



Project led by



# Private Security Training in Europe

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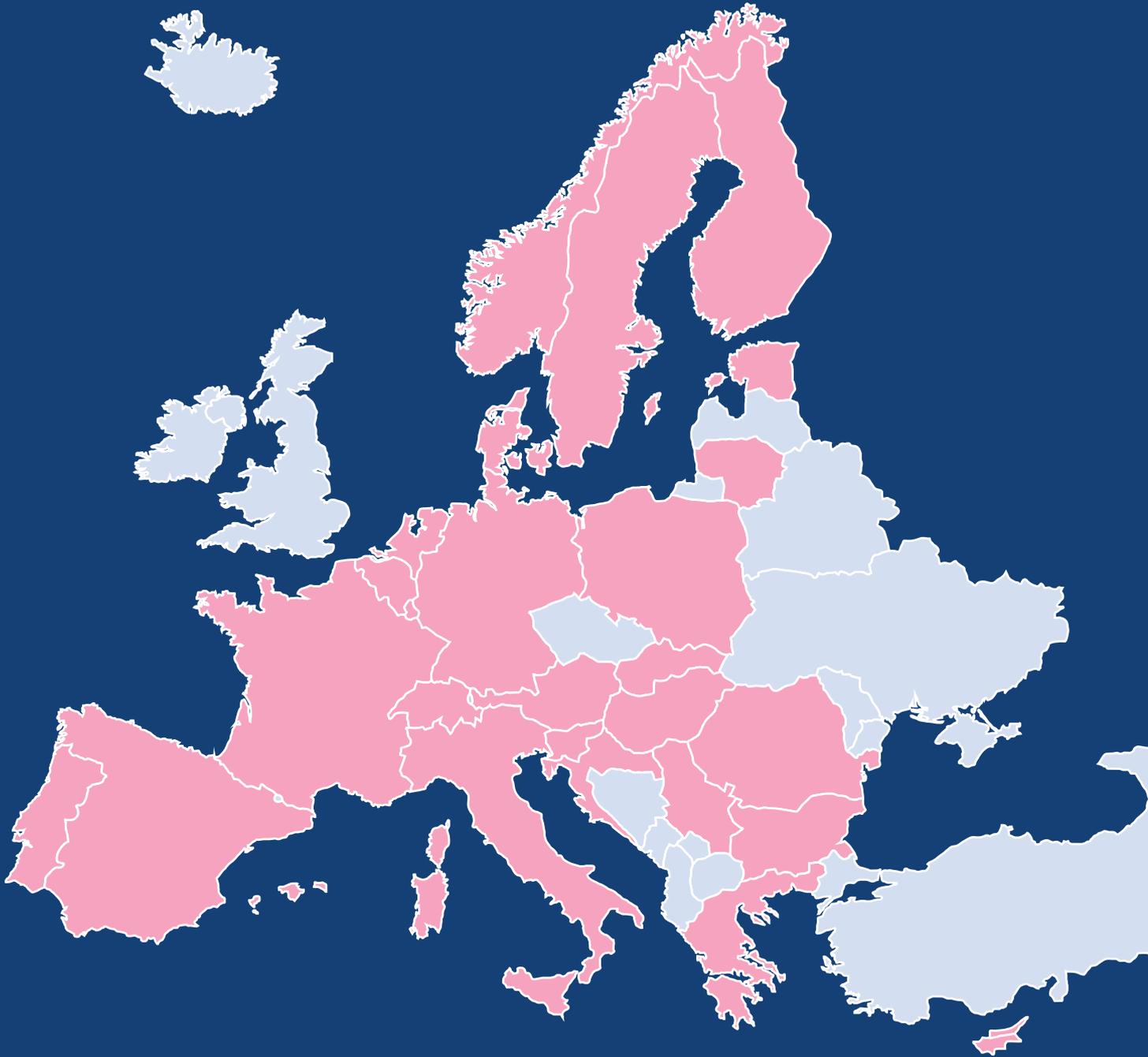
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# Introduction

In the previous EU-funded Social Partner project of CoESS and UNI Europa, **"INTEL: Skills Intelligence for the Private Security Services"** (2021-2023), research showed substantial labour and skills shortages in the sector. A key challenge reported by sectoral Social Partners, and in particular trade unions, to counter these labour and skills shortages was the inadequacy of formal training frameworks.

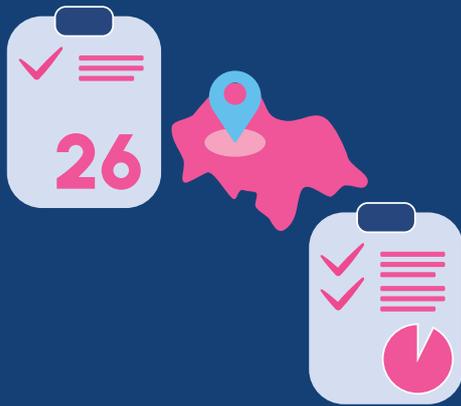
**In the 2021 survey, less than half (43.5%) of the interviewed employer organisation representatives and over 83% of trade union representatives stated that existing, formal qualifications did not adequately reflect future job profiles and demand for new tasks for security officers in their countries.**

As a regulated profession, training frameworks in private security are a national, not an EU competency. To help assess the sector's formal basic and additional specific training frameworks at national level, CoESS conducted, as part of the EU-funded follow-up project **"INTEL: NextGeneration"** (2024-2026), **desktop research and an online survey among employer group representatives and company stakeholders from 26 European countries**, including 23 EU Member States, to assemble data on existing training systems and curricula in the private security services. **The research was conducted from January to December 2025.**

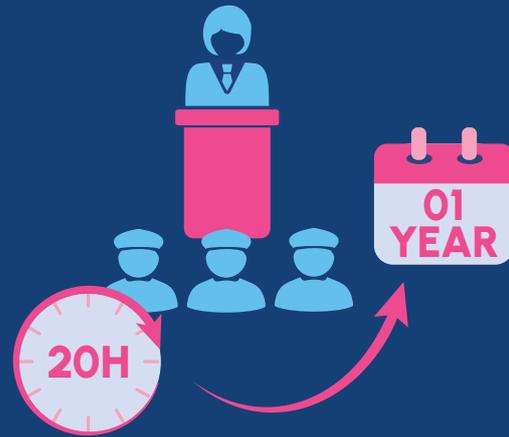
This report includes **in the first two chapters the information collected during this research on existing basic and additional specific training frameworks** to enable an exchange of best practices and recommendations for the governance of training systems, curricula, career advancement and Social Partner involvement among sectoral Social Partners. **In Chapter 3, the report identifies good practices** that could help national sectoral Social Partners strengthen the sector's ability to create attractive training frameworks and meet future skills needs.

