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Higher Standards and Regulation Needed for Event Security

As we are about to approach the busiest period in the event calendar, members of the Irish Security Industry Association's (ISIA) event security division are calling on Minister Shatter to uphold the promise made last year and implement regulation and licensing for both contractors and employees working in the area of event security.

Although, many areas of private security currently require both contractor and employees to hold a license, in the area of event security there is nothing in place to prevent companies from employing event security staff who have no formal training and have not been properly vetted as being suitable to fulfil a security role.

This is of genuine public concern. Over the next number of months we estimate that public footfall at concerts, festivals and sporting fixtures could be close to 3.5 million, if not more. Those millions of individuals will have an expectation that they will be able to rely on the organisers of the event to ensure that they are kept safe and secure. "Many parents may find themselves in the situation for the first time where they are allowing a son or daughter to attend a concert on their own. Those parents will want to feel secure that the staff entrusted with their son or daughter's safety and security are the most appropriate people to fulfil that role and have been properly trained to do so. At some events, that may be the case, but without regulation there is no guarantee that it will be", points out Michael McQuillan, Chairman of the ISIA's Event Security Division.

Currently in Ireland there is no licensing, which means nobody can be certain of the level of training completed by individuals working in this area. It also means that the company providing the security staff does not have to conduct their activities to any particular standard. Unlike other areas of private security, where individuals are Garda vetted and deemed suitable to work in security, there are no guarantees that the background of an individual working in event security will have been checked. The policies and procedures adhered to by security companies may vary greatly from event to event, as there is no minimum standard.

"The event security member companies of the ISIA have been calling for regulation of this sector for years and despite not seeing regulation implemented I must admit we have been very lucky to date", say Michael McQuillan. "However, we in the ISIA feel that the Minister for Justice now needs to follow up on the promise he made last year and implement the necessary regulation to protect the Irish public and visitors to the State attending events".

About the Irish Security Industry Association (ISIA)

The ISIA was established in 1972 and represents security companies across eight divisions of private security including; guarding services, electronic security, event and entertainment security, monitoring centres, transport/cash-in-transit, physical security, security consultants and secure data destruction.

The members of the ISIA are representative of approximately 70 per cent of both the turnover and the employees in the private security industry.

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