



**PRESS RELEASE - EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE ON 16/10/2020**

## **Beyond COVID-19: Private Security Services call for Political Action**

*Private Security Services are essential for the functioning of our economies – even more so in times of crises. During the pandemic, the often hidden workforce of 2 million European security officers has rightly been celebrated as “everyday heroes”. But the economic consequences of the crisis for the entire industry are severe. In the new White Paper “The New Normal 2.0: Private Security and the COVID-19 Pandemic”, the Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) and experts across Europe call for action to support an often overseen, yet critical, pillar of the European security framework.*

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS), the voice of over 45,000 private security companies, has published today a White Paper on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the industry and lessons to be learned for security in a “New Normal 2.0”.

Private security is critical for the functioning of our economies, which was acknowledged by a number of Heads of State and law enforcement across Europe throughout the pandemic. During lockdowns, the continued protection of Critical Infrastructure and supply chains proved essential to uphold the transport of medical supplies, food and cash. Today, private security officers support the protection of European citizens at work, care facilities, transport hubs and even supermarkets in collaboration with law enforcement. What we have been witnessing is the emerging concept of “securitisation of health”, accelerating the deployment of smart technologies.

But the sector took a severe hit during the crisis: companies operating in Cash-in-Transit, aviation and events have seen their revenues decrease by up to 85%.

Catherine Piana, Director General of CoESS, explains: *“We are facing a situation in which companies have difficulties retaining workers, like in other sectors. But private security is not any kind of service. Our workers are essential for upholding public safety, security and recovery in entire economic ecosystems. How will airports get back on track, if aviation security services can’t retain passenger screening personnel? The pandemic has also revealed in many countries an inadequate support by public authorities, hampering officers to help our economies and citizens to get through this crisis. Political action is needed to implement measures resulting of shortcomings identified during the crisis, reduce vulnerabilities, increase preparedness and, hence, resilience of our economies and societies. It is all well to talk about the security continuum that must be*

*formed between law enforcement and private security. But talking won't suffice to get us there. It's time to act."*

The paper quotes leading European experts in private security, who describe how the pandemic has accelerated and amplified change in Private Security Services. They recommend concrete steps for public authorities to support the sector, and provide a foresight of how to learn from the pandemic and transition to the "New Normal 2.0" with as little damage as possible.

The CoESS White Paper is available at [www.coess.org](http://www.coess.org).

Brussels, 16 October 2020

## About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 23 countries in Europe and representing 2 million private security officers, over 45,000 companies and generating a turnover of over €40M. The Private Security Services provide a wide range of services, both for private and public clients, ranging from Critical Infrastructure facilities to public spaces, national government and EU institutions buildings.

As per the most recent EU Representativeness Study, CoESS is the only European employers' organisation representative of the Private Security Services. Since 1992, the European Services Workers Union, UNI Europa, and CoESS are actively involved in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue for the Private Security Services.

## Contact:

Chantal Verlaet

Policy and Communications Officer

Phone number: +32 (0)2 462 07 76

Email address: [chantal@coess.eu](mailto:chantal@coess.eu)

[www.coess.org](http://www.coess.org)