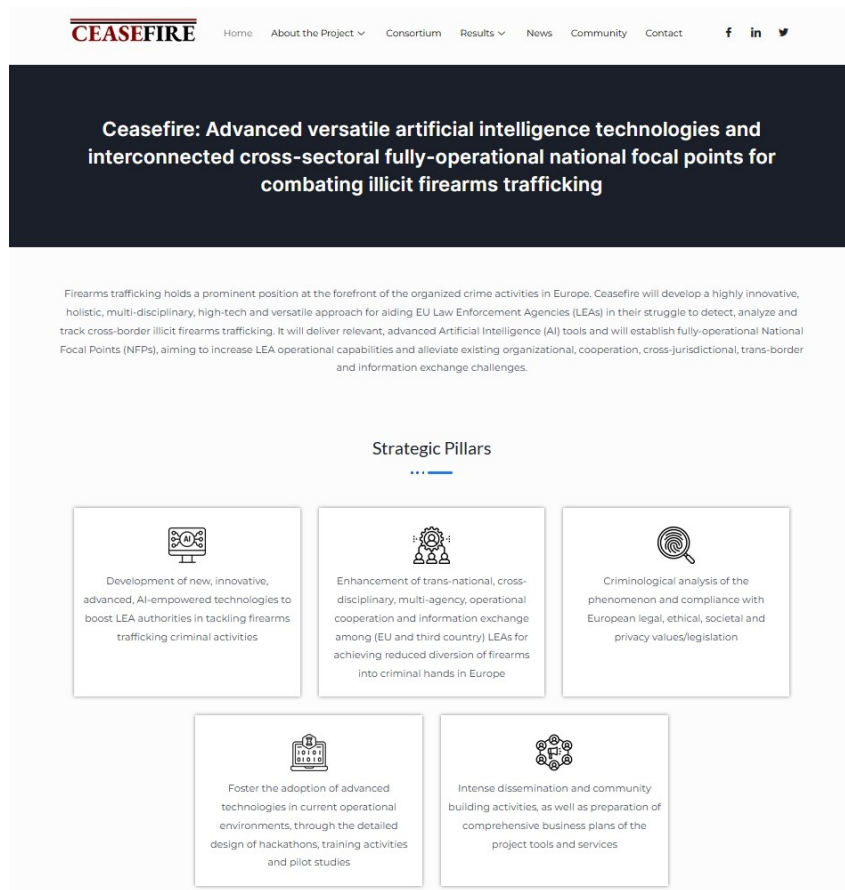


Figure 1. The home page of the CEASEFIRE Web site (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/>).

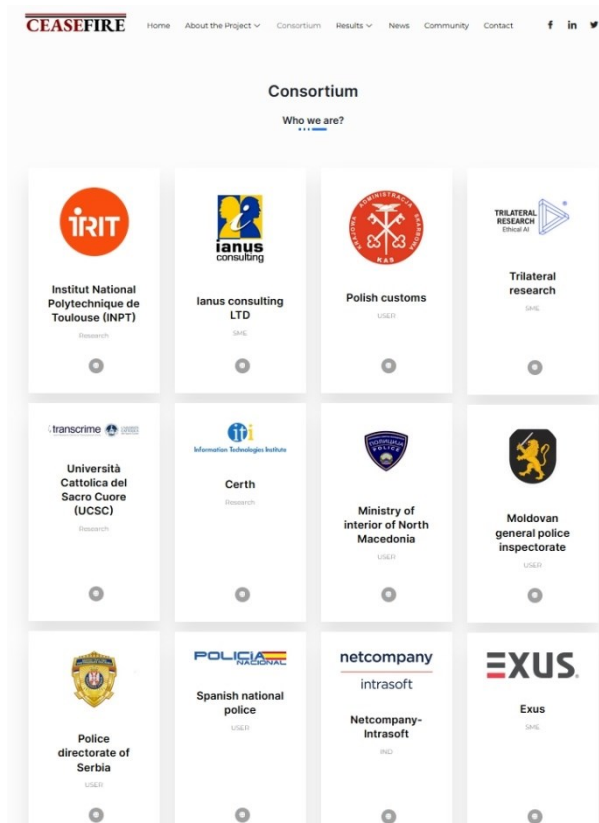


Figure 2. Part of the CEASEFIRE consortium presentation Web page (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/consortium/>).

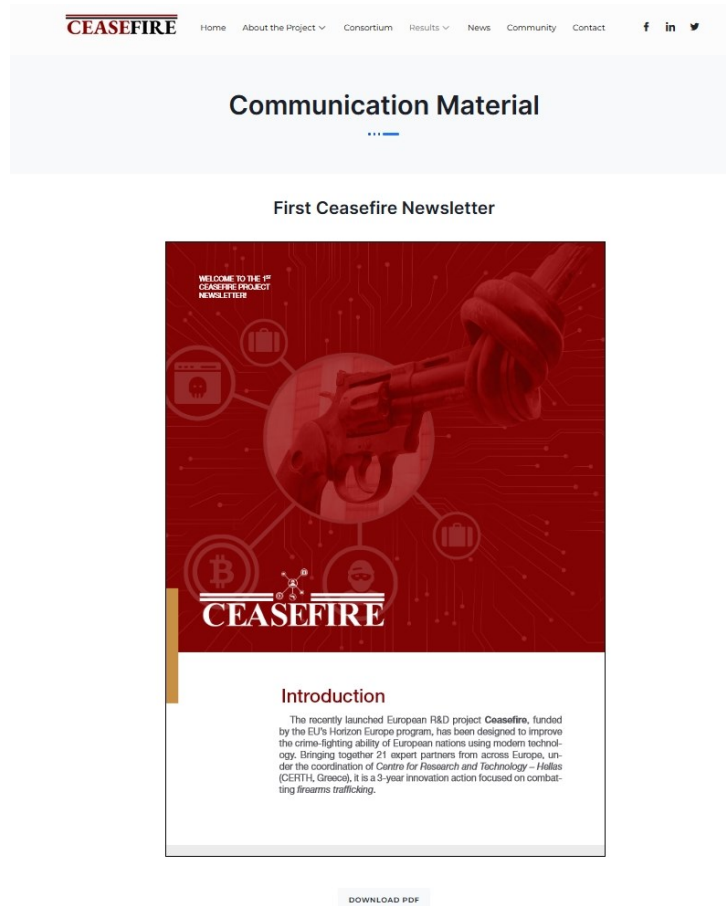


Figure 3. Part of the CEASEFIRE communication material Web page (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/communication-material-newsletters-press-releases-etc/>).