The project fully respects the sole competence of EU Member States in regulating the private security sector and training, aiming instead to provide a structured evidence base and sectoral Social Partner recommendations for enhancing training quality in light of labour and skills shortages, evolving security missions, and technological change.

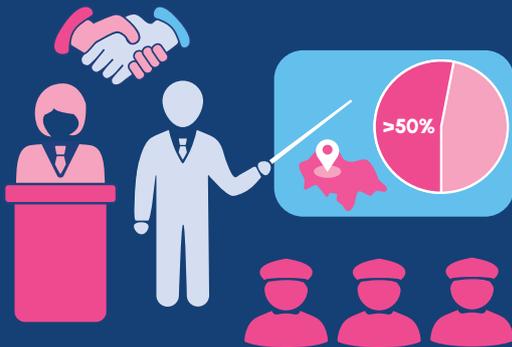
Basic training is regulated by national law in almost all countries.



All 26 surveyed countries meet at least one core quality benchmark for basic training; most meet two.



Training duration varies widely, from 20 hours to one year.



Sectoral Social partners are involved in basic training organisation in more than half of the countries.



Around half of the countries identify a need to improve basic training quality.

# Summary

## Basic Training

- **All 26 surveyed countries meet at least one core quality benchmark** for basic training (regulation, VET frameworks, or Social Partner involvement); most meet two.
- Basic training is regulated by **national law** in almost all countries, with Austria as an exception.
- **VET-based pathways** are the predominant model for entry into the sector.
- **In Austria, Luxemburg, Denmark, Germany and Spain**, Social Partners have developed **voluntary VET pathways** that exceed legal minimum standards and strengthen professionalisation.
- **Training duration** varies widely, **from 20 hours to one year**, reflecting divergent regulatory approaches.
- **Many countries offer shortened or modular training for entrants** with relevant prior experience (e.g. police or military).
- **Sectoral Social Partners** are involved in **basic training organisation in more than half of the countries** (both partners in 9 countries, employers alone in 6 countries), with roles ranging from advisory to fully operational.
- Where Social Partners are involved, **they often operate dedicated sectoral training institutes**.
- Social Partner involvement **in curriculum development and updates remains limited**.
- **On-boarding and mentoring are largely left to companies**, though **some Social Partners** run **targeted mentoring initiatives** for disadvantaged groups.
- **Around half of the countries identify** a need **to improve basic training quality**, notably through curriculum updates, increased public funding, and strengthened mentoring support.

## Additional Specific training

- **Regulatory frameworks, governance models and stakeholder roles vary widely across Europe**, making cross-country comparison particularly challenging.
- **In a majority of countries, additional and specialised training is formalised and often legally required for specific tasks** (e.g. aviation security, cash-in-transit, armed guarding where permitted).
- **Regulated specialised training usually follows nationally standardised curricula** linked to mandatory qualifications.
- **Social Partner involvement** in additional training **is limited; employers are more frequently involved**, with some bi-partite or tri-partite input into curriculum updates.
- In almost all countries, **additional and specialised training is fully or partly recognised as working time**.
- Most countries deliver at least some **specialised qualifications through VET systems**.
- **Security-related higher education pathways exist** in more than half of the surveyed countries.
- Training focuses more on soft skills than on emerging technologies; **micro-credentials in areas such as AI, data analysis and cybersecurity remain rare**.
- Workers mainly **learn about upskilling opportunities through employers or training providers**.
- Most employer organisations **lack comprehensive data on participation and completion rates** in specialised training.
- **Around 82% of countries report that current specialised training frameworks do not sufficiently reflect future security tasks**, underlining the need for curriculum reform, stronger IT skills and continued emphasis on soft skills.
- A clear majority of employers see **micro-credentials and add-on qualifications** as key tools to increase training flexibility.
- Limited client willingness **to pay for higher-skilled security services** remains a major barrier to workforce upskilling across almost all countries.



# 1 Frameworks for Basic Training in 26 European countries (incl. 23 EU Member States)

# 1. Frameworks for Basic Training in 26 European countries

**Basic training** for security officers is the starting point for work in the private security services sector. In almost all European countries, security officers must undergo basic training, regulated by national law as a pre-condition to perform private security tasks. As a career in the industry starts with it, adequate basic training is the basis for quality jobs and services.

Frameworks must fit requirements of workers, companies and market demand. They shape the professionalism of personnel, available career pathways for up- and reskilling, and the quality of services delivered to clients and the public. Qualitative and up-to-date basic training in private security has therefore an impact on public security overall.

This research shows that, across Europe, there are profound differences in how basic training is regulated, organised, and embedded in national vocational systems. These range from countries where structured, accredited vocational training is mandatory for all new entrants to other countries with low-threshold basic training to, in Austria, no legal requirements at all.

## Defining Quality Marks for Basic Training

In the private security industry, three structural elements consistently emerge from both EU-level policy discussions and sectoral practice as the defining “quality marks” of basic training:

- 1. Regulation and licensing** – The existence of clear legal or collectively agreed rules setting minimum requirements for training duration, curricula, and licensing before individuals can work as security officers.
- 2. Organisation within a vocational training framework** – Structuring training in a way that combines practical, workplace-based learning with theoretical instruction, supported by a cycle of planning, delivery, evaluation, and review to ensure continuous improvement.
- 3. Active involvement of Social Partners** – The participation of both employer and employee representatives in designing, updating, and in some cases delivering basic training, ensuring that it reflects operational realities and evolving worker and sector needs.

While on-boarding and mentoring programmes are not always formally classified as quality marks, they are widely recognised as important enhancers of learning outcomes and workforce retention, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

## Regulation and Licensing Across Europe

**The survey found that in almost all European countries, basic training for security officers is embedded in national law, establishing minimum standards for entry into the profession.**

An exception exists in Austria, where there is no legal regulation at all. However, CoESS' member VSÖ has set up its own voluntary training systems and centers. VSÖ's members must train their personnel in the association's training center, with certification being performed by the Austrian certification office for security (*Österreichische Zertifizierungsstelle Sicherheit (ÖZS)*).

