Security incidents are man-made threats and this implies that people play a central role, both those who attack a port, the criminals, and those who are supposed to protect it, security officers and personnel. Therefore, training and education is the most significant step in securing port facilities and preventing insiders, radicalization as well as non-malicious mistakes. Without training, personnel would not know typical failures of technical systems, how to use technologies and how criminals take advantage of them. Personnel need to know how to detect ongoing threats well in advance, for instance by being able to recognize weapons, understand suspicious behaviour of people inside and outside port facilities (spying and monitoring activities, etc.).

Hence, it is of outmost importance that PFSOs establish wide security awareness programmes aimed at improving their employees’ knowledge of best practices, an organization’s policy and usage of security technologies. Very often, this objective is accomplished by establishing cooperation with security consultants, and when possible in coordination with national authorities (to assure the quality of the courses delivered). In Sweden, port security courses are available in different forms depending on the target audience. For instance, some security companies have developed a 2-day course package for PFSOs. Other courses, limited in content and learning objectives, are also available for personnel with special security duties as well as other terminal operators and managers. Finally, security companies support the development and running of workshops, table-top exercises, or drills and exercises to perform live training of personnel.

The METPROM Solution

In the METPROM project, a set of leading maritime experts and universities in Europe is developing an e-learning platform that could contribute in making security education more cost-effective. Partners include: the Piri Reis Maritime University in Turkey (project leader), GÜSOD, the Turkish Association of Private Security Services, the University of Borås in Sweden, the Stichting STC-Group in the Netherlands, the World Maritime University in Sweden and Wismar University of Technology, Business and Design in Germany.

The platform being developed is primarily based on the recommendations provided for training available in the ISPS code (International Ship and Port Facility Security) and IMO (International Maritime Organization) handbook. In addition, the whole training programme is being split into a set of modules with different time lengths, learning
objectives and level of difficulties. With such a platform, available on-line, security personnel will be able to attend a class at any time of the day, from any place in the world with an Internet connection, and free of charge. In addition, the modularization of the security course will avoid personnel to sit in classes for days or hours. Instead, it will be possible to split and organize the learning path in a manner to reduce conflicts with security duties in ports. In addition, to ensure continuous engagement, the course is well-fitted with animations as well as practical examples and exercises, in order to guarantee that major security concepts are well understood with minimal effort.

Paving the way to a common European course

The METPROM team is aware that the security of the European Union could be as weak as the weakest of its ports! Hence, it is of outmost importance to ensure that all port facilities are able to guarantee the same level of security training and education. This needs to be accomplished while European educational visions like Life Long Learning (LLL), Vocational and Educational Training (VET) and free mobility of workers are pursued. Hence, an important part of the METPROM project is to recommend a roadmap to harmonization, i.e. ensuring that the course will be available to all ports in Europe, leading to similar professional qualifications. This is a major challenge if one considers that ports in different countries in Europe have different threats, cultural backgrounds, legislative frameworks, crime environments, etc. To accomplish these objectives, the University of Borås in Sweden has developed a roadmap suggesting actions in three main requirement areas: operational, strategic and legal (Figure 1).

From an operational viewpoint, the course needs to be modularized and made available in different languages. The course needs to be adopted by all countries in accordance with common minimum learning requirements, objectives, expected results, and hours of teaching. Finally, the course needs to be available on-line. From a strategic viewpoint, security standards and a harmonized Quality Assurance System have to be developed and implemented; in order to ensure the establishment of common pre-requisites to access the courses as well as common outcomes to assess examinations. In addition, Member States should commit to the implementation of the operational requirements. Finally, from a legal standpoint, we need an international convention giving recommendations on security training and education in ports. In accordance to this, EU directives and national legislations need to be amended and disseminated.

The final goal of METPROM is limited to deliver the operational requirements stated in the roadmap, hence a security course available to European port facilities on-line, in at least three different languages. However, more work needs to be done in the future, to ensure that examination systems will lead to similar professional qualifications as well as that acceptance and implementation is achieved in European Member States.

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The author of this article would like to thank the METPROM project (Modular Enhanced Training Programme for European Maritime Security Personnel - 2012-1-TR1-LEO05-35121), an EU-funded Leonardo Da Vinci Project under EU Lifelong Learning Programme to enhance Vocational Education and Training in Port Security. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the EU Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein. You can contact Luca Urciuoli at: luca.urciuoli@hb.se.