

# Management Reports 2012

Guardia Urbana Police Force of Barcelona

# BCN







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Barcelona, 2013

Public safety has become one of the **strategic pillars of Barcelona's City Council** during this term of office.

Thus, with the start of this new term of office in 2011, one of the most significant features introduced in 2012 was the change in its upper management as well for many other features of the GUB's management. This led to the **restructuring of the GUB's chain of command** and a new redistribution of district superintendents and specialised units. Of particular importance was the new approach of the Local Police's vision of service, strengthening and increasing actions and the collaboration in public safety matters as a clear and specific function of the Force beyond its usual, close collaboration with the Generalitat Police – the Mossos d'Esquadra.

This new approach is core to **Barcelona's Plan for Public Safety** for 2012-2015 and was presented by the local Government at the Plenary Session.

**The new plan implies a review and adaptation to today's social and economic context in order to meet the current challenges of the Catalanian capital.**

Its main goal is to make sure that the public feels safe in the city of Barcelona in addition to a commitment to reducing crime and increasing the perception of safety. We are aware that a balance between preparedness, prevention and reaction, together with the use of the proper resources, will allow us to better tackle two types of phenomena that are causing a deep sense of insecurity for the public: those of lower impact, but which are very common (e.g. theft on the metro), and those of higher impact but which, fortunately, occur less frequently (e.g. robberies involving violence and intimidation).





The plan is based on applying safety by integrating police policies with others which foster coexistence, participation and the peaceful solution of conflicts by improving safety, and the perception of it, in neighbourhoods. It also involves increasing preventive action for shops, tourism and schools, as well as incorporating safety concepts into the policies of different spheres of the municipal council. This is a commitment to strengthen permanent collaboration with associations and neighbourhood groups, neighbourhood trade associations and those involved in tourism.

Therefore, **in 2012, a move to improve public safety was consolidated.**

Analysing the 2012 results of this new approach, it can be seen that the indicators of our safety system for that year, presented by the **Local Safety Board of Barcelona** and presided by the city's Mayor, show a drop in crime in the city and an improvement in safety on a general level. This shows that the introduction of this new line of approach is correct and that we must continue with it, adding, of course, any necessary and appropriate improvements.

In 2012 there were 3,000 fewer arrests than the previous year, and calls made to 092 reporting problems, as well as incidents managed by the SCC dropped significantly, in particular during the second half of the year.

## GUB's greater involvement regarding public safety has served to strengthen the service on public streets offered by the GP-ME Force.

Greater collaboration and teamwork have made these improvements possible, and not only will they continue but they will be ever more important and usual.