In Poland, legal rules apply only to "qualified" security guards, with companies free to determine training for "non-qualified" guards. The Netherlands and Italy use bi-partite arrangements involving both public authorities and Social Partners, while in Switzerland basic requirements are defined only for companies with more than ten employees, and are set through a Collective Agreement.

**As part of basic training regulation, also the length of training is defined by law in nearly all countries**, with Austria the exception, and in some countries with involvement of Social Partners.

**Nationally standardised curricula exist in almost all countries and are usually set by national authorities.** In Denmark, curricula are set in a bi-partite process; in the Netherlands, they are developed in a tri-partite process involving public authorities, Social Partners, and chambers; in Italy, they are defined through a Collective Agreement.

**In most countries, trainees cannot perform security tasks before completing training and obtaining a licence.** There are exceptions: in the Netherlands, supervised work under a dedicated mentor is allowed; in Switzerland and Romania, trainees may work within the first three months of enrolment in a qualification programme.

**Once licensed, officers can perform on-site guarding everywhere;** in 20 of the surveyed countries they may also undertake mobile patrols, alarm response, and, in many cases, remote monitoring. The latter is more common in systems with longer training, though some countries with shorter training (such as Germany and Switzerland) also allow it. Refresher training is legally required in 57% of the surveyed countries.

## Organisation within Vocational Training Frameworks

**The structure and duration of training vary enormously.** Some countries have extensive programmes: the Netherlands operates a one-year dual system with one day in school and four in the company; Romania requires 360 hours; Sweden 300 hours (140 in school, 160 in-company); Bulgaria 260 hours; Poland 245 hours; Denmark 222 hours (basic legal minimum) to 2 years (VET programme); Hungary 200-250 hours; Spain 180 (basic legal minimum exam) to 400 hours (professional qualifications); France 175 hours; Norway 168 hours.

In contrast, Estonia mandates only 24 hours for guards, and Germany and Slovakia require 40 hours – providing a low threshold for interested job seekers to enter the job market and perform basic private security tasks.



**VET-based training is the dominant model in most European countries**, valued for its combination of workplace practice and classroom instruction. No VET framework exists in Slovakia, Croatia, Greece, Portugal, or Estonia.

**Importantly, Social Partners in Austria, Luxemburg, Germany, Denmark and Spain have created voluntary VET pathways** that go beyond minimum legal requirements, offering a more professionalised entry into the sector.

**Shortened or modular programmes for entrants with prior relevant experience (e.g. police or military) are available in many countries**, including Serbia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, France, and Italy. These often make use of micro-credentials to formally recognise existing competencies, provide new career pathways to public security professionals, and help the industry attract high-skilled workers in time of labour shortages.



## Active Involvement of Social Partners

**The role of Social Partners in basic training systems ranges from advisory to fully operational** – a factor that can play an important role to ensure that training systems reflect both operational realities and worker expectations.

In the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, France, Italy, and Hungary, both employer and employee representatives are directly involved in the organisation of training. In all of these countries but Norway, they operate their own training institutes, ensuring that course content remains closely aligned with operational needs. In some countries, such as Germany, the chambers play a central organisational role, but employer associations like BDSW also accredit providers through quality seals.

**Curriculum development and review is another area where Social Partner involvement varies.** In about half of the countries, public authorities lead the process, with Social Partners directly engaged in only a minority (Italy, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Denmark). This variability matters: systems where Social Partners have a formal, ongoing role can adapt more quickly to changes in the sector, update curricula more regularly, and embed practical operational knowledge in the training process.

## Access, Content, and Quality Assurance

**Entry requirements into basic training are generally low, facilitating access to the sector.** Six countries accept candidates with lower-secondary education, and ten require upper-secondary completion. Language fluency is required in only nine countries. Thirteen require a background check before training; nearly all require one before employment in any legally defined private security task, except Italy and Poland.

**Curriculum content is diverse.** Core elements such as legal knowledge, sector-specific tasks, and safety concepts are universal. Many countries include crisis management (first aid, fire safety, decision-making), professional ethics, conflict management, and risk assessment. Fewer address basic IT skills (six countries) or foreign languages (only the Netherlands).

**Quality assurance processes, though not always formalised, are evident in accreditation requirements for training providers.** Most systems rely on public authority oversight, sometimes in combination with Social Partner auditing or chamber-led verification.

## On-Boarding and Mentoring Practices

**On-boarding and mentoring are not mandated in national frameworks and are left to company discretion.** Nevertheless, targeted mentorship for disadvantaged groups exists in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany.

Belgium's Social Fund supports disadvantaged trainees with financial assistance and tailored mentoring. In the City of Hamburg, Germany, young trainees benefit from structured coaching designed to help those with weaker academic records. In Greece, reintegration programmes support unemployed former security officers in returning to the profession. These examples demonstrate that mentorship is not just a social good but a strategic workforce measure that can help address recruitment and retention challenges, often driven by Social Partner action.

## Adequacy of basic training systems

**Half of respondents believe their current systems ensure adequate quality; the other half call for improvement.** Interestingly, calls for reform come both from countries with minimal training and from those with extensive programmes, underscoring that high hours alone do not guarantee relevance or adaptability. The most frequently cited need (50% of countries) is to update curricula to reflect changing market and security demands. About 30% also call for increased public funding and expanded mentorship support.



## Conclusions and Benchmarking Against Quality Marks

Across the 26 European countries surveyed, all meet at least one of the three core quality marks, and many meet two. A remarkable number of systems meet all three (in countries like Spain and Germany thanks to the engagement of sectoral Social Partners): having strong legal regulation, a well-structured vocational training framework, and active Social Partner involvement.

- **Regulation and licensing** are present in almost all countries.
- **VET framework organisation** is well-established and mandatory in most Member States, with Social Partners having developed voluntary VET schemes in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Luxemburg and Spain.
- **Active Social Partner involvement** is widespread but deserves further promotion to further align training frameworks with operational realities, market developments and workers demands.