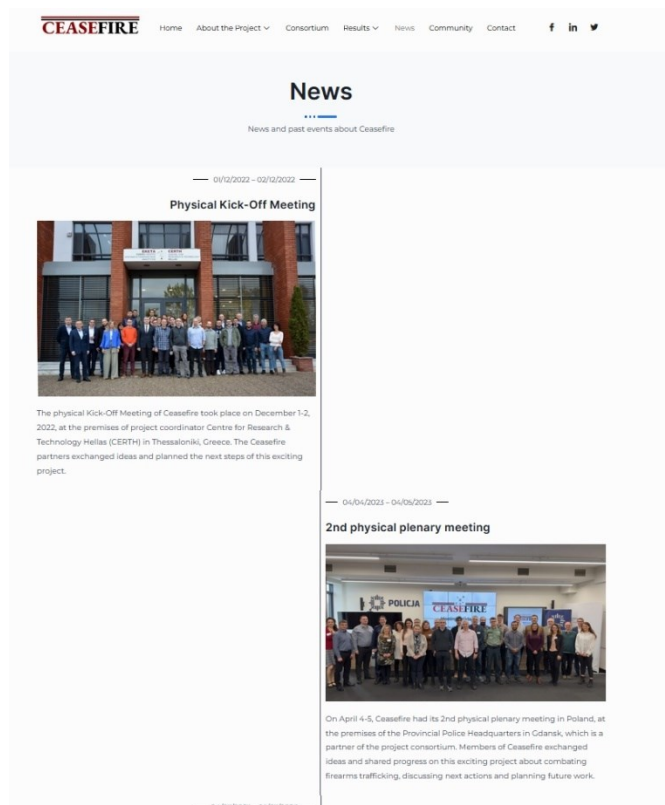


Figure 4. Part of the CEASEFIRE news Web page (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/news/>).

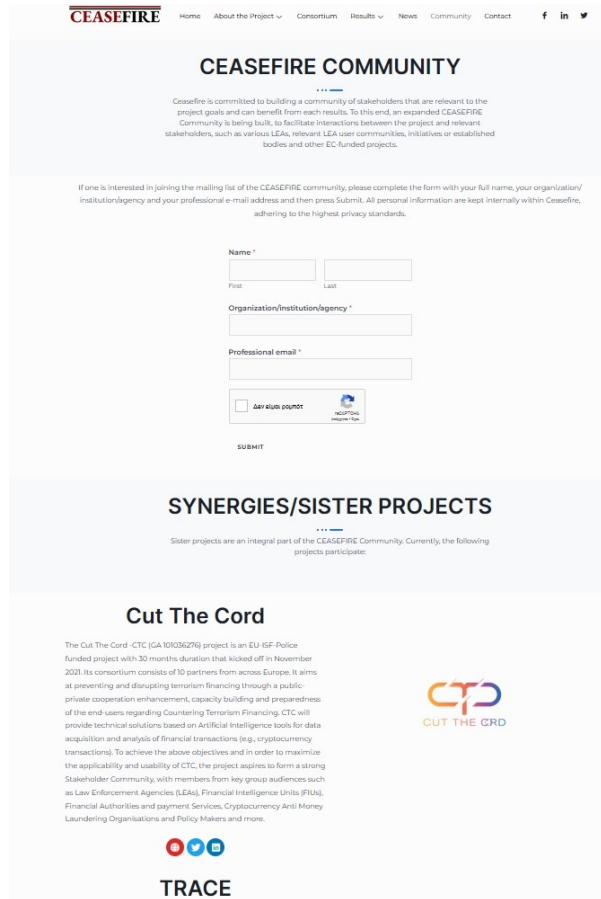


Figure 5. Part of the CEASEFIRE Community Web page (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/community/>).

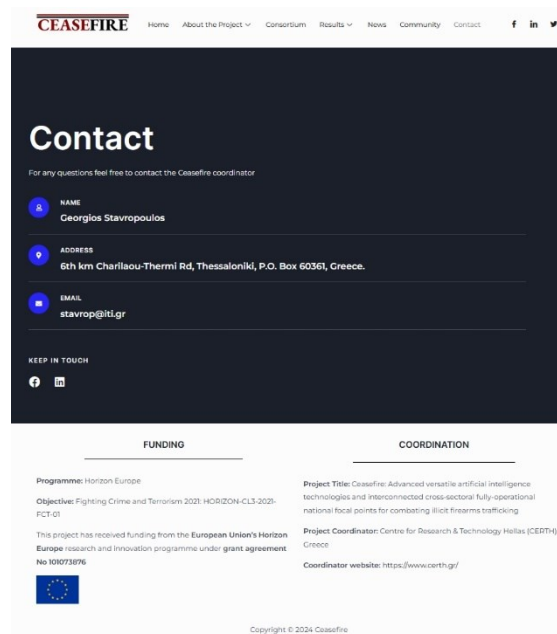


Figure 6. The CEASEFIRE contact Web page (<https://ceasefire-project.eu/contact/>).

2.2. CEASEFIRE social media presence

The project's social media accounts are active since M3 (LinkedIn, Facebook) and since M17 (X/Twitter). They can be found at:

- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ceasefireproject/>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/people/CEASEFIRE-Project/100089862614779/>
- **X/Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/CEASEFIREHE>

During the period M1-M18 of the project’s lifetime, they have gained 230, 21 and 27 followers, respectively for LinkedIn, Facebook and X/Twitter (*Relevant KPI: more than 100 new followers per year in social networks*). During the reporting period, 38/32/18 posts have been made in LinkedIn, Facebook and X/Twitter, respectively.

The social media accounts have been used as active dissemination avenues for project news, project participation in events/conferences, the published dissemination material (e.g., the newsletter) and the project itself (e.g., “Meet the partners of the consortium” posts). Indicative screenshots follow below, in Figure 7 - Figure 12.

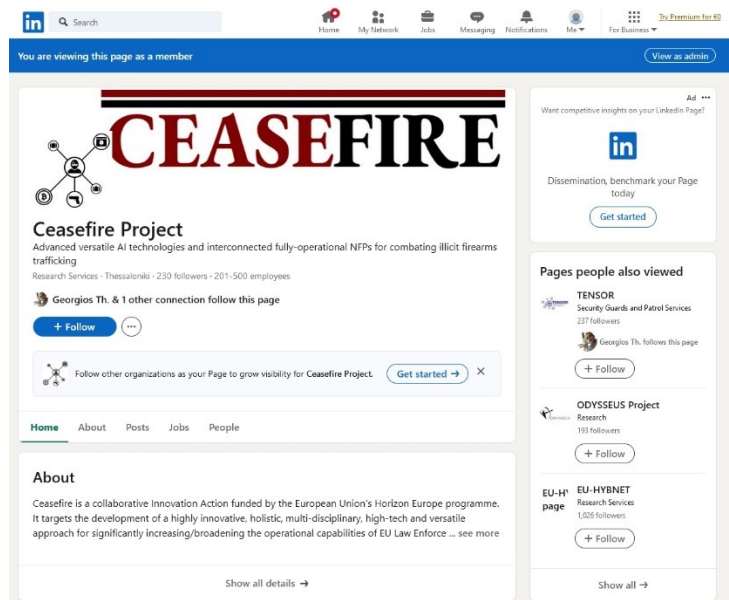


Figure 7. The LinkedIn profile of CEASEFIRE.

