

**Speech by Minister for Justice Beatrice Ask at
the Second European Summit on Private
Security, 8 December 2009**

Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, welcome to Sweden and thank you for inviting me to this summit. Judging from the programme, there are many important and interesting issues that you will be looking at today.

A more open and secure Europe is one of the main issues for the Swedish Presidency of the European Union. We are all happy that the ideas of free movement and a free market deepens and give our citizens new possibilities. But these opportunities also open for criminal activities. Cross-border crime, organized criminal networks and of course the use of new technologies give us new challenges.

This is the background for an increased awareness and more focused cooperation on security within the EU.

One important project during the Swedish presidency has been to prepare for a new multiannual programme for the EU cooperation when it comes to justice and home affairs. The board of Justice and Internal Ministers last week could agree on a proposal that will be adopted by the European Council on the 10th and 11th of December. We have reached consensus on guidelines and decisions that are both ambitious and that have a long perspective.

Our vision is that the programme should lead to a more secure and open Europe where the rights of individuals are safeguarded. The balance between

repressive measures and the right of, for example, privacy is a political responsibility. But all the measure taken for preventing and acting towards crime cannot only be a task for public authorities and that's why you are important.

A more secure Europe is a task that has to involve many actors. The issues that will be raised here today and the white paper that has been produced are part of the discussion that we must constantly pursue.

The security sector has an important task to fulfil here.

The security sector in Sweden has many years of experience of qualified work on security issues of various kinds. Every day, tasks are carried out that help to enhance security and safety. And I may say,

that one reason for this, is that the public authorities haven't been strong enough to meet the need of citizens and businesses. Not just industry and companies require the services of the security sector; private individuals, local government services and central government agencies also depend on the services that this sector can offer. Few people today would question the fact that the security sector is an important complement to the obligations of public bodies in the area of security.

In a world where security issues are high on the agenda and the security sector can offer numerous advanced services, it is essential that we have clear rules on what should be the responsibility of the public authorities and what can be delegated to private actors.

As is mentioned in the white paper, the Swedish and the other Nordic countries have a relatively generous attitude towards private actors in the area of public order and safety. Sweden introduced its first legal provisions in this area as early as 1974.

At the same time, the state must live up to its obligation to be the ultimate guarantor for people's safety and security. Therefore, the Swedish Government is currently making the largest ever investment in the Police Service. With the proposals recently presented, the Swedish Police Service has, under this Government, received total additional resources of SEK 2.4 billion (2.4 billion kronor) as a permanent appropriation increase. In addition, more than SEK 900 million (900 million kronor) in extra resources have been allocated for 2009. With these increased resources we will

increase the capacity of the police with 14 percent in volume, but of course much more in efficiency during a four year period.

The security sector is also in a period of expansion. Technology in the area of security has undergone dramatic development in recent years. New technologies make it easier to prevent crime and are to secure evidence for investigations. That is why it's an obligation to ensure that legislation is adapted to the opportunities – but also the risks – that these new technologies can bring.

Reform efforts are constantly under way to enable us to live up to the demands placed on modern and expedient legislation. From our perspective here in Sweden, I can mention a proposal to modernise Swedish legislation on camera surveillance that I

received from a government inquiry last month. This proposal would mean clearer and simpler regulations on how camera surveillance could or could not be used in Sweden in the future.

The proposals include the permit requirement being lifted in certain cases. There is also a proposal for a new rule entitling people to damages for any harm or invasion of privacy that may occur if camera surveillance has been in breach of the provisions of the law. The proposal will soon be circulated for formal consultation.

Another legislative proposal being dealt with concerns better protection for cash depots. The proposal means new tasks and additional authority for security firms.

I started by talking about the European level on Security and of course we do have to address questions on private security even more in the future.

New Swedish rules entered into force earlier this year to implement the EC Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications, which make it easier for security companies primarily from the EEA to do business in Sweden. But I presume that these are questions that has to be on the EU agenda in years to come. Let me give you an example.

In Sweden, as in most other countries, the police service has the main responsibility for checking that drivers are sober. Drink-driving is a major road safety problem and the need for checks is of

necessity greater than the resources the police service is able to allocate to this task.

To increase the number of checks, a legislative proposal is currently being prepared which will mean that people employed as security officers at security firms will, in some cases, have the right to take breath alcohol tests in order to prevent and detect drink-driving crimes. The proposal – which will be introduced on a trial basis – is limited to sobriety checks in ports that receive traffic from car ferries. I hope that the new rules will enter into force as early as 1 July (the first of July) next year.

But to be frank, drinking and driving is a huge problem all over Europe. Many different initiatives is needed to combat that danger. I'm convinced – the police authorities alone cannot solve the

problem. We need new ideas, technologies and actors to increase security also in this perspective.

On that note, I would like to thank you for listening and wish you good luck for today's discussions.