Underlining the importance of basic training for private security guards in general and for private security guards operating in ISPS-compliant\(^1\) areas in particular

A position paper by the Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS)

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) is the European umbrella organisation for 30 national private security companies’ associations. It was founded in 1989. CoESS is the only representative European employers’ organisation defending the interests of the private security industry and is recognised by the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) as a European sectoral social partner in accordance with the European Treaties.

CoESS represents 21 EU Member States and a total of 28 countries, which translates into some 50,000 private security companies employing a total of approximately 1.7 million private security guards. The European private security industry generates a yearly turnover of around \(\text{€} 23\) billion Euros.

Introduction

In most European countries, private security legislation is in place defining several criteria which must be fulfilled before an individual is allowed to perform guarding activities and private security services. Once these criteria are fulfilled, this individual is officially authorised by a competent authority to perform such activities.

One of these prerequisites is basic training for private security guards, usually, but not exclusively, administered by the government of a Member State or by an officially licensed or recognised training institute. This basic guard training covers chapters related to the basic legal framework in a Member State, security procedures, health and safety provisions, conflict management, customer care and communication, quality, first aid and other indispensable information and skills.

A second prerequisite includes a background screening of criminal records.

Both criteria ensure that private security staff performing private security services is equipped with the relevant skills and know-how and is familiar with the basic ‘rules of engagement’ when accessing

the profession. They also ensure that private security guards comply with public expectation of how they should serve society as a whole.

In addition to basic guard training, a great number of additional specialised training requirements exist, mainly depending on the specific environment in which a private security guard carries out his/her duties, e.g. shopping centres, alarm receiving centres, airports, ports etc. In order to be able to perform private security services in these specific areas – often part of a Member State’s national critical infrastructure – most of these additional specialised training courses are also obligatory by law.

**ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas**

The European Union, based upon the work of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), issued a number of regulations and recommendations aimed at considerably improving maritime security. These are included in an international agreement, the International Convention for the Safety of Lives at Sea (SOLAS)\(^2\) and the accompanying Code, the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code or ISPS Code, which is embodied in EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004.

The ISPS Code and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 contain detailed security-related requirements for governments, port authorities and shipping companies. It is intended to enable better monitoring of freight flows, to combat smuggling and to respond adequately to the threat of terrorist attacks.

Today, many port facilities and terminals have to be compliant with the ISPS Code and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004, a process which is inextricably linked to the establishment and maintenance of certain standards for the organisation of their security.

**Private security guards operating in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas**

Recently, CoESS has witnessed some local or country ‘initiatives’ whereby guards operating in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas are not expected to have received the afore-mentioned basic guard training, but only ISPS training.

The reasons thereof can be multiple. According to some national legal systems, ‘regular’ private security guards operate under the governance of – in most cases – the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice. Maritime private security guards, however, often fall under the governance of a different competent body or authority, e.g. the Port Administration or the Ministry of Mobility

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and/or Transport. In this respect, maritime private security guards may not be subject to the national private security legislation in place. This means that the afore-mentioned basic guard training, legally provided for by most national private security legislations, is not necessarily applicable to maritime private security guards.

Similar to the aviation security sector, specific and detailed EU Regulations are in place for the maritime security sector. These can differ from the rules that are applicable to the ‘general’ security sector. A lack of coordination between the different competent authorities in both the general and the maritime security field may result in administrations unilaterally setting and defining certain training standards for maritime private security guards, such as ISPS training, which might obliterate any other training requirements, such as the afore-mentioned initial and general basic guard training.

In the same way, the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice, responsible for ‘regular’ private security services, may decide that basic guard training does not apply to those segments of the security industry that are already governed by specific and detailed EU Regulations.

CoESS strongly opposes these developments. According to CoESS’ viewpoint, any private security guard, whether operational at a ‘general’ site, at an airport, port facility or any other specialised site, should successfully follow the legally binding initial and general basic guard training as provided for in most national private security legislations in Europe. Additional specialised training requirements, such as ISPS training, are not standalone training courses; they should be followed in addition to and only after initial and general basic guard training.