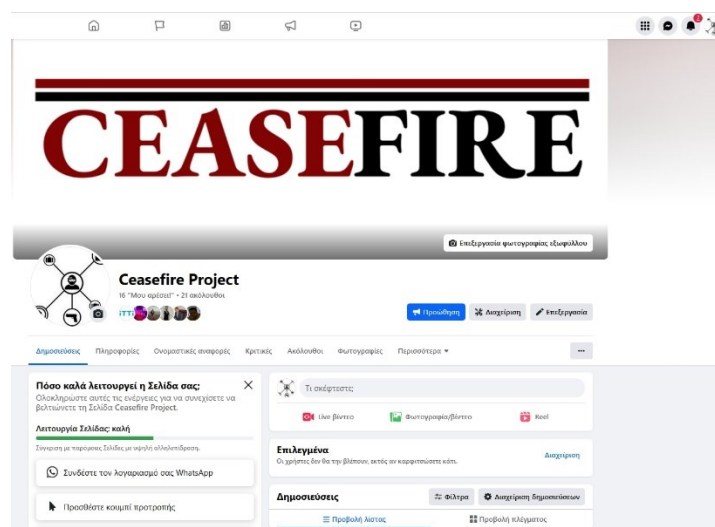


Figure 8. The Facebook profile of CEASEFIRE.

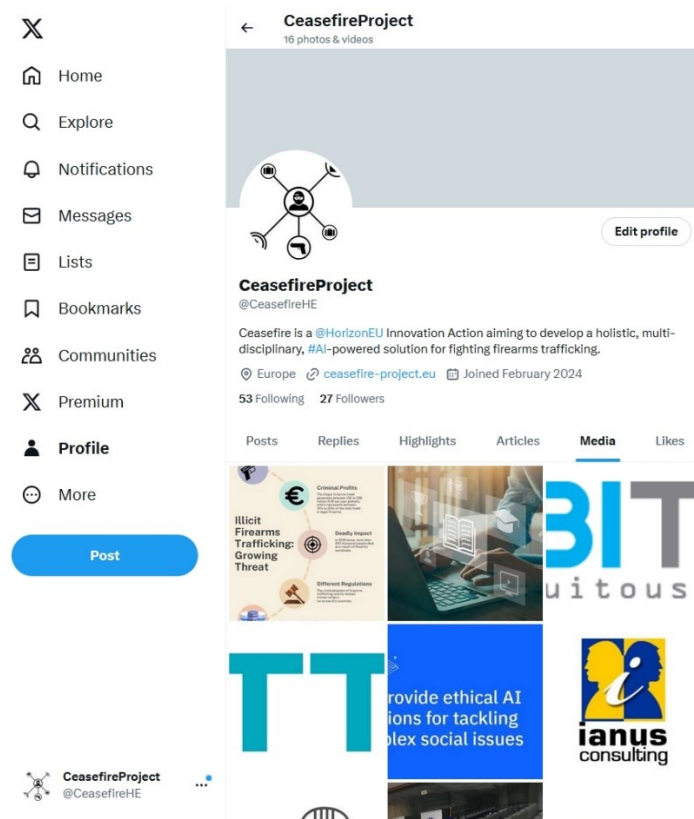


Figure 9. The X/Twitter profile of CEASEFIRE.

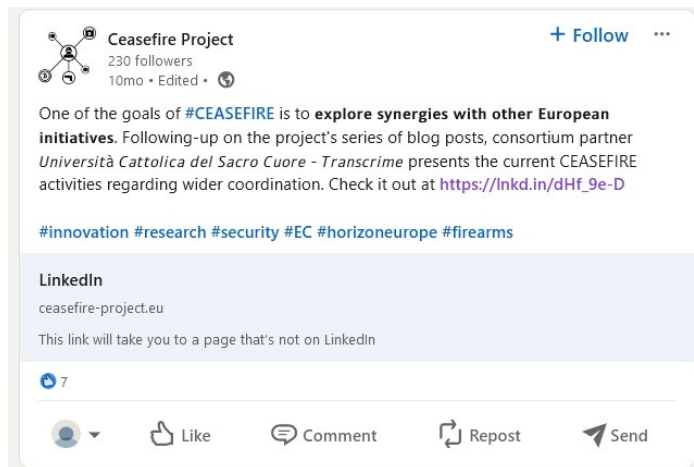


Figure 10. Sample CEASEFIRE LinkedIn post.

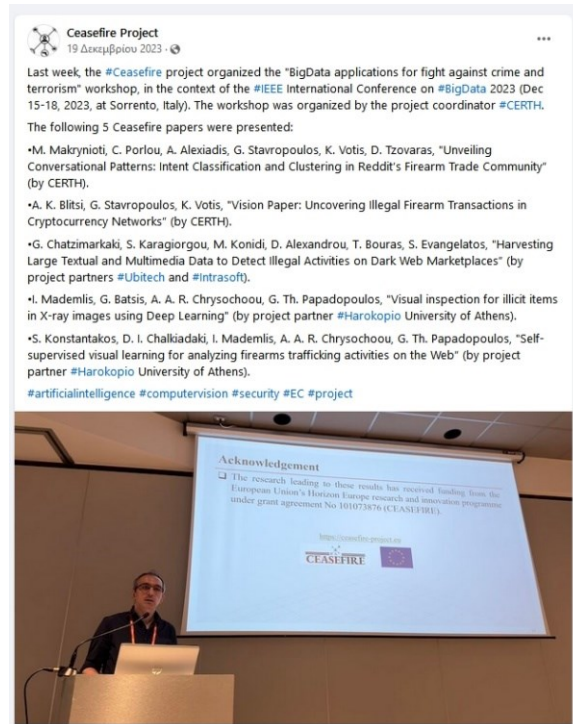


Figure 11. Sample CEASEFIRE Facebook post.

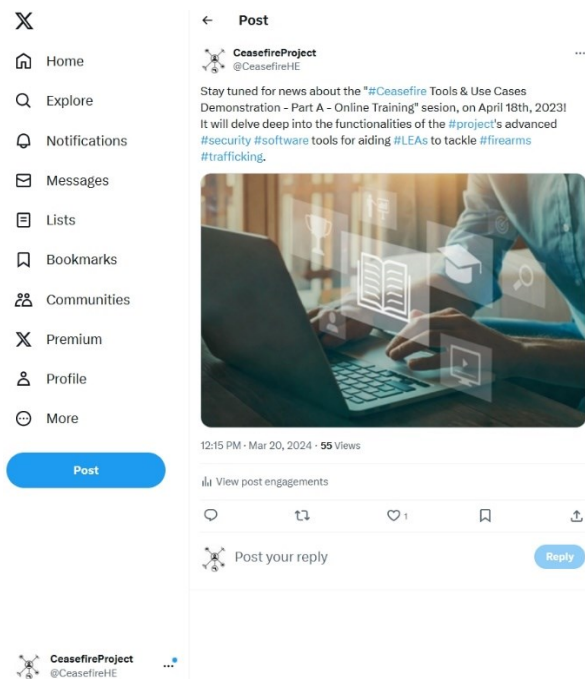


Figure 12. Sample CEASEFIRE X/Twitter post.