The evidence suggests that countries that combine all three quality marks with regular curriculum review and stakeholder co-ownership are best placed to maintain high professional standards and respond to emerging trends and challenges. Aligning more national systems with this model – while respecting national competence and Social Partner autonomy – could substantially raise the sector's overall capability, attractiveness, and service quality.

## 2 Frameworks for Additional Specific Training in 24 European Countries (incl. 21 EU Member States)

## 2. Frameworks for Additional Specific Training in 24 European Countries

**Additional specific training beyond basic training constitutes a key mechanism** through which private security officers access higher career pathways, specialised functions, upskilling opportunities and, ultimately, higher wages.

For the purpose of this study, we defined such training as all learning activities that go beyond the legally required basic training and may take place in a variety of formal and informal formats, including **Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education** (up to Bachelor's and Master's degree level), and **shorter modular or task-specific learning formats**.

**Additional training may serve different purposes.** In many cases, it is a legal prerequisite for performing specific, **often sensitive security tasks such as aviation security, cash-in-transit operations, armed guarding or critical infrastructure protection**. In other cases, it contributes to lifelong learning, reskilling and upskilling of workers in response to evolving service demands, technological developments and labour market needs.

In recent years, **the integration of new technologies into security service delivery – including drones and artificial intelligence (AI) – has further increased the need for continuous upskilling of security personnel**. While such competencies are often not yet fully embedded in formalised specialised training pathways, they are increasingly becoming legal and operational obligations. A prominent example is the **EU AI Act**, which will, as of 2026, **require extensive skills and training for the human oversight of high-risk AI systems used in security contexts**.

**One of the central objectives of the INTEL project is to understand the career pathways offered by the private security services industry, with a particular focus on quality training as a driver of professionalisation, attractiveness and resilience of the sector.** The project examines to what extent additional specialised training pathways are formalised, whether they reflect current and emerging market demand, and whether they are fit to address skills shortages and workforce transitions in the sector.

## Degree of formalisation and regulatory diversity

**Additional specialised training is formalised, often by law, in a clear majority of surveyed countries (17 out of 24).** Where such training is subject to legal requirements defined by national public authorities, it usually also follows nationally standardised curricula and makes specific qualifications mandatory to perform certain tasks. However, the regulatory models, governance structures and stakeholder involvement differ significantly across Europe, reflecting national security traditions, industrial relations systems and regulatory cultures. This diversity makes direct cross-country comparisons challenging.

**Minimum requirements to access specialised training vary widely.** In most countries, successful completion of basic training is a prerequisite, often combined with minimum work experience in the sector. In some cases, additional criteria such as educational level or enhanced background checks apply.

**In several operationally sensitive areas, national legislation requires in most countries that security officers complete specific training before performing certain tasks.** This is most consistently the case for aviation security, cash-in-transit services and armed guarding (where this is permitted by law). Mandatory specialised training is also common for explosive detection dog handlers, technical maintenance and installation personnel, fire protection and prevention specialists, monitoring and alarm receiving centre staff, and security services related to critical infrastructure and prisons.

## Curricula and the Provision of IT and Soft Skills

**In most countries where specific training is regulated by law, curricula are most commonly regulated by national competent authorities and follow national standards.** In several countries, chambers and/or Social Partners are also involved in defining curricula and minimum requirements. Notably, Social Partners are involved in Italy, France and the Netherlands in setting minimum requirements for specific training. In Romania, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia, France and Italy, chambers, employers and/or both Social Partners are also involved in the update of (certain) curricula.

**Both formalised specialised training and micro-credentials currently place greater emphasis on soft skills than on emerging technologies.** For example, security officers' skills related to AI and cybersecurity are, in the vast majority of countries, not yet mandatory by law. This gap is particularly interesting considering upcoming regulatory developments. For high-risk AI use cases, the EU AI Act adopted in 2024 introduced binding requirements for adequate skills related to human oversight from August 2026 onwards.

**Micro-credentials specifically targeted for security officers in areas such as data analysis, AI and cybersecurity also remain rare.** By contrast, training related to the operation of drones is already more widespread.

**Soft-skill-related micro-credentials targeted for security officers are far more common.** They frequently cover crisis management, de-escalation techniques and occupational health and safety. Foreign language skills and ethical or intercultural competencies are also included in sector-specific micro-credentials in several countries.

## Specialised Training Frameworks, Organisation and Governance

**In most surveyed countries (14), some or all specialised qualifications are delivered within VET frameworks.** Also higher education pathways, including bachelor's and master's degree programmes related to security management or specialised functions, exist in around half of the participating countries.

**The organisation of additional and specialised training varies considerably.** Accredited training providers play a central role in most countries. These providers are predominantly private entities, although public training institutions also exist in around 60% of surveyed countries. They are most commonly audited by public authorities, sometimes in combination with employer organisations or other sectoral bodies.

**Employers are frequently involved in the organisation of training.** Both Social Partners, however, play a relatively limited role in the direct organisation of specialised training and are formally involved in only four countries (the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy and France). But dedicated Social Partner training institutes for special training exist at least in five countries (Austria, Sweden, Poland, France and Italy).

**Procedures for updating specialised training curricula are equally diverse.** Where training is regulated by law, updates are typically the responsibility of public authorities. In some countries such as Romania, Slovenia, and in some aspects Spain and Germany, Social Partners are involved in curriculum updates through bi-partite or tri-partite mechanisms.

**Financing models are predominantly mixed, combining employer contributions with public funding.** In a small number of countries, clients also contribute to the financing of specialised training.

**In almost all surveyed countries (87%), formal additional and specialised training is recognised either fully (10 countries) or partly (also 10 countries) as working time.**

## Mentorship, Equal Access and Transparency

**Mentorship programmes linked to specialised training are generally limited to company-level initiatives.** Structured national or sectoral mentorship frameworks are largely absent. Specific frameworks aimed at supporting the participation of women in specialised training were reported only in Spain.

**Workers most commonly learn about upskilling opportunities through their employer or through training providers themselves.** Public authorities and Social Partners play a more limited role as information channels. Nevertheless, 68% of participating employer organisations report having initiatives in place to inform workers about available additional and specialised training options.

**A majority of employer organisations report a lack of comprehensive data on the proportion of workers who have successfully completed specialised training.** Where data is available, four countries report very high participation rates, with more than 75% of security workers having completed additional training in Spain, Slovenia, France and Cyprus.

