



# Standardizing Close Protection across Europe

## CONFERENCE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

*45 People registered for the conference, ranging from small private companies, global companies, NGOs to large-scale public offices, like the European commission. All companies/institutions who have shown an interest, can be seen on last page.*

### **21 MARCH 2022**

Kick-off with Henrik Otto, Int. director of IACPO.

As Danish security company Vasik ApS, thru IACPO training, have re-entered the CPO scene, we found that it is practically impossible to work as a close protection officer across European borders, without breaking the law. In some instances, it is next to impossible to get a permit or license – and in other, it is totally impossible/illegal to protect other people, if you are a civilian.

Identifying these issues, called for a poll. We asked high and low, on- as well as offline and found that no one company were ready to go online on camera and say that they had found a way to work legally across European borders. In fact, several people identified issues with their own laws and regulations, prohibiting them from working with close protection AT ALL.

Asked whether they could see a way out of this or not, a few had some local progress, where the police tried to comply with the need for private security, whilst the majority of CPOs and companies simply asked their clients to hire them as “consultants” rather than facing a long battle against authorities.

A small number of respondents wrote “We just went anyway” – rather than facing a “no” from the authorities and risking losing a client, some simply acknowledge, that they will probably not get caught hence working without the license/permission.

### **Why has it come to this?**

Well, it has been like this for decades, but in recent years the demand for a more professional approach has unveiled several issues, stated briefly here:

- A. The authorities perception of Close Protection is STILL an archaic notion of a bulky bulletcatcher, with little education, if any at all. It is considered a physical profession, rather than an academic and administrative profession.
- B. The CPOs representing the industry aloud in Europe, represents a mixed race of “peacocks” showing off, professional bigots and know-it-alls with little interest in the professional development. There seems to be the perception, that “If I say out loud, that I am better than ‘YZX’ often and loud enough, I may get more clients!” thus leaving themselves and the profession at a loss of integrity.
- C. As we have NDAs with most clients, it is a VERY hard profession to sell, politically. Especially since the police in most countries perceives CPOs as an enforcement segment, rather than a proactive and reactive service segment.

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## **Viable solutions**

Several were put forward in the days leading up to the conference and a couple on the conference. Most interesting are:

1. Dividing the education of the profession into the complexities of the different client types.
2. Split up the job in threat categories, governed by the police in each country. Educate CPOs in each and let police hand out licenses according to which category/threat you are allowed to work in.
3. Elevate the education to a higher degree, NOT measured by hours, but by tests and relevant content.

Speaker Catherine Piana, Secretary General of CoESS pointed out, that legislation in each European country would probably stand in the way of a standardization attempt. However, as CoESS do this on an international scale and in just as complex segments of the security industry, it was dubbed “possible”.

## **21 MARCH 2022**

After a recap of the text above, we started out by having Danish MP, Mr. Peter Skaarup (DF) present his view on the challenges the industry faces in Denmark, as well as Mr. Skaarup's thoughts on what obstacles would present themselves when trying to roll out a mutual standardization in Europe.

Mr. Skaarup, who was under the firm belief, that Danish law permitted CPOs, recognized that IF the law contradicts private CPOs to work in public and they are forced to work illegally, then legislation needs to be revisited and rewritten.

It was also in the public as well as authorities' interest, to regulate CPO work across Europe, when ever each country could identify a viable solution. Obviously, this couldn't and probably shouldn't be done right away, but when scalable instruments are in place.

Mr. Skaarup invited to a local bilateral meeting regarding Danish legislation and the challenges it faces.

Mr. Christian West from EPAccess presented a 30+ year outlook on the industry's evolution in terms of standardization. He also shed some light on the American attempts to standardize the industry in the United States. One committee worked within the framework of the ANSI, whilst another worked within the ASIS. Both seemed to have same purpose/end goal and both were serious about following through, until they had a finished product.

Mr. West suggested a privatized voluntary standard, like the ISO 9001/2015 as a platform, reminding the listeners, that it is still a MINIMUM standard, leaving everyone to build on top of it. The reason for this choice was, that the longevity of the struggle with authorities in each European country would decline if a mutual ISO standard (recognized in many different business segments across the world) were in place.

Finally Mr. West graciously (as he is a training provider himself) warned against letting training providers dictate the standards, as their outlook could be somewhat clouded. Letting clients and government officials help the training providers form a standard were preferred.

Last we had Mr. Tony Holyland from the Security Industry Authority presenting us with their work.

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The Security Industry Authority is a bridge between the public authorities and the private sector. They lobby politically for both camps, so to speak.

They have spent the last 20+ years building a framework which is now the mandatory Close Protection SIA standard. As they have just revised it significantly, it actually contains most of what is sought after and presents an excellent platform for future uniformity. Again Mr. Holyland, as well as Mr. West, reminded people, that the standards were MINMIUM standards, which each company easily could build on.

Mr. Holyland also revealed that the Security Industry Authority will be looking to expand their standards, to encompass further (maybe even higher) learning for security professionals.

Unfortunately, Mr. Richard Aitch of Mobius International, a renowned advocate for raising standards were not able to attend his speaking engagement.

### **CONCLUSION**

After a lengthy debate, the conference attendees concluded that the smart way to move forward, would be to create a European subcommittee under ASIS (international), and try to look at the existing frameworks around the world (British, Swedish, and French) and then present a possible solution, while in the meantime start negotiations with politicians and other significant stakeholders/institutions.

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[IACPO](#) wishes to thank our sponsor [Vasik ApS](#) for this opportunity. We would also like to thank [ASIS Denmark](#) chapter 228 for Co-hosting the physical event.

A special thanks to our speakers:

- Secretary general of [CoESS](#), Mrs. Catherine Piana
- Member of the Danish Parliament for Danish Peoples Party, [Mr. Peter Skaarup](#)
- CEO of [EPAccess](#), Mr. Christian West
- Rep. for the UK [Security industry Authority](#), Mr. Tony Holyland
- Our very professional moderator [Ms. Lisa Rowland](#)

I would also like to thank the individuals who have shown an interest in this topic and invite you all to reach out if you would like to be part of the exciting creation of a cross-border standard framework.

As GDPR prohibits a lot of things for obvious reasons, we have chosen to only reveal the institution/companies, where the interested who've signed up for this conference work – in a totally erratic and non-orderly fashion:

- Vasik ApS
- The European Commission
- AS Solution
- AGM
- IPG
- CPH. University, faculty of law
- Danish Security Trade Association
- UN DK
- S.M.A.T.
- HERE
- UrsaMajor International
- Intercruises
- Alchemy Global
- AXA
- Ford
- Partner TX
- XSEC Global
- QRF Solutions
- IACPO
- SSW GmbH
- Argus Security
- Christian Garlaschi Ltd.
- AK Logistics Services
- Executive Protective Service Holding PTY Ltd.
- G4S
- UN (ME)
- Global affairs Canada
- Firstcall
- HPE
- SEGURIDAD
- Prosper training facility
- Fenix outdoor
- Serbian Association of Bodyguards
- Several private individuals and the non-registered ASIS members of the Danish chapter

Should you have any insights or questions, please feel free to contact me on: [info@iacpo.com](mailto:info@iacpo.com)

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