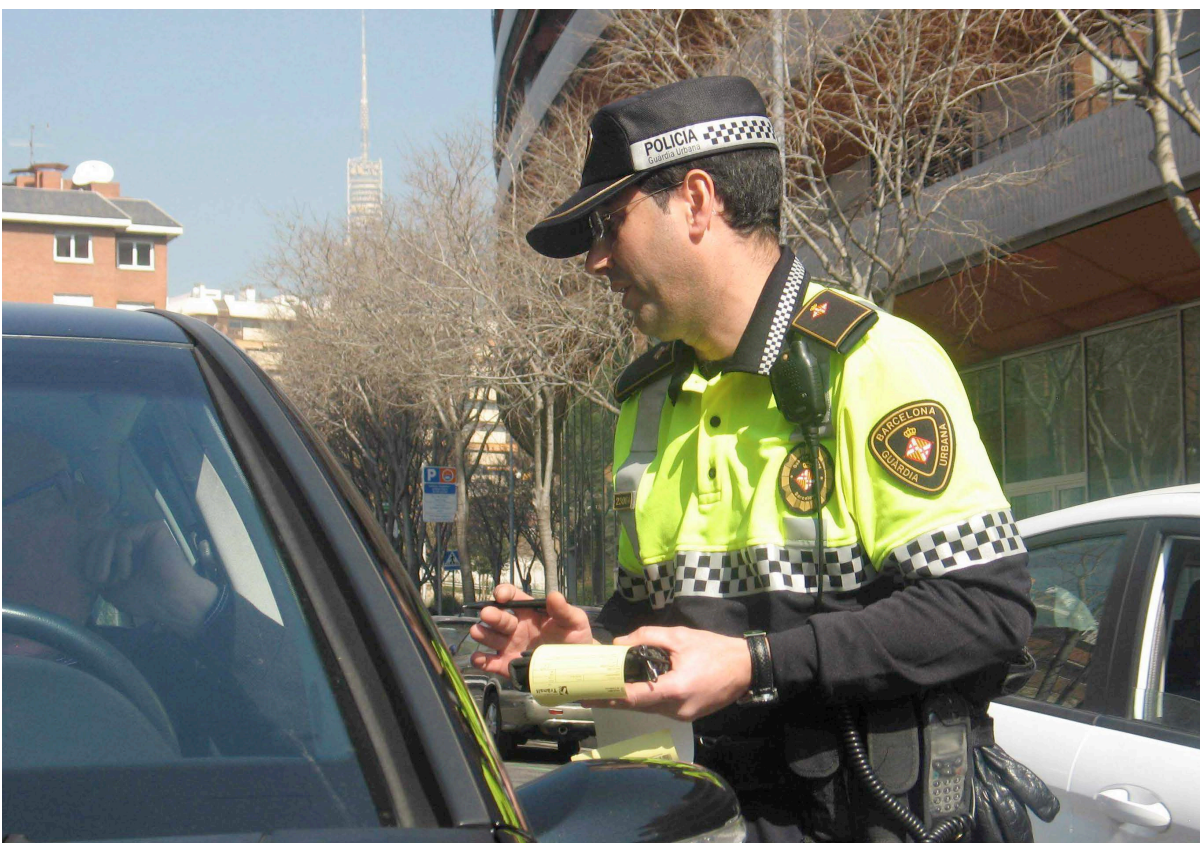
The public's assessment likewise confirms this analysis, which, in 2012 was slightly better than that recorded in 2011, and is in line with that of the past five years. Thus, we found that in 2012, with respect to the assessment regarding the level of safety in the city, **perception increased** from 5.4 in 2011 to 5.6 in 2012. When the survey was conducted at a neighbourhood level, this improvement was maintained and went from 6.2 to 6.3.

The **Survey on victimisation** in Barcelona (in 2012 with data from 2011) reflects an increase in the perception of safety both at a neighbourhood level as well as at a city level, and also reflects a downward trend in the number of people who say they have been victims of crime. Furthermore, and for the first time since 2009, the locals of Ciutat Vella have approved the level of safety in the neighbourhood. The perception of levels of civic-mindedness in the city also experienced a slight increase, going from 5.9 to 6 in the case of neighbourhoods and from 5.5 to 5.6 in the case of the city.

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The rate of victimisation for the inhabitants of Barcelona is 24.2%, a figure which implies a decrease of 0.6% with respect to the previous year. The crime rate also dropped, from 35.7% to 33.2%.

The rate of victimisation has fallen although no changes have been made to the legal framework. We have carried out the duties assigned to us. Now, work needs to continue so that this change in trend continues into next year.

The 2012 **Municipal Omnibus** survey likewise points out that 78% of the inhabitants of Barcelona who were interviewed, saw the Guardia Urbana in their neighbourhood over the last week, the highest figure since 2004. In fact, this implies a 17% increase over the figures obtained in September of last year, and 11% over those of last December. The districts of Ciutat Vella, Nou Barris and Les Corts are those that state they have seen the Guardia Urbana the most in their neighbourhoods.

Another key aspect, implemented and improved over 2012, and which has been very successful is the close collaboration between the police forces of the city: the Mossos and the Local Police. With regard to this point, special mention should be given to **operation Xarxa**, which has adapted itself to needs that have arisen since its inception and has established itself as an important joint operation. Since July 2011, crimes recorded on the metro have dropped nearly 19% thanks to the efficiency of this unit. We hope that the new units, such as the group that works in theft prevention on the Bus Turístic or on the TMB ones, will further help improve safety on public transport.