In other words, in many European countries, maritime private security guards are somehow put ‘outside’ of the scope of national private security legislation, which CoESS believes to be an alarming trend that could result in a dramatic lowering of the training standards of private security staff in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas.

The following examples illustrate this development:

**Norway**
On July 16, 2009 a proposal for a revision of the Norwegian Private Security Industry Act was passed by the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget), i.e. Odelingets 49 – 2008-2009. This proposal stipulates that security in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas could be performed by staff having received only ISPS training and not basic guard training.

**Sweden**
On January 1, 2010 new Swedish legislation entered into force (Rikspolisstyrelsens föreskrifter och allmänna råd om förordnande av sjöfarts- och hamnkyddskontrollanter – RPSFS 2009:21 – FAP 699-1) stipulating that security in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas can be performed by staff having received only ISPS training and not basic guard training.
The importance of basic guard training

From the outset, private security training has been a central concern for CoESS. Continuously improving training is one of the key components in raising worker performance, quality standards, professionalism and also employment in the private security industry.

CoESS and its member federations are determined to continue to build a professional service industry, providing high-quality services to customers and high-quality employment to private security guards.

It is particularly crucial for an industry committed to a high level of quality that all entrants into the private security profession receive at least a minimum level of basic training, which provides them with the relevant skills required to adequately carry out their function. These minimum training standards must be made compulsory by and integrated into a sound regulatory and licensing framework at national level thereby ensuring that all private security companies and employees throughout Europe meet acceptable quality standards.

In addition to this basic training, specialised training courses, such as an ISPS training course, are imperative to ascertain the highest level of security, particularly in sensitive environments, such as ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) port facilities. Specialised training courses allow private security personnel having already acquired a solid basic skill set to further fine-tune and expand their knowledge and expertise.

In the interest of fair competition, based not solely on price, but equally on considerations of professionalism and the right level of service, it is also vital that the same rules and thus the same costs in relation to high-quality training apply to all companies active in the private security industry within a single national market. High-quality training standards must be safeguarded against ‘free riders’ benefiting from the investments made by others in private security training, but refraining from investing in training themselves.

These principles are reinforced by the publication of a European Vocational Training Manual for Basic Guarding already in 1999³, elaborated by CoESS and UNI Europa, the European trade union federation, in the framework of their European Sectoral Social Dialogue and supported by the European Commission (DG Education and Culture and DG Employment, Social Affairs) setting a generic European framework of minimum training requirements for private security guards to be adapted to the national level. These principles are also reflected in CoESS and UNI Europa’s jointly developed European Model of Private Security Services (2004)⁴.

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Recently, CoESS developed a European Training Manual for Maritime Security Personnel focused on the ISPS Code (EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004). This Manual provides Member States with a generic European framework, which can easily be adapted to the national legislative and operational context, and constitutes a valuable addition for qualified private security guards having followed the basic guard training in order to be able to operate in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas in a professional manner.

CoESS therefore calls upon the European Commission and the European Institutions to take these elements into consideration and reiterate and support the essential role of basic guard training in general and for private security guards operating in ISPS-compliant (and EU Regulation (EC) 725/2004 compliant) areas in particular.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the CoESS General Secretariat:

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Disclaimer

Over the past years, private security has evolved to a global, multi-faceted world in which providers of state of the art technology and equipment combine strengths with providers of skilled manned guarding to offer the best suited solutions and services to the government and corporate users. In Europe, these providers and users are represented by major organisations, such as:

- EOS – The European Organisation for Security (www.eos-eu.com), representing providers of equipment and technology-based solutions and services
- CoESS – The Confederation of European Security Services (www.coess.eu), representing providers of skilled guarding services and security systems operators
- ECSA – The European Corporate Security Association (www.ecsa-eu.org), representing corporate users of security solutions and services.

Although the main objective of each organisation is to voice the views of its members, these three organisations share the common goal of reaching an adequate level of security, in line with the European ideals of freedom, security and justice. Through periodic consultations and where joint interests exist, they draft common position papers and voice shared views.

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