



Response to First Phase Consultation of Social Partners Possible EU Action related to fair minimum wages

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) welcomes the opportunity to participate in the first phase consultation of Social Partners on a possible EU action addressing the challenges related to fair minimum wages.

CoESS stands for an industry that provides high quality services for the benefit of public security and society as a whole. Adequate wages are an important criterion for security workers' job performance and the provision of qualitative services. CoESS therefore agrees with the European Commission that clear criteria must exist to identify minimum wage levels according to national circumstances, and Social Partners must be closely involved in their set-up, according to their national legal framework.

CoESS has however some doubts whether EU action on minimum wages, which goes beyond the European Semester process, is fully compatible with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. CoESS is concerned that, in many countries where Social Partners play a central role in setting minimum wage levels, EU legal action would not be of added value, but could eventually have a detrimental effect by interfering in, and weakening, collective bargaining and Social Dialogue.

The impact of adequate minimum wages on quality services

The provision of high quality services is crucial in the private security sector and a core value of CoESS. We believe that qualitative services can only be delivered if certain conditions are fulfilled, including employment conditions and adequate pay. In CoESS' understanding, adequate wages that value workers and allow them to have a decent quality of life are an important basis for quality services. If a private security company can demonstrate a fair and transparent remuneration structure, the staff is more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their employment, and therefore performing better in their job and delivering a better service to the client. CoESS regrets that, too often, procurement of security services focuses on price rather than quality, which has detrimental consequences on workers' wages and, as a result, lowers motivation and performance. This may entail severe consequences for public security. CoESS has warned about this inadequacy between the need for security and the "race to the bottom" on costs and has promoted a "best

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value” approach, as shown in the “[Buying quality private security services](#)” manual, published jointly by the Social Partners (CoESS and UNI Europa) with EU Funds.

Strong role for Social Partners and collective bargaining

CoESS therefore agrees with the European Commission that clear criteria must exist to identify minimum wage levels and Social Partners must be closely involved in their set-up.

CoESS is engaged in a very productive Social Dialogue with UNI Europa on the provision of qualitative working conditions. Importantly, CoESS’ national members are actively involved in Social Dialogue and in setting salaries in cooperation with trade unions, in accordance with national labour relations systems. Social dialogues and their outcome vary significantly from one Member State to the other, as do the social and economic frameworks in which they are established. Furthermore, some countries have recently introduced measures to raise minimum salary levels, which are not yet reflected in the consultation document.

Eventually missing legal basis for a legally binding EU action

CoESS is willing to discuss the different systems of minimum wage setting in the sectoral Social Dialogue, as well as any related challenge in the Member States by respecting the autonomy of national and European Social Dialogue mechanisms. CoESS also supports EU measures that strengthen the role of Social Partners and their autonomy at national level, for example through ESF-funding. In addition, the EU may provide recommendations to Member States and Social Partners to support them in setting clear criteria for the identification of adequate wage levels. Concrete criteria must, however, be set according to the existing, diverse systems in place in Member States.

Furthermore, CoESS expresses doubts regarding a legal basis for the European Union to directly interfere in binding ways in minimum wage setting at national level, going beyond the recommendations already provided to EU Member States in the European Semester process. Importantly, it would risk putting collective bargaining in those countries in question, where Social Partners are autonomously setting wage levels, and weakening the Social Dialogue. Social Partners must have a role in the process of fixing minimum wages in line with the economic, labour relations, business and social reality of each country.

About CoESS

CoESS acts as the voice of the private security industry, covering 23 countries in Europe and representing 2 million guards, over 45,000 companies and generating a turnover of over €40M. The



Confederation of European Security Services

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.

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