2.3. CEASEFIRE Dissemination Pack

The initial version of the CEASEFIRE Dissemination Pack has been delivered at the end of M3 by HUA, with further refinements having taken place since then. The current version contains the following items:

- The final CEASEFIRE logo (utilized in all project material, including this document, since M4).
- The official CEASEFIRE presentation templates (utilized in all project presentations since M4).

- A PowerPoint presentation of the project’s general vision and goals (12 slides), which is freely being utilized by the partners for project dissemination/communication purposes.
- A journalistic textual description of the project’s general vision and goals (3 pages), which is freely being utilized by the partners for project dissemination/communication purposes.
- A comprehensive infographic (3 pages) presenting the project’s motivation, aims and vision to the general public.

These items are uploaded to the project’s internal cloud repository (“NextCloud”, managed by CERTH) and are accessible to any consortium partner, so that they can be freely used for project dissemination/communication. Additionally, the textual description and the infographic are publicly available at the project’s Web site, at the URLs <https://ceasefire-project.eu/motivation-and-goal/> and <https://ceasefire-project.eu/vision/>, respectively.

Indicative screenshots from the project’s presentation, journalistic description and infographic are depicted below, in Figure 13 - Figure 13.



Figure 13. A sample from the main PowerPoint presentation of the project.

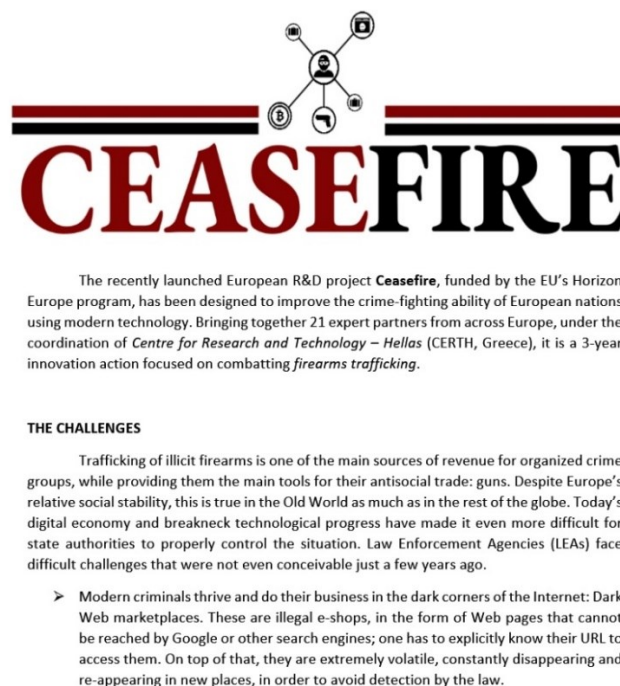


Figure 14. A sample from the main journalistic description of the project for the general public. The project’s logo is clearly visible.



Figure 15. A sample from the main CEASEFIRE infographic for the general public.

2.4. CEASEFIRE Periodic Newsletter

A CEASEFIRE newsletter, simultaneously **addressing both external stakeholders and the general public**, has been set-up since M5 and is being periodically updated with new versions. Its purpose is to communicate the project’s aims, vision and activities, while providing updates on recent developments. Four newsletters have been disseminated between M5-M18, with the frequency of publication expected to step up after M18, since project activities have significantly intensified/accelerated at this phase (*Relevant KPI: At least one newsletter issued every 3 months*). All available outreach avenues have been employed to disseminate these newsletter publications, meaning:

- The CEASEFIRE Web site.
- The CEASEFIRE social media accounts.
- The individual consortium partners’ networks of contacts.
- The CEASEFIRE Community mailing list (see Section 4.1).
- The CEASEFIRE Sister Projects and their networks of contacts (see Section 4.2).

All Community list members receive CEASEFIRE updates, including the project newsletters, as soon as they are issued. Therefore, the Community list members can be considered to be CEASEFIRE newsletter subscribers and, as reported in Section 4.1 of this document, on M18 they were 82 people in number (*Relevant KPI: More than 50 new newsletter subscribers per year*).

The 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th CEASEFIRE newsletter is 5, 7, 7 and 9 pages long, respectively, and it has been issued on M5, M9, M15 and M18 of the project’s lifetime, correspondingly. All newsletters are publicly available for on-line reading or for downloading (in .pdf form) at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/communication-material-newsletters-press-releases-etc/>. Indicative screenshots of the 4 published newsletters are depicted in Figure 16 - Figure 19.

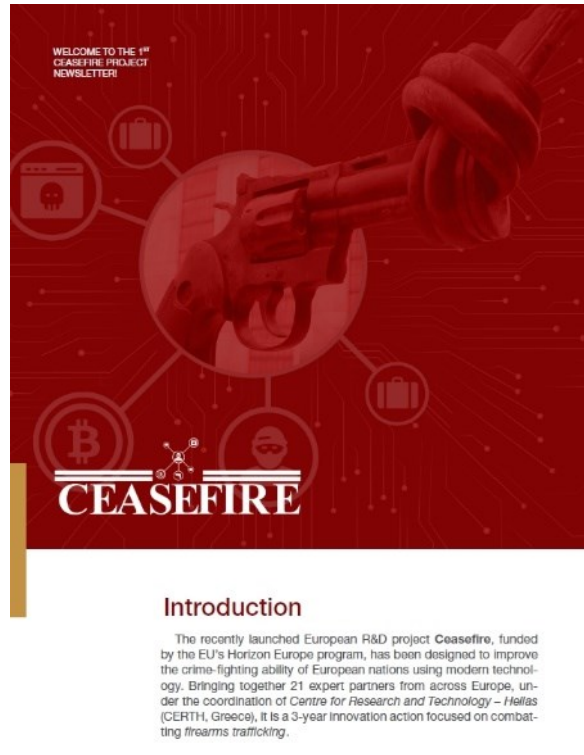


Figure 16. Sample page from the 1st CEASEFIRE newsletter.

The future

Technical Ceasefire work is also progressing, in areas such as:

- Elicitation of LEA requirements.
- Criminological analysis.
- Harmonization of international LEA procedures.
- Development of efficient inter-LEA information sharing tools.
- Development of AI tool for on-line data collection and analysis.
- Development of AI tools for off-line visual analysis.
- Ceasefire system specifications.

Ceasefire links

The project's dissemination channels will host regular updates on these critical aspects.

CEASEFIRE Web site:
<https://ceasefire-project.eu/>

CEASEFIRE LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ceasefireproject/>

CEASEFIRE Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/people/Ceasefire-Project/100089862614779/>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101073876.

Figure 17. Sample page from the 2nd CEASEFIRE newsletter.

Coordinating the Ceasefire endeavour

On July 4-5, 2023, the Ceasefire consortium held its 3rd physical plenary meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, organized by the project partner PSP (Polícia de Segurança Pública).

Ceasefire participants exchanged ideas, reviewed their progress and coordinated their efforts towards further advancing the development of the Ceasefire system. The discussions focused on enhancing collaboration and innovation to tackle the project's ambitious goals of facilitating the struggle against firearms trafficking, using advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI).



Figure 18. Sample page from the 3rd CEASEFIRE newsletter.

