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UNI europa attends Private Security Submit

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Last week, UNI europa participated in the second Private Security Summit held on behalf of CoESS in Stockholm to discuss the issue of private-public partnerships in the private security sector.

The summit brought together stakeholders from all areas of the private security sector to launch a new white paper on private security in Europe entitled 'Public-Private security partnership as a way to the future'. The white paper presents the 'Nordic Model of Public-Private Partnership' as a transferable model for the European private security sector. The paper was presented by the General Secretary of the Swedish employers association ALMEGA, who stressed the importance of social dialogue to improve cooperation between social partners on quality and standards, legislation, health and safety issues and using collective agreements as a regulatory instrument. He also presented the partnership possibilities between the private security sector and the public sector for example in the protection of public buildings, securing crime scenes and scenes of accidents and in carrying out alcohol tests for drivers.

Bernadette Ségol, UNI europa's regional secretary, took part in the summit's central debate. During her intervention, Ms Ségol emphasized the positive aspects 'framework harmonisation' between EU member states could bring in terms of raising industry standards in areas such as training, working conditions and licensing as well as stressing the need to promote European unity in order to work together to maintain an upwards trends in social progress. She confirmed UNI europa's support for the exclusion of the private security sector from the Services directive on grounds of the specificities of the sector which require greater protection for workers and the general public and in turn more regulation. She concluded by underlining that while she recognized the positive role the private security sector could play in some areas of public service, a clear balance needed to be found to ensure that key public services did not become too liberalised as this would lead to a reduction in accountability of the services and a lack of control by the state.

The Swedish Transport Workers Union, UNI europa's Swedish affiliate for the private security sector, was represented by Lars Lindgren who in his intervention underlined the necessity of improving the professional status of workers in the sector achieved through improved training, higher wages and more advanced tasks to stimulate and interest private security staff. He emphasized that clear boundaries needed to be drawn between the activities of the private security sector and those of the State with distinct limits to the authority of the private security companies. Good rules and regulations as well as continuous dialogue between the Government, unions and companies, he argued were also all crucial to ensure the protection of workers and the general public.

More details can be found on the CoESS website below:

<http://www.coess.eu/Stockholm2009/index.htm>