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As mentioned above, we are only moderately satisfied despite good results, but we want to avoid talking about success because there is still much work to do. We can see that prevention work by the police forces is giving positive results, and therefore, we must continue along these lines. We thus work actively to improve these rates and we cannot lower our guard. With the addition of new agents (**145 members** in July), the implementation of new units, new operations and a more efficient distribution of services in line with the reality of today's society, we believe that results will improve even more.

**One of the improvements in GUB operations in 2012 which we believe has played one of the biggest roles in improving safety in the city was the launch of the new group of 70 beach agents**

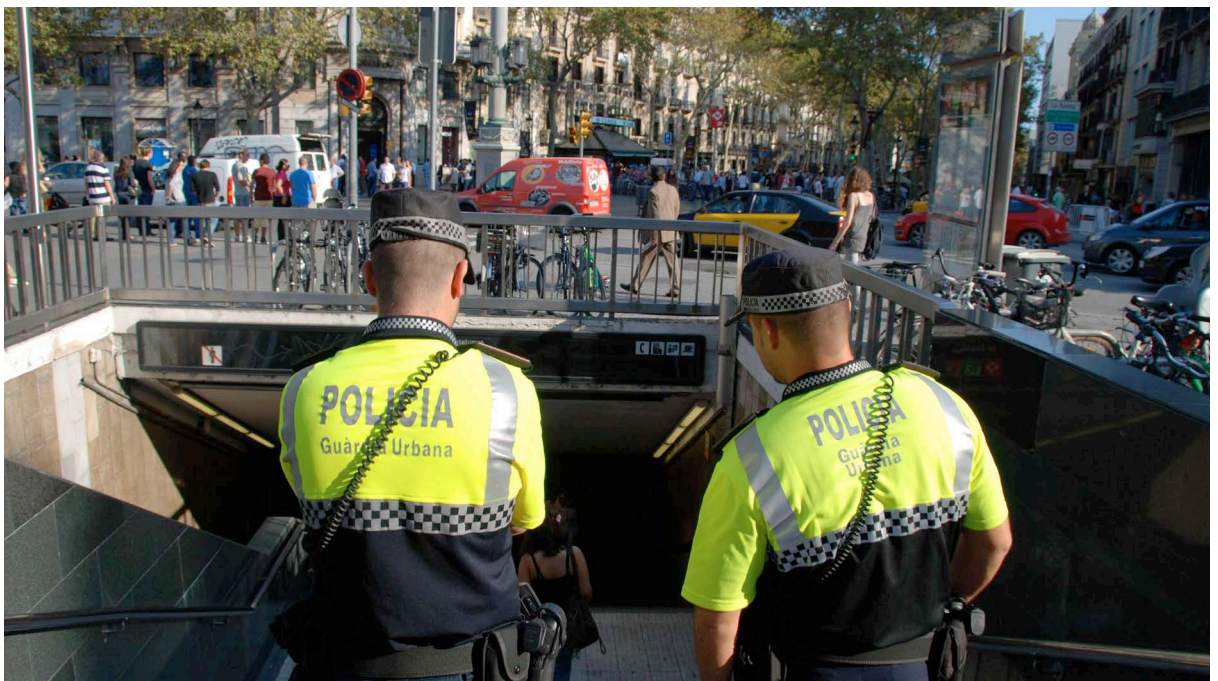
to improve public safety and reinforce the fight against all conduct in violation of bylaws regarding Barcelona's beaches. The assessment was, without a doubt, very positive (a 15% drop in crime on the beaches, an 11.4% rise in reporting illegal street trade on the beaches and a 300.9% rise related to unauthorised services offered in public spaces, such as massages), and we are already working to continue this in 2013, expanding and improving our human and technical resources.

In view of the above-mentioned committed approach, and with regard to commerce in the city, in 2012 we launched a new and **specific operation** with increased surveillance in mobile-phone shops and those buying/selling gold, which from the second half of the year onwards showed a downward trend in theft on the street and in shops.