The 1st online Ceasefire training session for LEAs

The first CEASEFIRE online training session for Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) took place on December 12, 2023, focusing on familiarizing end-users with CEASEFIRE's AI-based tools and their application in combatting illegal firearms trafficking. This session, virtually attended by 32 people and organized by project partner IANUS, marked the beginning of a comprehensive series of modules, designed to empower LEAs with the expertise needed to effectively leverage cutting-edge technology in their operations.

Throughout the session, participants gained invaluable insights into the functionalities, applications, and capabilities of CEASEFIRE's advanced tools. Led by the project's technical partners, the training provided a detailed overview of the AI-based tools that form the foundation of the CEASEFIRE project, alongside discussions on the ethical and legal considerations surrounding their usage.

Attendees had the opportunity to develop a profound comprehension of the functionalities, applications, and capabilities of advanced CEASEFIRE tools, enhancing their awareness of how these tools



can positively influence law enforcement outcomes. Through guided exploration, they navigated the intricacies of CEASEFIRE's AI-driven technologies, acquiring the skills to seamlessly integrate these tools into their operational frameworks and gaining an understanding of the legal and ethical aspects associated with CEASEFIRE's AI-driven technologies.

The success of this training session underscores the consortium's commitment to equipping LEAs with the knowledge and tools necessary to combat illicit firearms trafficking effectively.

Figure 19. Sample page from the 4th CEASEFIRE newsletter.

3. Dissemination and communication activities

During the M1-M18 period of the project’s lifetime, the CEASEFIRE consortium partners engaged in intensive dissemination & communication efforts that can be divided into three categories: a) presence and/or presentations in end-user/industrial or scientific seminars, workshops, conferences and events that are related to firearms trafficking or relevant innovations/operations/training, b) peer-reviewed publications in proceedings of scientific conferences and in academic journals, via papers stemming from CEASEFIRE research, and c) events that have been organized by the CEASEFIRE project itself.

Most of these activities have been widely communicated via the projects dissemination avenues. Additionally, the involved partners posted information about them in their own on-line channels (WWW, social media). These activities are succinctly described in the following subsections.

3.1. Presence in end-user/industrial/scientific events

CEASEFIRE has been present and/or presented in 18 distinct events that have been organized by external security and academic stakeholders with an interest in firearms trafficking. In a subset of these events, multiple project partners were involved. Details are found in the following list.

1. CEASEFIRE was presented via **HUA** on February 7, 2023, in Athens, Greece, at the **2-day seminar “Modern technologies for combating terrorism financing”**, supported by the ISFP Sister Projects Anti-FinTer and CTC. A sample image is depicted in Figure 20.



Figure 20. CEASEFIRE in the “Modern technologies for combating terrorism financing” seminar.

2. On 14 March 2023, CEASEFIRE participated via **CERTH** and **HUA** in CERIS (the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security) FCT **workshop on “EUROPOL’s new role in Horizon Europe”**, in Brussels, Belgium. The goal was to facilitate networking and present the project to stakeholders. The event gathered 120 participants, including approximately 40 ongoing Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects, represented by researchers, engineers, police officers and industry. A sample image is depicted in Figure 21.



Figure 21. CEASEFIRE in the workshop on “EUROPOL’s new role in Horizon Europe”.

3. HUA presented CEASEFIRE at the **EMPACT Firearms strategic meeting**, taking place at the EUROPOL headquarters (The Hague, Netherlands) on June 15, 2023. Discussions paved the ground for future collaborations. A sample image is depicted in Figure 22.



Figure 22. CEASEFIRE in the “EMPACT Firearms strategic meeting”.

4. On 14-15 March 2023, CEASEFIRE consortium members participated via **CERTH, UCSC, IGP, PSP and FMI** in a meeting organized by the European Commission on the “**State of play and way forward on the establishment of National Firearms Focal Points and the standardization of data collection on firearms at EU level**”. This was a non-public EMPACT Firearms meeting which gathered approximately 40-50 participants and took place in Brussels, Belgium. On March 14, UCSC gave a presentation titled “**Synergies and coordination of EU-funded project CEASEFIRE with operational action on NFFPs in EMPACT Firearms. How this project can help MSs in the development of NFFPs**”. The aim of the presentation was to point out synergies between CEASEFIRE and EMPACT Firearms operational actions, especially the one related to NFFPs led by the European Commission. The meeting was also an occasion to interact with different LEAs and international organizations working in the firearms trafficking domain. A sample image is depicted in Figure 23.



Figure 23. CEASEFIRE in the “State of play and way forward on the establishment of National Firearms Focal Points and the standardization of data collection on firearms at EU level” meeting.

5. CEASEFIRE was represented by **CERTH** at the “**Projects to Policy Seminar**”, which took place in Brussels, Belgium, on June 14-15 2023. The seminar was organized by DG HOME and the European Research Executive Agency.
6. CEASEFIRE was presented by **CERTH** at the **European Association for Biometrics Research Project Conference (EAB-RPC 2023, September 18-20, Darmstadt, Germany)**. This is the largest event on EU-funded research in the area of Biometrics and Identity Management.
7. CEASEFIRE was presented by **CERTH** at a **Virtual Knowledge Hub** on-line meeting organized by Sister Project **Anti-FinTer** (November 7, 2023). The event attracted almost 40 participants.
8. CEASEFIRE was presented by **CERTH** and **TRI** at the **Law Enforcement Technology Symposium** in The Hague, the Netherlands, to an audience of law enforcement practitioners and policy-makers (8 December 2023). **CERTH** presented the technological design of the project’s applications and explained their functionality for law enforcement. **TRI** presented the ethical and legal frameworks underpinning the AI technologies developed, including the European Commission’s Guidelines for Trustworthy AI, as well as the EU’s AI Act and GDPR. **TRI** also introduced the work that is being carried out to assess social impact of CEASEFIRE technologies beyond the end-users. The presentations enjoyed audience interest and a lively discussion afterwards, with questions revolving around both the technical aspects of CEASEFIRE technologies and the challenges of investigating firearms trafficking. A sample image is depicted in Figure 24.

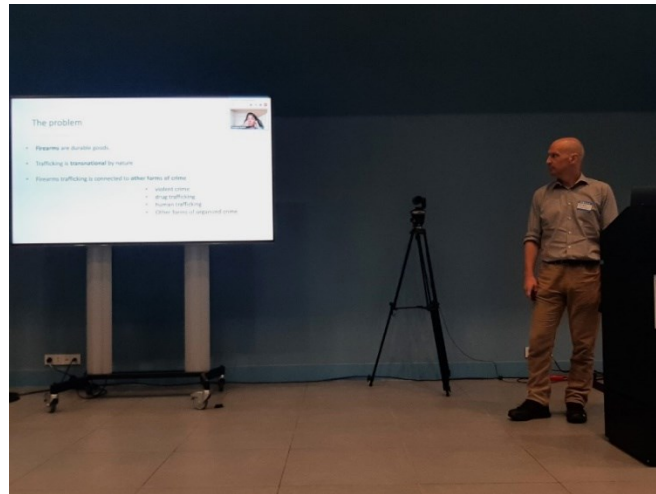


Figure 24. CEASEFIRE in the “Law Enforcement Technology Symposium”.

