



# Private Security Summit

'Private Security at the Crossroad of the EU's Future'  
June 12, 2008 | Brussels, Stanhope Hotel

## Private security at the Crossroads of the European Union's Future

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*According to popular perceptions, states are granted with the legitimate and exclusive power to provide security for their citizens. But as societies and political institutions evolve rapidly, the distinction between 'public' and 'private' loses its traditional focus and relevance. Under this context and as the EU is working towards the modernisation of its security policies, private security has an important role to play by working closer with public authorities in various forms of partnerships.*



When it comes to private security, the EU tends to approach this industry more as a component of the first rather than the third pillar. This classical approach basically means that private security is viewed as a commercial sector without being an expression of public authority or contributing to public security.

The prospect of the Lisbon Treaty entering into force will give rise to new opportunities for the entire sector. In essence, the Reform Treaty will merge the three "pillars" allowing security related decisions to be taken by qualified majority instead of by unanimity as it is currently the case.

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This new rule will not only enable the EU to work faster and more efficiently as there will no longer be a total of 27 different security systems but will also extend the scope of EU's competence in other security related matters. Private security industry could eventually play a greater role as an issue of internal market, as well as common foreign, security policy and Justice and Home Affairs.

Academic research demonstrates that private security is bound to gain a central role in the EU and could eventually emerge in areas of activities such as Private Military Companies working closely with national armies, Private Intelligence Services, Private Security Transport as well as Health Care Security Services.

In fact, many EU member states have already started integrating private security into their criminal public policies. An integrated security concern model as used in the Netherlands and Belgium could become an overall EU standard. This criminal policy dealing with crime, fear and concern for crime, incivilities uses public-private partnerships and gives the private security industry an important role in crime prevention initiatives.

Moving forward, the EU needs to embrace developments with regards to private security and consider the adoption of common minimum standards across the EU. Successful lessons could be actually drawn from existing policy areas such as aviation and maritime security or critical infrastructure protection.

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