In 2012, and this is another significant focus of our intervention, we put more pressure on illegal street trading in public spaces. As the data from **Operation Mestral** shows, results were very positive, with increased interventions and better outcomes. It should be pointed out that the problem regarding illegal street trade, not only focuses on the seller but also on the dealer. In this regard, in 2012 we carried out interventions such as, for example over 178,000 cans of illegally sold drinks at various premises in Ciutat Vella, Sants-Montjuïc and Sant Martí.

In 2012, a change of strategy was decided upon regarding two types of **unlawful activity in public spaces**, which could be described as being very complex given their legal lack of clarity. Firstly, prostitution (with an emphasis on cracking down on demand as well as on organisations that extort women), and secondly the shell game (with a change that would accuse those involved as being part of organised crime).

The amendment of the **Citizenship Ordinance** (decisively approved in a Plenary Session to make prostitution more difficult and ban it in public places) on **sex work**, which came into effect in August – although during the first few weeks the **Agency for a Comprehensive Approach to Sex Work (ABITS)** and the GUB, carried out an informative campaign – made our work easier as it allowed more severe sanctions to be applied on customers and those who benefit from street prostitution. This new approach, with the clear aim of protecting women who are obliged to go into prostitution, strengthened the investigation of the fight against sexual exploitation and human trafficking networks thanks to collaboration with other police forces.





Regarding the **shell game**, work continued in 2012 to reduce its presence on public streets (in particular on Las Ramblas), and intervention regarding it was increased from a criminal point of view in order to ensure verdicts that demonstrate that it is not only a phenomenon on a municipal level but is clearly an element of organised crime. With this in mind, the City Council carried out an informative campaign on the phenomenon of the shell game to prevent people, who are unaware of this illegal practice, from participating in it.

One of the critical places in Barcelona is **Ciutat Vella**. The GUB earmarks considerable effort and resources to this neighbourhood, considered to be a “special” area at operational level, but we were able to reduce crime by 7% (more than the 4.3% average for the entire city). Preventive patrolling, more police presence and actions to increase safety in Ciutat Vella made it possible for a significant drop in theft and crime to be seen in 2012 compared to 2011.

**For the first time since 2009, the locals of Ciutat Vella showed satisfaction with the level of safety of their neighbourhood, which shows that our work is both well-planned and on the right track.**

In addition, to improve the coexistence of those living in the neighbourhood with the **area’s nightlife** (e.g. The Triàngulo Lúdico in Poblenou), we implemented a specific work plan to try to reduce the level of noise and ensure safety and respect for civic regulations on the street during the night.





One of the aspects regarding safety where we did not get the results we had hoped for in 2012 was in relation to **road accidents**. The increase in the number of traffic accidents (+4.8% overall and +6% with victims) is not satisfactory.

As our Deputy Mayor, Mr Joaquim Forn, said, the figures for road accidents were very high and more work needs to be done to reduce them.

In 2012, the Guardia Urbana intervened in a total of 9,255 traffic accidents in the city, 8,416 of which included victims. In total 10,985 people were injured (249 were seriously injured and 10,736 suffered minor injuries), 7.39% more than in 2011. However, comparing this evolution from 2000 until today, we recorded 3,831 injuries less than twelve years ago.

The data are consistent with the overall increase in accidents that have been recorded on the roads in Catalonia and the rest of the country.

It should also be pointed out that in 2012 there was a decline of 6.16% in the number of accidents that involved mopeds. However, there were more motorcycles involved in accidents (7.11% more) and most of them were caused by failure to obey traffic light signals, followed by carelessness.

Drink driving was, once again, the main indirect cause of accidents, but there were 7.07% fewer cases. In this regard, in 2012, the Guardia Urbana carried out a total of 118,854 breathalyser tests and 1,758 drug tests, in other words, 55% more than during the previous year.

224,350 penalisations were also filed for speeding, 27.5% more than in 2011.

It should be said that this is a complex phenomenon that requires the involvement of all the players involved, as well as society which has to be aware of the danger of conduct that contravenes traffic regulations and which endangers other road users.