9. IASGDA provided the audience information on CEASEFIRE at the “**CELBET Training Workshop**”, which took place in Athens, Greece, on 21-24 March 2023. The meeting gathered about 30 representatives from countries participating in the CELBET Programme and a representative of the European Commission. CELBET (Customs Eastern and South-Eastern Land Border Expert Team) is an initiative of 11 EU Member States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece) that operates under the Customs 2020 programme. A sample image is depicted in Figure 25.



Figure 25. CEASEFIRE in the “CELBET Training Workshop”.

10. CEASEFIRE was presented by IASGDA at the “**Innovations in Public Administration - Big Data and Artificial Intelligence in Tax and Customs**” international professional and academic conference (Budapest, Hungary, May 3 2023). The conference was organized by World Customs Organization (WCO), Hungarian National Tax and Customs Administration and Hungarian National University of Public Service. There were participants from 36 countries (100 physical, 270 remote), including representatives of WCO, Intra-European Organisation of Tax Administrations (IOTA), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD).
11. On 9-10 May 2023, CEASEFIRE participated via UCSC, PSP and GPI at the **closing seminar event** of the EU-funded project “**Fight Organized Crime Against Light and Small Firearms**” (FOCAL-SF). The event took place in Bucharest, Romania, and was also attended

by European Commission, EMPACT Firearms, EFE, EUROPOL and INTERPOL representatives, as well as LEAs from different countries working in the firearms trafficking domain. The goal was not only to disseminate CEASEFIRE goals/results, but also to create synergies with FOCAL-SF. A sample image is depicted in Figure 26.



Figure 26. CEASEFIRE in the closing seminar event of the FOCAL-SF project.

12. CEASEFIRE was represented by UCSC at the **closing seminar** of the EU-funded ISF project **REGISYNC** (Brussels, Belgium, October 24, 2023). The seminar was attended approximately by 40 participants, including representatives of the European Commission, selected sister projects, LEAs, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, etc.
13. During 6 - 9 September 2023, UCSC attended the **Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology 2023** in Florence (Italy) (<https://eurocrim2023.com/>). This Annual Conference was attended by thousands of researchers and representatives of the academic community from all over the world. UCSC discussed results of research conducted within CEASEFIRE. The presentation was titled **“Exploring new trends and challenges in the illicit firearms trafficking in Europe”** and occurred in the panel on “Organized crime involvement in legal and illegal trades”. The possibility to present the results is granted upon acceptance of an abstract to be submitted some months before the conference. A sample image is depicted in Figure 27.



Figure 27. CEASEFIRE in the Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology.

14. During 15 - 18 November 2023, UCSC attended the **Annual Conference of the American Society of Criminology 2023** in Philadelphia (USA) (<https://asc41.com/events/asc-annual-meeting/>)¹. ASC is an international organization whose members pursue scholarly, scientific, and professional knowledge concerning the measurement, consequences, prevention, control, and treatment of crime and delinquency. Every year ASC organizes a very important event, the Annual Meeting, that all the academics/practitioners/experts/students in the field are invited to join to present their more recent studies on different criminological areas in order to share knowledge, trends, research results, create synergies with colleagues and receive feedback on their work. Marina Mancuso and Caterina Paternoster did a presentation titled “**Illicit Firearms Trafficking: An Exploratory Analysis Based on Text Analytics and Open Source Data**”. The presentation showed preliminary methodology and results of the study carried out as part of UCSC contribution to CEASEFIRE. The possibility to present the results is granted upon acceptance of an abstract to be submitted some months before the conference. A sample image is depicted in Figure 28.



Figure 28. CEASEFIRE in the Annual Conference of the American Society of Criminology.

15. GPI represented CEASEFIRE in the “**Handbook on Firearms**” workshop, organized by FRONTEX within the EU Security Hub, on 2-12 November, 2022 (Ungheni, Republic of Moldova). A sample image is depicted in Figure 29.



Figure 29. CEASEFIRE was present in the “Handbook on Firearms” workshop by Frontex.

¹ Authorization was granted by the PO for travelling outside the EU.

16. GPI represented CEASEFIRE in the **6th online meeting of the “Working group on operational results, information exchange and joint investigation team related to weapons, ammunition and explosives trafficking”**, organized by the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) on 20 April, 2023. A sample image is depicted in Figure 30.

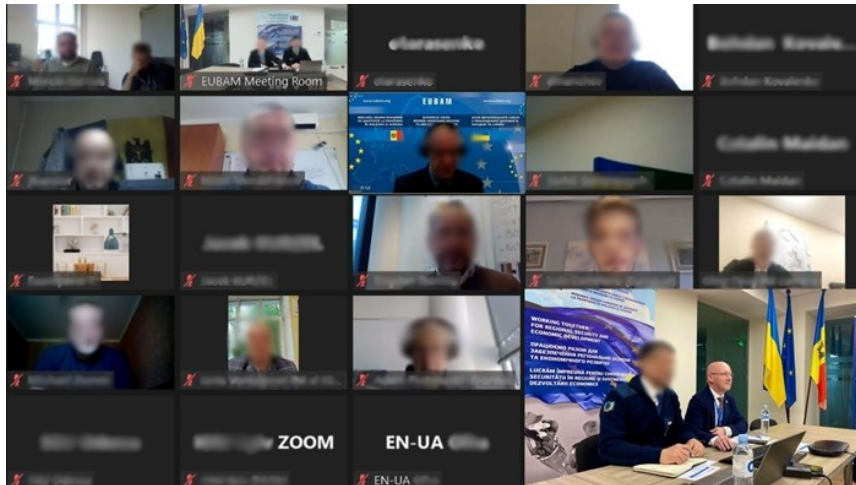


Figure 30. CEASEFIRE in the “Working group on operational results, information exchange and joint investigation team related to weapons, ammunition and explosives trafficking” by EUBAM.

17. GPI represented CEASEFIRE in the **“Training development workshop on illicit firearms trafficking investigation techniques”**, held under the auspices of CEPOL and EUROPOL in Warsaw, Poland (24-27 April, 2023). A sample image is depicted in Figure 31.



Figure 31. CEASEFIRE in the “Training development workshop on illicit firearms trafficking investigation techniques” by CEPOL and EUROPOL.

18. GPI represented CEASEFIRE on-line in the plenary meeting of the European Firearms Expert Group (EFE), organized from the 19 to the 21 of April 2023. A sample image is depicted in Figure 32.



Figure 32. CEASEFIRE-related content in an EFE plenary meeting.

3.2. Publications in proceedings of scientific conferences or in academic journals

CEASEFIRE innovation often necessitates research, unavoidably leading to novel scientific contributions that are being peer-reviewed and, if accepted, published in the form of papers within the proceedings of scientific conferences (following in-person presentation) or in academic journals. Many consortium partners have engaged in such activities during M1-M18 of the project's lifetime, with several of these papers having already been accepted/published.