## Adequacy of Training Frameworks

**When looking at current market demands, employer organisations assess specialised training frameworks as somewhat better aligned than basic training.** However, 36% of countries still consider existing specialised training insufficient for today's operational requirements.

**Concerns are significantly more pronounced about future needs.** Around 82% of participating countries indicate that existing additional and specialised training frameworks do not adequately reflect future tasks in private security services, pointing to a strong need for curriculum reform and updating – also in almost all countries where specific training is subject to national regulation.

**Most countries identify the need for improved IT-related skills and curricula, as well as continued emphasis on soft skills.** Better public funding, additional training hours and stronger support and mentorship mechanisms are also frequently highlighted.

**A clear majority of employer groups believe that micro-credentials and add-on qualifications can enhance the flexibility and responsiveness of training systems.** 27% of countries also see a need for more formally recognised and regulated specialised curricula.

## Effect of low-cost focused Public Procurement

A major structural challenge remains the limited willingness of clients to pay for higher-skilled security personnel.

This issue is reported by 21 out of 24 countries and represents a significant barrier to upskilling and professionalisation. At the same time, around two thirds of countries report that sufficient job placements for higher-skilled security workers do exist, indicating a persistent disconnect between market demand for skills and procurement practices.



# 3 Good practice examples

## 3. Good practice examples

### The Netherlands

#### Overview

The Netherlands represents a strong good practice in the governance and quality assurance of private security training, characterised by the institutionalised and systematic involvement of sectoral Social Partners in both basic and specific training frameworks. Dutch arrangements fulfil all three quality marks identified in this report for basic training: **regulation through national law, organisation within vocational education and training (VET), and strong Social Partner involvement.** A defining feature of the Dutch model is the central role played by the SVPB (Stichting Vakexamens voor de Particuliere Beveiligingsorganisaties), which anchors sectoral Social Partners' ownership of training standards and qualifications. SVPB is also part of the Dutch regime for secondary education.

#### Legal basis and governance in VET frameworks

While the number of minimum training hours in basic training is set through national law, **minimum qualitative requirements are defined in bi-partite governance** settings involving public authorities and Social Partners.

**Basic training is organised within a mandatory one-year VET framework**, governed by national legislation. This framework combines theoretical and practical learning, foreseeing that students attend a VET school one day per week and undertake on-the-job training for four days per week under supervision. Also parts of specific training are organised in VET frameworks.

**Curriculum content for basic and specific training is nationally standardised and regulated in tri-partite arrangements**, involving public authorities, Social Partners and sectoral bodies. This ensures consistency across training providers while allowing responsiveness to sectoral developments.

#### Central Role of SVPB and Social Partners

**A central role in the Dutch training system is played by the SVPB** (*Stichting Vakexamens voor de Particuliere Beveiligingsorganisaties*). **SVPB is governed on a tri-partite basis**, with employers' organisations and trade unions from the private security sector represented alongside independent experts. It develops and manages nationally recognised examinations for private security roles, certifies qualifications for security officers, and ensures that training and exams comply with Dutch legal requirements under the *Wet particuliere beveiligingsorganisaties en recherchebureaus*.

**Public authorities are consulted in the process and retain responsibility for the licensing of private security officers and companies**, background checks, enforcement of law and supervision – e.g. ensuring that changes in legislation are reflected in curricula and exams.

Within SVPB, Social Partners are directly involved in:

- Defining occupational profiles and competence standards for security roles;
- Updating qualification frameworks and examination requirements in line with changes in legislation, technology and work organisation;
- Ensuring that working conditions, professional ethics and employability are systematically reflected in training outcomes.

Curricula are updated through an ongoing review process, currently including a more fundamental revision jointly led by Social Partners to address emerging skill needs.

### Organisation of training and career Pathways

**Basic and specific training are delivered by accredited public, private and Social Partner training providers, with oversight shared between public authorities and sectoral actors.** Students may perform all security tasks under the supervision of a mentor during training, and mandatory refresher training supports continued competence development after licensing.

The Dutch system also provides a wide range of formal additional and specialised training pathways, many of which are legally required to perform specific security tasks (e.g. aviation security, cash-in-transit, alarm response, maritime security, cybersecurity and the use of high-risk AI systems). **Social Partners remain involved in the organisation of additional training and play an important role in informing workers about available up- and reskilling pathways.** For the near future Social Partners will develop a sector-owned system of permanent education which in a few years will be obligatory under the law for all security workers.





### Overview

Sweden represents a good practice model for high-quality private security training, fulfilling all quality marks identified in this report for basic training: clear regulation through national law, organisation within VET frameworks, and strong involvement of Social Partners in training delivery and organisation. A distinctive feature of the Swedish system is the role of the sectoral training institute BYA (*Bevakningsbranschens Yrkes- och Arbetsmiljönämnd*), which operationalises training standards and embeds them in collective labour relations.

### Legal basis and governance in VET frameworks

**Minimum requirements for basic and additional training, training hours and curriculum content are fully regulated by public authorities through national law.** The Swedish model is characterised by a strong regulatory role of the state, with the Police Authority responsible for curriculum updates and alignment with public security policy. Students are not allowed to perform security tasks prior to licensing, reinforcing a strict quality and compliance approach.

**Basic training follows a nationally standardised curriculum and is organised within a VET framework,** combining classroom-based instruction and practical training. To become a licensed security officer, trainees must complete 140 hours of formal training, followed by 160 hours of company-based training. Entry requirements include upper secondary education, fluency in the national language and completed background checks. Refresher training is mandatory by law.

### Central role of BYA and the involvement of Social Partners in training organisation

While regulation is centralised in national law, **Social Partners play a key role in the practical organisation, financing and delivery of training.** Both employers' organisations and trade unions are directly involved in organising basic and additional training, and training is largely financed by the Social Partners.

A central pillar of the Swedish training system is the **BYA** – a non-profit organisation jointly operated for more than 15 years by the Swedish Security Industry Association (*Säkerhetsföretagen*) and the Swedish Transport Workers' Union.

BYA is:

- Regulated and financed through the sectoral collective agreement,
- Governed by an Executive Board and working committees representing the entire industry,
- Closely cooperating with law enforcement and competent public authorities.