In 2012, the Guardia Urbana launched 14 campaigns to increase road safety and gave road-use lectures to both children and the elderly. Halfway through the year, the City Council initiated a number of measures to curb the number of people being run over. The number of reports of drivers not respecting pedestrian crossings rose, and a review of more than 15,000 of these pedestrian crossings was begun.

Accidents and road safety in general became one of our focal points. We work in close collaboration with the department for municipal mobility, and are totally committed to constantly looking for the best ways to try and reduce these figures.

Throughout 2012, we set up a number of **campaigns or specific operations**, working in the area of prevention to anticipate problems, a key aspect in public and road safety. The following should be highlighted:

- Summer operation (from the 15th of June to the 30th of September).
- Campaign for school transport safety in the city.
- Campaign to protect motorcyclists and pedestrians.
- Campaign to ensure proper road use by groups of tourists on bikes.
- Operation around schools, increasing our presence to guarantee traffic flow and safety.
- Training sessions for the elderly to increase preventive actions regarding their safety.
- Fairground checks to ensure safety and compliance with regulations.
- Campaign to guarantee toy safety.
- Safer Christmas season.

To end this short review of the most significant aspects of 2012, we would like to mention that our most complex interventions regarding public safety have, to a certain extent, contributed to strengthening our strategic metropolitan role which was implemented to be in close proximity to the public. This kind of **success** has repercussions on an operative level which we call “city level impact”, and therefore they are specifically designed operations which take into account the collaboration of other law enforcement and emergency bodies, as the impact is usually very high:

- Safety plan for the 2012 Mobile World Congress (crime related to the MWC dropped by 43%).
- European Central Bank Summit.
- General strikes (29th March and 14th November).

In terms of **social responsibility**, we would like to end this report highlighting some of the innovative initiatives and best practices introduced in 2012 that define us as a vibrant organisation, committed to Barcelona’s citizens:

- **The Commission for Women’s Equality within the GUB:** 6th of June, Barcelona’s City Council, via a Mayoral Decree, set up this committee in order to promote the inclusion of women in our Force and improve their internal promotion up the chain of command. In the new intake of agents in 2012, women accounted for 21%.
- **Social networks:** the GUB set up a Twitter account and by the end of 2012, had over 4,000 followers.
- **Electric mobility:** In 2012 the Guardia Urbana added 55 new motor scooters to its fleet, 2 of which are electric.



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Without being smug given the positive data in this report, the GUB has set major new **challenges ahead for 2013**. Priorities include:

- Managing the incorporation of new agents into the Force to maintain a quantitative balance of its workforce.
- Setting up an Investigation Unit to collaborate with the PG-ME in the fight against persistent reoffences linked to theft.
- Taking part in the creation of the 2013-2016 Local Plan for Road Safety to contribute to the introduction of measures to help reduce the number of traffic accidents.
- Explore and set up improvements in the organisation of services in order to better suit the real needs and demands of Barcelona's citizens, with the aim of improving results in a more efficient way.

Our goal for the coming years is to be closer and more accessible to the public by increasing the presence of the GUB in every neighbourhood as well as in public spaces where large numbers of both locals and tourists converge.

Another area of improvement that concerns us is **reducing the number of traffic accidents**, especially regarding the most vulnerable members of the public such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists. To do this, we will create **awareness campaigns** and will continue to inform the public of the real consequences that offences generate via bulletins on offences. In addition we will continue with the inspection of more than **15,000 pedestrian crossings**.

Throughout 2013 we have launched various special operations specifically focusing on **combatting illegal street trade**. We will continue this work which has given good results in order to minimise unlawful activities that adversely affect the image and the local economy of the city.

Finally, we would like to mention the total **integration of the GUB into the 112 service**, an important step in the improvement of the high level of coordination between the police forces and emergency services. Citizens, therefore, now have a single telephone number for reporting incidents and the duplication of services is thus avoid; decision time is shorter and human and technical resources are distributed and allocated more efficiently.





