UNI-Europa – CoESS Joint Statement

Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination in the European Private Security Services

Brussels, 20 February 2024

The objective of this Joint Statement is to advance the principles of diversity, equality, and inclusion within the European Private Security Services sector, leveraging the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue. It represents the perspectives of both CoESS and UNI Europa regarding the European Private Security Services industry, while also acknowledging the potential for further development in Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining, at both the company and national levels, without imposing any limitations.

This Committee notes:

- The Covid-19 crisis underlined the essential nature of Private Security Services and their workforce.
- CoESS and UNI Europa have co-signed the 'Multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work' in 2010[1]
- CoESS and UNI Europa have published a joint statement outlining their proposals for the labour market integration of persons with disabilities[2].
- The EU-funded RETAIN[3] and INTEL[4] projects highlighted how labour and skills shortages represent a strategic challenge to the sustainability of the sector.
- As per the EU-funded project "INTEL: Skills Intelligence for the Private Security Services":
    - Women constitute 15% of the workforce in the Private Security Services industry in 2018.
    - Private Security workers aged 50-64 across the EU already represent 35% of the workforce, and in some Eastern European countries up to 49%.
    - The share of young workers in the industry (aged below 25) is low, with young apprentices and trainees frequently dropping out of their training and education in many countries.

[1] To access the multi-sectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work: https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?mode=dsw&docId=8895&langId=en

[2] To access the statement on the integration of persons with disabilities: https://www.uni-europa.org/news/coess-and-uni-europa-adopt-joint-statement-on-the-integration-of-people-with-disabilities/

[3] For more information on the RETAIN project, please refer to www.retainproject.eu

[4] For more information on the INTEL project, please refer to https://www.securityskills.eu/about-intel/

- The gap between the employment rate of persons with disabilities and others persists at around 24 percentage points in the EU across sectors[5]. National law and the nature of services provided make it difficult to hire persons with disabilities in some countries.

We firmly believe in the following principles to raise the attractiveness and guide the integration of new workers in the Private Security Services:

- **Diversity:** an enrichment to our industry, characterised by understanding, accepting, and acknowledging differences among the workforce.
- **Equality:** creating fair access, opportunities, and advancement for all groups of workers.
- **Inclusion:** establishing cultures that support diversity and equality within company management and the workforce.
- **Non-discrimination:** Treating individuals or groups fairly and equally, without racial discrimination or prejudice based on characteristics like ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexual identity or disability.

Social Dialogue can play an important role to promote these principles. Social Dialogue includes all types of negotiation, information and consultation and exchanges between, or among, representatives of governments, employers and trade unions, on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy. It enables the European Social Partners to help to define European social standards, and is a fundamental part of the European social model.

We support the following possible strategies to improve diversity, equality and inclusion in the Private Security Services:

1. **Non-discrimination**

Inclusive work environments support equal opportunities and fair treatment for all individuals, fostering diversity and preventing any form of unfair advantage or disadvantage. By adhering to non-discrimination policies and practices, the Social Partners demonstrate their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, and fostering a culture of respect and equality.

The Social Partners demonstrate their commitment to workplace environments, cultures, practices and policies that are based on the principles of non-discrimination, diversity, equality and inclusion. Direct and indirect discrimination, including but not limited to racial discrimination, the discrimination on the basis of gender, age, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity and disabilities, shall not be permitted. Anti-harassment policies should be brought to the attention of all employees, including leadership. The Social Partners emphasize that it is

[5] As per data of the European Disability Forum, available here: https://www.edf-feph.org/employment-policy/#:~:text=The%20latest%20available%20EU%2Dlevel,percent%20of%20persons%20without%20disabilities.

important that the principles of diversity, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination are duly reflected across the industry.

2. **Company and Sectoral Diversity and Inclusion Bodies and Committees**

The Social Partners consider that staff networks for particular groups can establish an inclusive environment, assist in addressing group-specific issues and foster greater equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. These staff networks should be open to every employee. Trade union representation in these bodies can enhance Social Dialogue and outcomes. Company and sectoral diversity and inclusion bodies and committees could include Social Partner counterparts so as to ensure that Social Dialogue is strengthened and the integration of diverse groups of workers becomes a joint effort.