**BYA's mission is to raise professional standards in the private security sector by improving qualifications and competencies,** promoting quality working conditions, and strengthening the professional image of security officers.

## Scope of training and career pathways

**BYA provides basic, repetitive, special and additional training for security workers, largely in VET formats.** It also contributes to improving the working environment through guidelines and dedicated support structures. **The organisation trains around 10,000 students per year, including approximately 1,500 participants in initial basic training.**

**Sweden also provides a broad range of legally regulated additional and specialised training and career pathways,** including monitoring and alarm receiving centre specialists, aviation security, cash-in-transit, public space security, armed guarding, prison services and explosive detection dog handlers. Additional micro-credentials exist in areas such as drone operation and advanced IT skills, as well as crisis response and detection training.

Social Partners, companies and public authorities jointly inform workers about available additional training pathways, ensuring transparency and accessibility across the sector.



## Overview

France represents a highly developed good practice for private security training, fulfilling all three identified quality marks for basic training: clear regulation through national law, organisation of training in VET frameworks, and strong involvement of Social Partners in training governance and delivery. A defining feature of the French system is the central role played by the CNAPS (*Conseil national des activités privées de sécurité*), operating under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior, which combines consultation, supervision and enforcement functions across the sector.

## Legal basis and governance in VET frameworks

Minimum requirements for basic training, training hours and curriculum content are defined by public authorities in national law. Basic training follows a nationally standardised curriculum and is organised within a VET framework, combining theoretical instruction and practical learning.

**To become a licensed security officer, trainees must complete 175 hours of basic training.** Entry requirements include upper secondary education, nationality requirements, fluency in the national language and completed background checks. Refresher training is mandatory by law, and trainees are not allowed to perform security tasks prior to licensing, reinforcing a strict compliance-based quality model.

## Curriculum development and the role of Social Partners

While the legal framework is state-led and defines curriculum content of basic training, **Social Partners play a strong and formalised role in curriculum governance.** Updates to basic training curricula are developed through consultative processes involving public authorities, Social Partners and chambers, in which Social Partners can make proposals. This ensures that training content reflects operational realities, labour-market needs and professional standards, alongside regulatory requirements.

**Basic training curricula cover a broad range of competences, including legal knowledge, ethics, crisis response, people and conflict management, technical systems and basic IT skills, reflecting the increasing complexity of security tasks.**

## CNAPS as Supervisory and Enforcement Authority

**A key institutional feature of the French system is the role of CNAPS, a specialised authority under the Ministry of the Interior. CNAPS plays a central role in:**

- Supervising and enforcing compliance with training and licensing requirements,
- Authorising and monitoring training providers and security companies,
- Acting as a platform for consultation with Social Partners and sectoral stakeholders,
- Ensuring alignment between training standards, professional conduct and public security objectives.

Through CNAPS, France combines strong state oversight with structured Social Partner involvement, contributing to high levels of professionalism and trust in the private security sector.

### Organisation of basic training

**Basic training is organised jointly by Social Partners, accredited training providers and public authorities.** Training providers may be public, private or operated by Social Partners, and auditing responsibilities are shared among competent authorities and sectoral actors. Financing is based on mixed arrangements involving employers, workers and public funding.

Licensed security officers may perform tasks such as static guarding, mobile patrols and technical security functions once training and background checks are completed. Shortened basic training frameworks, incl. micro-credentials and modular training, exist for side-entrants (e.g. students with former qualification in other profession, former police officers, military personnel, etc.)

### Additional and specific training pathways

**France also demonstrates a particularly strong performance in additional and specialised training, with more than 75% of security workers having completed additional training** – although a minimum work experience is required to enter additional specific training. Formal frameworks exist, and governance of additional training is largely led by chambers and Social Partners, rather than exclusively by public authorities.

Additional training pathways cover areas such as security management, critical infrastructure protection, public transport security, retail security and patrol and alarm response. Additional micro-credentials exist for drone operators. All additional training is organised within VET frameworks, and some pathways are integrated into higher education, including Bachelor-level programmes.

Curricula updates are driven by proposals from universities and Social Partners, reinforcing responsiveness to labour-market and technological developments. Training providers include public, private and Social Partner institutes, with auditing and financing based on mixed governance arrangements.



## Overview

The mandatory basic training system is extensively regulated by national law and directly supervised by the police, ensuring a high level of control, compliance and quality assurance. At the same time, Spain stands out for the complementary role played by **Social Partners, who have developed high-quality vocational and additional training pathways, including targeted measures to support women's participation in upskilling.** As a result, Spain reports a very high participation rate in additional and specialised training, exceeding 75% of the workforce.

## Governance Framework and Legal Basis for Basic Training

**Minimum requirements, training hours and curricula for basic training are defined by public authorities in national law**, notably under the Spanish Private Security Act (Ley 5/2014). The main mandatory entry pathway is the Ministry of Interior-authorized certificate training, which requires 180 hours of training followed by a police-administered examination.

This system is fully overseen by the police, including:

- Authorisation and supervision of training centres,
- Control of curricula and teaching staff,
- Organisation and validation of final examinations.

**This basic training is not organised within a VET work-based learning framework, and Social Partners do not have a formal governance role in this mandatory entry route.** Students are not allowed to perform security tasks prior to licensing, and refresher training is mandatory by law.

## A Complementary Formal VET Pathway

In parallel to the police-led entry route, **public authorities have developed with Social Partners a formal vocational education pathway within the education system:** the "Técnico en Seguridad" qualification. This pathway is organised as a **two-year VET programme** (approximately 2,000 hours), combining school-based learning with an in-company training phase. This VET route provides a professionalised and structured alternative pathway into the sector, contributing to higher qualification levels and longer-term career development.

## Additional and Specialised Training: Role of Social Dialogue

In additional and specialised training, **Social Partners play a more visible role, notably through joint training governance structures linked to the national system for training for employment**. Depending on the type of training, governance involves:

- Public authorities (especially for legally required specialisations),
- Bi-partite or joint committees with participation of Social Partners,
- Accredited public and private training providers.

Additional training pathways cover a wide range of specialisations, including aviation and maritime security, critical infrastructure protection, public transport and public space security, alarm response, events security, retail security and refugee centre protection. Some pathways are organised within VET frameworks, and others are linked to higher education, including university-based programmes for security management and security directors.