The published CEASEFIRE papers are accessible via the project's WWW site, at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/scientific-publications/>. Below, in Table 1, follows a list of CEASEFIRE papers that, as of M18, have either been accepted/published, or are still under peer review after submission. Overall, **6 papers have already been accepted and another 4 papers are currently under review** (*Relevant KPI: At least 5 peer-review publications per year*).

No.	TYPE	AUTHORS	TITLE	STATUS
1	Conference paper	G. Batsis, I. Mademlis, G. Th. Papadopoulos	Illicit item detection in X-ray images for security applications	Accepted/ Presented
2	Conference paper	I. Mademlis, G. Batsis, A. A. R. Chrysochoou, G. Th. Papadopoulos	Visual inspection for illicit items in X-ray images using Deep Learning	Accepted/ Presented
3	Conference paper	S. Konstantakos, D. I. Chalkiadaki, I. Mademlis, A. A. R. Chrysochoou, G. Th. Papadopoulos	Self-supervised visual learning for analyzing firearms trafficking activities on the Web	Accepted/ Presented
4	Conference paper	A. K. Blitsi, G. Stavropoulos, K. Votis	Vision Paper: Uncovering Illegal Firearm Transactions in Cryptocurrency Networks	Accepted/ Presented

5	Conference paper	M. Makrynioti, C. Porlou, A. Alexiadis, G. Stavropoulos, K. Votis, D. Tzouvaras	Unveiling Conversational Patterns: Intent Classification and Clustering in Reddit's Firearm Trade Community	Accepted/ Presented
6	Conference paper	G. Chatzimarkaki, S. Karagiorgou, M. Konidi, D. Alexandrou, T. Bouras, S. Evangelatos	Harvesting Large Textual and Multimedia Data to Detect Illegal Activities on Dark Web Marketplaces	Accepted/ Presented
7	Conference paper	T. Malon, S. Chambon, A. Crouzil, L. Lechelek, G. Jalabert, C. Brocard, N. Bernadeau, L. Abadie, B. Sera, T. Hartmann, M. Le Bras	Ceasefire Hierarchical Weapon Dataset	Submitted/ Under review
8	Conference paper	C. Andreeva, F. Trevisan, G. Anagnostaki	Investigating firearms trafficking in Europe: tackling old issues with new structures?	Submitted/ Under review
9	Conference paper	J. Cani, I. Mademlis, A. A. R. Chrysochoou, G. Th. Papadopoulos	Illicit object detection in X-ray images using Vision Transformers	Submitted/ Under review
10	Journal article	I. Mademlis, M. Mancuso, C. Paternoster, S. Evangelatos, E. Finlay, J. Hughes, P. Radoglou-Grammatikis, P. Sarigiannidis, G. Stavropoulos, K. Votis and G. Th. Papadopoulos	The invisible arms race: digital trends in illicit goods trafficking and AI-enabled responses	Submitted/ Under review

Table 1. A list of CEASEFIRE papers that have been accepted and/or submitted to peer-reviewed venues.

3.3. Events organized by CEASEFIRE

During M1-M18, one CEASEFIRE event has been organized by project partners. In the context of the scientific conference IEEE BigData 2023 (15-18 December 2023, Sorrento, Italy), CERTH organized and chaired the physical “**Big Data Applications for Fight Against Crime and Terrorism**” (BDA4FCT) workshop, which attracted a total of 10 papers and a peak attendance of approximately 50 people (*Relevant KPI1: at least 2 special sessions co-organized with international conferences, within the entire project's lifetime*) (*Relevant KPI2: at least 2 public events to be held within the entire project's lifetime, organized by partners FMI and PSP*).

IEEE BigData is a premier international forum with a specific focus on technologies related to the use, storing, processing, and validating large collections of data. In the current information age, Big Data can be utilized in the fight against crime and terrorism by using machine learning and other methods to process the data and extract suspicious activities.

The BDA4FCT workshop brought together researchers from academia, industry, government, and LEAs that presented the state of the art and discussed the latest advances in the area of the application of Big Data for crime and terrorism activities' detection and prevention as well as border checks/management. The workshop covered the whole range of theoretical and practical aspects, related to the application of Big Data technologies

and methods in the fight against crime and terrorism. The official Web page of the BDA4FCT workshop can be found at the URL <https://bda4fct.iti.gr/>. Sample images from the event are depicted in Figure 32.



Figure 33. Sample images from the CEASEFIRE-organized BDA4FCT workshop (IEEE BigData 2023).

The BDA4FCT workshop brought CEASEFIRE into close contact with external academic/industry researchers that are active in various areas of the wider security domain. This is evident from the list of non-CEASEFIRE papers that were accepted and presented there, which can be seen in Table 2.

No.	AUTHORS	TITLE
1	A.A.A. Odaini, F. Zola, L. Segurolo, A. Gil, C. D’Andrea	Cybersecurity in public space: Leveraging CNN and LSTM for Proactive Multivariate Time Series Classification
2	A. Calo, M. Lia, M. Zappatore, A. Longo	Visual data engineering for conflict and terrorism prediction
3	S. Evangelatos, T. Papadakis, N. Gousetis, C. Nikolopoulos, P. Troulitaki, N. Dimakopoulos, G. Bravos, M.V.L. Giudice, A. Shadma, A. Aziani	The nexus between Big Data analytics and the proliferation of fake news as a precursor to online and offline criminal activities
4	L. Kaati, A. Shrestha, N. Akrami	General Risk Index: A measure for predicting violent behavior through written communication
5	K. Miniadou, E. Kyriakou, S. Tzagkarakis, A. Leonidis, G. Th. Papadopoulos, C. Stefanidis	Investigating visual analytics against terrorist financing in Dark Web marketplaces

Table 2. A list of non-CEASEFIRE papers that were presented in the BDA4FCT workshop.

4. Community-building efforts

In the context of T9.2, CEASEFIRE is committed to building a **Community of internal and external stakeholders** (e.g., LEAs, LEA user communities, security-related EU/national/international bodies and initiatives, related EC-funded research projects, SMEs active in security products/services, etc.) that are relevant to the project goals and can benefit from its results. Towards this direction, two concrete steps have been taken during M1-M18 of the project's lifetime:

- a) A **Community mailing list** has been set-up, which also serves as a **subscription service** for interested individuals and organizations to receive CEASEFIRE updates.
- b) A set of relevant, active security-oriented research & innovation projects have been contacted and adopted as **Sister Projects**.

These activities are described succinctly in the following subsections.

4.1. Community mailing list

A Community mailing list has been set-up and has been continuously operating since M5. **82 individuals have subscribed to it as of M18**. Any interested stakeholder is welcome to join in order to receive regular updates, news and invitations from the wider security ecosystem. Joining is done by signing up at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/community/>, with admission subject to approval by list administrators. All personal data is kept internally within CEASEFIRE, adhering to the highest privacy standards. PSP has supervised the initial recruitment of stakeholders, while HUA is operating/moderating the list from a technical perspective.

This Community mailing list can be used by any participating member, irrespectively to whether they belong to the CEASEFIRE consortium or not, for:

- a) Dissemination of events of wide interest.
- b) Sharing public project updates.
- c) Soliciting feedback.
- d) Facilitating collaboration.
- e) Identifying potential partners.
- f) Conducting surveys or polls.

