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## News

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### Breakthrough in EU-funded Optix project in explosion detection

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The Optix consortium has successfully developed and tested a portable prototype capable of detecting extremely small quantities of explosives at a 20-metre distance, providing police and security forces with an invaluable asset in the fight against bomb attacks.

No other research organisation or company has to date achieved similar results which places the European industry in an unprecedented position to bring the technology to market. The Optix consortium has received € 2.4 million in funding from the EU Commission and is led by Spanish consultancy and technology multinational Indra.

"Not only would security be enhanced, but the inconvenience for citizens would be reduced significantly through the use of a non-invasive and non-hazardous explosive detection system," explained Indra Security Director, Alberto Calvo.

The system makes use of advanced optic technology which thanks to lasers can precisely identify the atomic and molecular structure of explosives. The device can rapidly and remotely scan an object and pick up trace residue. It is virtually impossible to handle explosives and transport them without leaving a trace since residue adheres to the surface of the objects that transport them, as well as the hands of the people who handle them and whatever they touch.

To make the system portable, it will be integrated into a wheeled platform that can be transported in a standard-sized van to the area to be patrolled.

The Optix prototype has already been successfully tested in laboratory and outdoor environments, simulated real-life situations and in various weather conditions. Further trials are planned to increase the sensitivity, precision and robustness of the system before making it available to European police and security forces. Commercialisation of the system would have the dual benefit of improving the security of citizens and the competitiveness of Europe's industry, making the continent less reliant on imported technology.

The Optix consortium shows interesting capabilities in other areas, in particular the field of forensic investigations. To guarantee the programme's success, an effort has been made to actively involve end users, European forces and security bodies specialised in detecting and neutralising explosive artefacts. Optix is one of many security projects receiving support through European Union R&D programmes.