**More than 75% of security workers have completed additional or specialised training**, underlining the effectiveness and accessibility of these pathways.

## Inclusion and Gender Equality in Upskilling

**A notable good practice element in Spain is the existence of specific frameworks to support women's participation in additional training and upskilling**. While these measures are primarily embedded in the additional training system rather than in basic training, they contribute to improving diversity, career progression and long-term workforce sustainability in the sector.

## Key Characteristics of the Spanish Model

**Spain illustrates how strong state-led regulation and enforcement, combined with Social Partner-driven vocational and additional training initiatives, can coexist and mutually reinforce training quality**. The model demonstrates that even where Social Partners are not formally involved in mandatory basic training governance, social dialogue can play a decisive role in raising qualification levels, expanding VET pathways and promoting inclusive upskilling across the private security workforce.



## Overview

**Germany represents a dual and complementary training model in private security.** On the one hand, access to the profession is regulated by national law through a low-threshold mandatory basic qualification, organised and examined by chambers. On the other hand, Social Partners have developed a comprehensive, high-quality vocational education and training (VET) system, covering both initial and advanced qualifications and enabling clear career pathways. In addition, innovative Social Partner initiatives at regional level, such as the Excellence Initiative in Hamburg, demonstrate how targeted mentorship and quality assurance can address drop-out risks and support disadvantaged trainees.

## Mandatory Basic Training: Chamber-Based and Outside VET

**The legal minimum requirement to work as a security officer is regulated by national law** (notably §34a GewO and the *Bewachungsverordnung*). Entry into the profession requires either:

- Completion of a 40-hour instruction course (*Unterrichtungsverfahren*), or
- Passing a chamber-administered knowledge test (*Sachkundeprüfung*) without mandatory prior training.

There are **no formal entry requirements**, no nationally defined curriculum beyond a list of legal content areas, and no obligation to organise this basic training within a VET framework. The chambers (*IHKs*) play the central role in examination and certification, while training costs are borne by the individual. This statutory basic qualification is explicitly conceived as a minimum access threshold, rather than as a comprehensive professional training pathway.

## Social Partner-Led VET as the Quality Backbone

Beyond the legal minimum, **Germany's private security sector developed formal VET pathways jointly shaped by employers' organisations and trade unions.** Two nationally recognised VET occupations exist in the sector:

- *Servicekraft für Schutz und Sicherheit* (2 years), and
- *Fachkraft für Schutz und Sicherheit* (3 years).

These programmes are part of Germany's dual VET system, combining company-based training with education in public and private vocational schools. They are regulated through training regulations and curriculum frameworks adopted by law, following a structured process in which Social Partners jointly define occupational profiles, competence requirements and training structures, coordinated by the *Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training* (BIBB).

Workers can progress to further qualifications such as *Geprüfte Schutz- und Sicherheitskraft* or building on initial VET, *Meister für Schutz und Sicherheit*, and even Bachelor and Master degrees in Security, creating clear vertical career pathways within the sector.

## Quality Assurance and Training School Certification by BDSW

**An additional good practice is the role of the Federal Association of the Security Industry (BDSW) in certifying training institutes.** Through BDSW certification, training providers are audited with regard to qualifications of trainers, didactic quality and curricula, and technical and organisational resources. This voluntary but widely recognised certification helps ensure consistent quality standards in training beyond the legal minimum and provides transparency for companies, workers and public funding bodies.

## The Hamburg Excellence Initiative: Mentorship and Retention

**A particularly innovative Social Partner initiative is the Excellence Initiative for Training Companies in the Security Industry in Hamburg.** Launched jointly by BDSW, the trade union ver.di, regional security associations, the Chamber of Commerce and the local VET school, the initiative aims to reduce high drop-out rates in vocational training.

Key elements include:

- A jointly appointed ombudsperson supporting trainees in conflict situations,
- Quality criteria and a seal of excellence for participating training companies,
- Mandatory availability of qualified training managers, limits on working time, and protection of school phases,
- Targeted support for disadvantaged trainees, including additional learning assistance and prohibition of overtime.

According to participating stakeholders, the initiative has led to noticeably lower complaint and drop-out rates, demonstrating the effectiveness of local Social Partner cooperation and mentorship-based support structures.

## Additional and Specialised Training

**Germany also offers a broad range of additional and specialised training pathways, some regulated by law** (e.g. aviation security), others organised by chambers, universities or private providers. In VET-based pathways, Social Partners are involved in developing and updating curricula, whereas chamber-based and private qualifications follow different governance logics.



## Overview

**Basic training is regulated by national law, delivered in a VET-format, and complemented by structured refresher and specialist upskilling.** A distinctive strength is the role of the Slovenian Private Security Chamber (*Zbornica za razvoj slovenskega zasebnega varovanja - ZRSZV*), which acts as a sectoral competence hub for training delivery, development of standards, and quality-oriented support to the industry. Slovenia also reports a very high participation in additional/specialised training (around 75% of the workforce).

## Governance Framework and Legal Basis

**Minimum requirements, training hours and curriculum content for basic training are set in national law.** Basic entry requirements include education, nationality and language requirements, background checks and a medical examination. Initial basic training comprises 102 hours and is organised in a VET framework combining structured learning with job-related competence development.

## ZRSZV as a Sectoral Competence and Quality Institution

**A defining institutional good practice is the role of ZRSZV in organising training and supporting quality across the sector.** Under the Slovenian Private Security Act (*ZZasV-I*), ZRSZV is recognised as a representative professional association and may perform a range of sectoral functions, including: proposing occupational standards and training/catalogue content for national professional qualifications; supporting the development of education, training and upskilling; issuing recommendations on quality criteria and verifying their fulfilment through professional oversight; and conducting professional supervision of internal upskilling at licensed companies.

ZRSZV also positions training as a core service offer, providing professional upskilling and a dedicated secondary-level security programme ("*Tehnik varovanja*") for young people and adults.

## VET Pathways and Recognition of Competence

**Beyond basic training, Slovenia features a structured professional pathway through formal education.** The "*Tehnik varovanja*" programme is a secondary vocational programme and graduates can obtain direct recognition of professional competence for security roles (including access to national vocational qualifications), reducing duplication and supporting more coherent career entry and progression. Refresher trainings are set at every five years (with additional triggers possible through inspection measures).