3. **Gender balance**

Given the predominantly male nature of the Private Security Services sector, promoting gender balance in the workforce is highly important. This also includes appropriate representation of women in the company´s boards, for example as per the EU Directive on Gender Balance on Company Boards where applicable[6]. Such representation can contribute to remedy gender imbalances in the sector and to attract more women in Private Security Services.

4. **Recruitment & Career Development**

Principles of diversity, equality and inclusion should be considered for the entire recruitment process, including job descriptions, screening, hiring and on-boarding. The application and selection process should be free from discriminatory criteria.

5. **Work-life balance**

Where possible and according to business realities, working arrangements and conditions should reflect the specific considerations of a more diverse workforce, support equality and inclusion. It needs to be stressed that this does not lead to further flexibilization of working arrangements against the worker's interest.

6. **Equal opportunities and access to career pathways**

The European Social Partners in Private Security encourage equal access to training for all employees - irrespective of factors such as gender, age, sexual identity, ethnicity, religion or belief, disability or family situation. To ensure uptake of up- and reskilling opportunities and equal opportunities as regards skills development, it is important for employees to be kept informed in a transparent and timely manner about available training. Training must be facilitated and provided in accordance with national law and/or Collective Agreements.

[6] See full legal text here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022L2381

7. **Equal pay**

The effective establishment of the equal pay principle in the private security services through Collective Bargaining can enhance the attractiveness of the sector to a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Collective Bargaining is a powerful means to reduce the gender pay gap in line with the future EU Pay Transparency Directive. In this regard, the correct application of Collective Bargaining provisions must be a prerequisite, and the adherence to Collective Agreements, as stated in the Social Partners' Joint Declaration on Procurement and Collective Bargaining from 20 December 2022, must be reflected in public procurement practices.

8. **Occupational Health and Safety**

Anti-harassment policies should be introduced and implemented for all employees, including leadership. Efforts to preventing violence and harassment are a prerequisite for creating a safe and inclusive working environment. The Social Partners are committed to supporting and promoting a culture, workplace and working conditions in the Private Security Services, in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect, and are protected from violence and harassment[7]. Information should be available to ensure that employees, including trainees, interns and temporary workers, have access to relevant support and are protected against retaliation following complaints.

9. **Private Security Services in a multi-cultural society**

The Social Partners encourage regulators at EU and national level to reflect on the increasingly essential role that Private Security Services play guaranteeing security in a multi-cultural society. As Social Partners we are committed to tackling and advocating against racism in any form it takes. It is important that the workforce reflects the society it is serving in different aspects (gender, ethnicity, demographics). Furthermore, regulation and training frameworks should ensure that surveillance decisions of security workers are based on objective, non-discriminatory criteria[8]. For example, in terms of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) empowered security solutions, regulation (such as the EU AI Act) and procurement practices must guarantee that human oversight of high-risk technologies is only performed by adequately skilled and trained security personnel.

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[7] Please consult the multi-sectoral guidelines on to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work on the recommended steps to take: https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?mode=dsw&docId=8895&langId=en

[8] For further information, please consult the statement by the International Security Ligue https://www.security-ligue.org/news?tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=103&cHash=76c82a830fa67bb194bf557215fe2298

We commit to:

- Work together to envisage future Joint Declarations covering matters related to diversity, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.
- Exchange best practices within EU Sectoral Social Dialogue on the promotion of diversity, equality and inclusion through above-mentioned strategies.
- Support in EU Sectoral Social Dialogue the actions included in the EU Disability Employment Package, for example the promotion of hiring perspectives through affirmative action and combating stereotypes, and guidelines for reasonable accommodation at work.
- Encourage Social Partners at the national level to advance diversity, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination through Social Dialogue and Collective Bargaining
- Evaluate the use and implementation of this Joint Statement as part of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Work Programme 2026-2027.

The European Sectoral Social Partners for the Private Security Services are committed to promoting the principles of diversity, equality and inclusion across the sector, notably through the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue and actions announced in this Joint Statement.

For more information, please contact:

CoESS: Catherine Piana, Director General, +32 473 83 63 59, catherine@coess.eu

UNI Europa: Mark Bergfeld, Director Property Services, + 32 473 82 74 22
mark.bergfeld@uniglobalunion.org