

Press Release

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Website: <https://worldsecurityreport.com/>

Protesters and climate change are bigger threat to security chiefs in Austria than any other European country

KLAGENFURT, 13 September 2023 - Subversives - hackers, protesters and spies - and climate change are predicted to be bigger security threats facing Austrian businesses than anywhere else in Europe over the next year, according to the 'World Security Report' published by G4S.

1,775 Chief Security Officers (CSOs) in 30 countries at large, global companies with total revenue of more than \$20 trillion took part in the first ever 'World Security Report'.

Three in five CSOs (60%) see "Subversives" as the most genuine security threat to their organisation; an increase of 20 percentage points on the previous 12 months and higher than the world average of 50% and European average of 45%.

Economic criminals at 44% and terrorists at 42% were the second and third most likely threat actor groups according to Austrian respondents.

Climate change, at 46%, is foreseen to be the biggest security-impacting hazard over the next 12 months - an increase of 11 percentage points on the previous year and significantly higher than the European average (30%).

When comparing other European countries, only Estonia at 40%, ranked climate change above the world average of 38%, but lower than their Austrian counterparts.

When it comes to the use of technology in security operations, security bosses revealed they currently use the most minimal or basic form of technology in Europe, at 48%. This is much higher than the world and European averages of 31% and 36%.

Austrian CSOs are the most reluctant to invest in the most modern technology - cutting-edge and emerging - over the next year. Only 31% of respondents want to be using this in their security operations - the lowest in Europe and well below the world and European averages of 52% and 39%.

The cost to implement new technology and the lack of skills in the workforce, both at 44%, were the top barriers to implementing the most advanced technology.

However, 55% of respondents intend to significantly improve their uptake of Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered surveillance and monitoring systems over the next five years to improve physical security operations. This is much higher than the world and European averages of 42% and 32%, and 15 percentage points above the second most likely country, Belgium.

Michael Schnitzler, Managing Director, G4S Austria, said: *"The threats and challenges that Chief Security Officers and business leaders in Austria continue to face remain significant. Protesters, climate change - and people protesting about climate change - are all expected to disrupt security operations in the next year.*

"The wildfires, flash flooding and tropical storms that have ravaged parts of Europe and North America in the last few weeks have a knock-on effect on the safety of our people, security operations and supply chains. Failure to factor this security-impacting hazard into security operations could have serious consequences and CSOs will continually need to keep abreast of these threats to ensure their companies are prepared and protect against them."

Stephane Verdoy, Regional CEO of G4S Europe, said: *"More than ever before, security leaders will face multiple risks and threats that are caused by geopolitical tensions and economic pressures.*

“Every Chief Security Officer’s top priority must continue to be the safety and security of their employees, customers, data and assets.”

Other key findings from the World Security Report:

Security threats and incidents

- CSOs from Belgium scored **climate change** at 32%, Germany at 30%, The Netherlands at 28%, The UK and France both at 25% and Denmark at only 17%. The European average was 30%.
- 75% of respondents believe their physical security budgets will **significantly increase**, with **rising operational costs** the main reason given by 46% of CSOs - higher than the European average of 39%
- 98% of CSOs based in Austria expect **the number of physical security threats to increase** over the next 12 months
- **Misuse of company resources or data** will be the biggest internal security threat, according to 31% of respondents. The world and European averages are 35% and 29%
- Physical security threats committed by **‘Violent criminals’** are expected to jump to 40% in the next year from 33% in the prior year. Only the UK will experience more incidents involving this threat actor group.
- External **‘malicious damage to company property’** over the next 12 months, at 8%, is predicted to be well below the world and Europe averages of 22% and 19%.

Technology of security

- **Improving security workforce productivity** at 38% and **more efficient security processes** and **reducing security risks** - both at 37% - are the top three drivers for the adoption of new technology to bolster company’s security operations. All three are above the European averages
- Austrian CSO’s **strongly agreed** with the top three following statements more than any other European country, the world and European averages: **Technology changes the skills required for security personnel** at 77%, and **Technology has increased the technical proficiency of security staff** and **Technology is improving the overall effectiveness of security operations**, both at 71%

Future of security

- **Customer service skills** at 73%, **Integrity and honesty** at 67% are the two most important traits in front-line officers
- The challenges to recruitment - **Perception of low career progression** at 78%, followed closely by **Retention of qualified and experienced security staff, appropriate skills** and **unattractive role** - all at 76% - are higher in Austria than any other country, the world and Europe averages

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