## Additional and Specialised Training

**Slovenia provides a broad range of formal additional and specialised training pathways,** including security management, monitoring/alarm receiving centre specialisation, cash-in-transit, critical infrastructure protection, patrol/alarm response, public space and event security, armed guarding, and technical maintenance/installation specialisations. Entry to these pathways can involve higher thresholds (e.g., experience requirements, enhanced background checks, and upper secondary education). Additional training is financed through mixed arrangements, including the possibility of client participation.

# 4 Overview Table: Sectoral Training Systems across Europe

	 Austria	 Belgium	 Bulgaria	 Croatia	 Cyprus
<b>BASIC TRAINING</b>					
Is basic training regulated?					
Minimum legally mandatory training hours	none	139	260	100	
Are National Curricula Standardised ?					
Who updates curricula?	in Social Partner Training Institutes	accredited training providers	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)	Ministry of Interior	
Is training organised in VET framework?	 (voluntary)				
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation?	only employers in voluntary VET				
<b>ADDITIONAL TRAINING</b>					
Do formal frameworks exist?					
Are minimum requirements regulated?					
Are National Curricula Standardised ?				some	
Do sector-specific IT microcredentials exist?		depending on training provider			Communication technology
Do sector-specific soft skill microcredentials exist?	foreign languages, conflict mgmt and de-escalation, OSH	depending on training provider	Foreign languages, Professional ethical and intercultural skills		Foreign languages
Is training organised in VET framework?					
Do higher education pathways exist?					
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation	Only employers		Only employers		Only employers
Percentage of security workers w/ additional qualification		50-75%	5-10%		>75%

 yes  no  n/a

	 Denmark	 Estonia	 Finland	 France	 Germany
<b>BASIC TRAINING</b>					
Is basic training regulated?					
Minimum legally mandatory training hours	222	24	120	175	40 or exam only
Are National Curricula Standardised ?					(  )
Who updates curricula?	Tri-partite (Public authorities, Social Partners, Chambers, VET-schools)	bi-partite (Public authorities, employers)	tri-partite (Ministry, Employers, Training Providers)	Tri-partite (Public authorities, Social Partners, Chambers)	Public authorities
Is training organised in VET framework?	 (voluntary)				 (voluntary)
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation?	both			both	only in voluntary VET
<b>ADDITIONAL TRAINING</b>					
Do formal frameworks exist?					
Are minimum requirements regulated?		some			some
Are National Curricula Standardised ?		some		some	some
Do sector-specific IT microcredentials exist?	Drone operator, Other advanced IT skills			Drone Operator	
Do sector-specific soft skill microcredentials exist?	Foreign languages, ethical / intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt / de-escalation, Crisis training, OSH, HR mgnt				Foreign languages, ethical / intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt / de-escalation, Crisis training, OSH, contract mgnt
Is training organised in VET framework?	some			some	some
Do higher education pathways exist?					
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation	both			both	Only employers
Percentage of security workers w/ additional qualification				>75%	5-10%

 Greece	 Hungary	 Italy	 Lithuania	 Luxemburg	 Norway
					
105	200-250	40-100	68	24	168
					
	Chambers	bi-partite (Public authorities, Social Partners)	Ministry of Interior and Police	in Social Partner Training Institutes	Police
				 (voluntary)	
	both	both		both	both
					
					
					
Drone Operator	Cybersecurity specialist, Drone operator	Data protection specialist, Cybersecurity specialist, AI specialist, Drone operator, Other advanced IT skills			
OSH		Conflict mgmt, Crisis mgmt, OSH, HR mgmt, Contract mgmt, Drug and/ or explosives detection			
					
					
		both			
5-10%	5-10%	50-75%			

	 Poland	 Portugal	 Romania	 Serbia	 Slovakia
<b>BASIC TRAINING</b>					
Is basic training regulated?					
Minimum legally mandatory training hours	245	60	360	102	40
Are National Curricula Standardised ?					
Who updates curricula?	Ministry of Interior and Police	Public authorities	bi-partite (Sectoral Occupational Committee)	Ministry of Interior	Ministry of Interior
Is training organised in VET framework?					
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation?	only employers	only employers			
<b>ADDITIONAL TRAINING</b>					
Do formal frameworks exist?					
Are minimum requirements regulated?					
Are National Curricula Standardised ?					
Do sector-specific IT microcredentials exist?		Monitoring security systems			Cybersecurity specialist, Other advanced IT skills
Do sector-specific soft skill microcredentials exist?	Crisis mgmt, OSH	ethical / intercultural skills, OSH, contract mgmt			Crisis mgmt, OSH
Is training organised in VET framework?	some				
Do higher education pathways exist?					
Are Social Partners involved in training organisation	Only employers	Only employers			
Percentage of security workers w/ additional qualification					

 Slovenia	 Spain	 Sweden	 Switzerland	 the NL
			(  )	
102	180	300	20	1 year
				
Specialist Working Groups	Police	Police	Employer Organisation	tri-partite (SVPB)
	 (voluntary)			
Only industry chamber	only employers in voluntary VET	both	both	both
				
				
				
	Drone operator	Drone Operator, Other advanced IT skills		Digital resilience (cyber crime, social media, IT safety)
ethical and intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt, Crisis mgmt	Foreign languages, ethical and intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt / de-escalation, Crisis mgmt, OSH, HR mgmt, Contract mgmt, Drug and/ or explosives detection	Crisis mgmt, Drug and/ or explosives detection	Foreign languages, ethical and intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt / de-escalation, Crisis mgmt, OSH, HR mgmt	Foreign languages, ethical and intercultural skills, Conflict mgmt / de-escalation, Crisis mgmt
some	some	some	some	some
				
	Only employers	both	Only employers	both
>75%	>75%			10-25%

# About

**Since 1992, CoESS and UNI Europa are actively involved in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue for the private security services sector.**

## CoESS

The Confederation of European Security Services (CoESS) is recognised by the European Commission as the EU employers' organisation representative in the private security services, covering 23 national associations in Europe and representing 45,000 companies with 2 million security officers.

## UNI Europa

UNI Europa is the voice of 7 million service workers in 13 sectors that constitute the backbone of economic and social life across Europe – including private security. We coordinate the European Works Councils in the sector and European sectoral Social Dialogue committees.  
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