



## Position Paper EU guidelines for the protection of public spaces

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The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to deliberations at the European Commission and European Council on future activities concerning the better protection of public spaces against acts of terrorism and other serious crime.

Private security services are an increasingly important part of the security chain for the protection of public spaces. Both by means of on-site guarding and remote surveillance, private security services are involved in the protection of numerous public spaces, including air and maritime ports, mass events (concert halls, festivals, sport stadiums), urban transport and public buildings.

It is therefore important to adequately recognise the role of security services as part of the security chain protecting public spaces. Concretely, CoESS recommends that operators of public spaces take into account the following principles when working with private security services:

- **Consider security services in risk assessments and security plans:** the deployment of qualified security staff, either in-house or outsourced, needs to be adequately reflected in, and based on, regular risk assessments for public spaces. A respective security plan must clearly define roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.
- **Ensure a security culture among personnel:** all staff must have an adequate level of security awareness. This must include a clear understanding of security risks and reporting lines in case of suspicious situations to on-site security officers, control rooms and law enforcement.
- **Consider quality criteria when hiring security services:** best value should always be the criteria of choice. This is even more valid for high-risk locations, as security officers must be adequately equipped, trained and qualified for the task. If, as a result of the risk assessment, the operator decides to deploy security officers, security services should be selected based on relevant quality criteria in order to ensure a well-functioning security chain. To support buyers in identifying quality services, CoESS has published with our Social Partner UNI Europa an EU-funded manual on "[Buying Quality Private Security Services](#)".
- **Set in place an effective security continuum:** to better prevent attacks, a security continuum among operators, security services and law enforcement should ensure well functioning information exchange and reporting lines along the entire security chain. In case of a heightened alert and risk of an attack, private security services at high-risk locations (for example in access control or on-site/remote surveillance) must be informed by the competent



authorities via adequate reporting lines in order to better support the authorities. CoESS has assembled best practice from several countries in the 2019 [White Paper on “The Security Continuum in the New Normal”](#). The Paper also lists success criteria for public-private partnerships.

Past incidents unfortunately show that these basic principles are not always followed by operators of public spaces and law enforcement:

- Prior to the Manchester Arena Bombing in 2017, investigations revealed that stewards (not duly qualified security officers) who were posted in the public areas of the Arena failed to properly respond to or report the suspicious behaviour of the perpetrator to the control room and law enforcement prior to the attack.
- During the attacks in Brussels in March 2016, private security companies operating in local, urban transport were informed of the airport attacks by the media, at the same time as the general public. An hour later, another bomb went off in a metro station.

CoESS believes that European guidelines for operators on how to enhance the protection of public spaces would be a valuable initiative and important opportunity to raise awareness to key principles when working with private security services, particularly in high-risk locations.

## About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 23 countries in Europe and representing 2 million security officers as well as over 45,000 companies. The private security services provide a wide range of services, both for private and public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure facilities to public spaces, supply chains and government facilities. CoESS is recognised by the European Commission as the only European employers’ organisation representative of the private security services. Representing a labour-intensive sector, CoESS is actively involved in European Sectoral Social Dialogue and multiple EU Expert Groups - including SAGAS, SAGMAS, LANDSEC, RAILSEC and the EU Operators Forum for the Protection of Public Spaces.

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