Any member of the list can post a message of wide significance/interest, by sending an e-mail to the Community's address (subject to approval by administrators). Before posting, members are encouraged to: i) accurately specify the topic of the message in its subject, ii) ensure that the content of the message is indeed widely useful and interesting to the majority of the Community. Up to M18, CEASEFIRE has exploited the list mainly for disseminating communication material and project updates, for publicizing events, as well as for inviting external stakeholders as volunteers for its on-line training activity "*CEASEFIRE Tools & Use Cases Demonstration-Part A-Online Training*" (taking place at M19 of the project).

At M18, the **CEASEFIRE Community list subscribers come from different 39 organizations: 13 internal stakeholders** that participate in the project consortium (CERTH, HUA, UCSC, IANUS, FMI, MOI-MK, GPI, MUP-RS, PSP, SLP, IASGDA, KWPG, MIRPN) and **26 external ones** (*Relevant KPI: >40 stakeholder organizations in the CEASEFIRE community by the end of the project's lifetime*). The participating external stakeholders include other security-oriented EC-funded or national R&D projects, research organizations, national Ministries of Interior, Financial Intelligence Units or Police Forces of EU MSs, as well as **11 relevant broad, international LEA user communities, organizations, established bodies or institutes** that are relevant to illicit firearms trafficking (EACTDA, ENLETS, EFE, UNODC, INTERPOL, SEESAC, EMPACT Firearms, SIPRI, Small Arms Survey, GLOBSEC, El Pacto) (*Relevant KPI: At least 5 relevant LEA communities to connect by the end of the project's lifetime*).

4.2. Sister Projects

A second, complementary approach to tackling the goal of building a strong CEASEFIRE Community has been to closely interact with a circle of so-called “Sister Projects”. A set of active EC-funded or national R&D security-oriented projects that overlap with CEASEFIRE themes have been approached and registered as Sister Projects, within the period M5-M18 of the project’s lifetime. As of M18, **7 projects have been linked to the CEASEFIRE Community** (*Relevant KPI: Cooperation/liaison with at least 5 projects from the 1st year of the project*). They are the following ones:

- a) Cut The Cord (CTC), accessible at the URL <https://ctc-project.eu/>.
- b) TRACE, accessible at the URL <https://trace-illicit-money-flows.eu/>.
- c) Anti-FinTer, accessible at the URL <https://anti-finter.eu/>.
- d) ARIZONA.
- e) CosmoPort, accessible at the URL <https://cosmoport.ai/>.
- f) BAG-INTEL, accessible at the URL <https://www.bag-intel.eu/>.
- g) VIGILANT, accessible at the URL <https://www.vigilantproject.eu/>.

These 7 projects are publicly designated as CEASEFIRE Sister Projects at the URL <https://ceasefire-project.eu/community/>, where a short description, a logo and WWW/social media (where available) are provided for each of them. Out of these, 6 are EC-funded and one (i.e., ARIZONA) is nationally funded by the German Federal Government. HUA retains individual contact points within each of these Sister Projects, while a subset of them have reciprocally designated CEASEFIRE as their own Sister Project.

Up to M18, interactions with Sister Projects have concentrated on **joint dissemination efforts** and on communicating each project’s aims and outreach material (e.g., newsletters, invitations, etc.) to the other project’s consortium. Sister Project contacts have also been encouraged to individually **sign up to the CEASEFIRE Community list**, so that they can post and receive dissemination messages on their own. Additionally, CERTH has **presented CEASEFIRE at a Virtual Knowledge Hub** on-line meeting organized by Sister Project Anti-FinTer (see Section 3.1), while **ARIZONA has been remotely/virtually presented** in the 4th CEASEFIRE physical plenary meeting at Toulouse, France (30 November - 1 December 2023). Finally, ARIZONA representatives are currently under discussions for **future technical knowhow exchange** with CEASEFIRE’s WP4 participants, due to complementary research objectives.

Besides knowhow exchange and further joint dissemination, future plans for the third year of CEASEFIRE’s lifetime also include the possibility of **events/workshops jointly organized with willing Sister Projects**, with certain early preliminary discussions having already taken place towards this goal. All such results of community-building efforts shall be appropriately reported in D9.3.

5. Conclusions/Future work

CEASEFIRE outreach activities have mostly progressed well and according to the outreach plan that has been drafted. Most of the relevant KPIs per the GA have been reached by M18; a subset of them have in fact exceeded the quantitative target corresponding to the period M1-M18, or even the target set for the project's final month. The project's presence in events/seminars/workshops has been strong during the reporting period (18 CEASEFIRE participations in total), while academic dissemination has also advanced satisfactorily via 10 paper submissions/publications/presentations in peer-reviewed scientific conferences and journals. Community-building efforts have proceeded effectively, via the Community mailing list and interactions with other related R&D projects: 82 individuals from 39 stakeholder organizations have subscribed to the list and 7 other R&D endeavors have been designated as Sister Projects, as of M18.

The CEASEFIRE Community mailing list, the CEASEFIRE Web site and the 3 CEASEFIRE social media accounts have been exploited consistently for project outreach purposes, with the LinkedIn, Facebook and X/Twitter accounts having collectively gained 278 followers by M18. Communication material (e.g., project newsletters, blog posts, news updates) has been widely disseminated via all such channels, with the Community mailing list in particular acting as an on-line subscription service. The frequency of publishing such material is expected to increase after M18, given that all project activities have intensified and the project's intermediate technical milestones are being reached during the period M15-M19.

Future work in the context of T9.1-T9.2 will concentrate on the following three axes:

- a) Improving outreach in those aspects where current quantitative performance metrics are lower as of M18. Thus, communication material publication frequency will increase (e.g., project newsletters), while more emphasis will be placed on popularizing the project's Facebook and X/Twitter accounts (given that 230 out of the 278 current followers of the project on social media are in LinkedIn).
- b) Deepening the cooperation with existing Sister Projects, according to the directions that have already been discussed in a preliminary fashion.
- c) Implementing certain KPIs that have not yet been met, namely:
 - *Public events to be held: at least 2 (organized by partners FMI and PSP) by the end of the project's lifetime.*
 - *Number of special sessions co-organized within international conferences: at least 2 by the end of the project's lifetime.* The current status is that 1 such event has been organized until M18 (BDA4FCT workshop at the IEEE BigData 2023 international conference).
 - *Free trials for the general public: at least 4 by the end of the project's lifetime.*
 - *Stakeholder organizations in the CEASEFIRE community by the end of the project's lifetime: >40.* The current status is that 39 stakeholders participate in the Community as of M18.

Simultaneously, future effort will be devoted to achieving further progress in all other relevant KPIs as well, such as continuing to expand the Community mailing list, submitting scientific publications, attracting new visitors to the CEASEFIRE Web site, etc. Additionally, the Dissemination Pack will be augmented with a short film (to be uploaded to YouTube), summarizing the project's concept, use-cases and initial results.

D9.3, to be submitted on M36, will report on all outreach activities that will take place during the period M19-M36.