Interim Report on the SECOTA Project at the ESSA General Assembly 2019

* **First SECOTA comparative tests of international testing laboratories completed**
* **Long-term benchmarking to increase comparability for customers and insurers**

**Frankfurt, 10 December 2019 –** "The first practical test series in international laboratories institutes in the course of the SECOTA project (Security, Equivalent, Certification, Organization, Testing and Auditing) has been completed“, reported Falko Adomat, Deputy Managing Director of the European Security Systems Association (ESSA), last week at the ESSA General Assembly 2019 in Frankfurt.

In his SECOTA interim report, he explained the testing procedure, which six testing bodies from six countries underwent in the first run. In the independent test, each of these bodies performed 35 tests with different tools on specially prepared, identical sets of 16 test specimens per body. The participation of the laboratories in the SECOTA project (Security, Equivalent, Certification, Organization, Testing and Auditing) is voluntary.

**More transparency for customers and insurers**

This is the largest independent comparative test in accordance with EN 1143-1 to date, with each laboratory starting with the same requirements. "An independent committee has determined in advance that really every laboratory is welcome, regardless of association affiliations, links to certification bodies, size or geographical origin," Adomat clarified. The SECOTA project is a long-term project. The anonymous benchmarking has been designed to ensure comparable performance of the participating laboratories in the long term.

According to Adomat, the evaluation of the first series of tests revealed some differences between some of the tools used. "The institutes themselves know how they performed compared to the others - and can now use this information to work specifically on improving their performance at the weak points that were discovered," he explained.

**Anonymization of the results precondition for many participating laboratories**

Discussions on the anonymization of test results emerged at the ESSA General Assembly. Adomat emphasised that SECOTA was not about blaming individual laboratories for possible quality defects in the short term, but about raising the level of all laboratories in the long term and about harmonising them. In order to win as many laboratories as possible for this process, SECOTA will publish the test results only in anonymous form. "Our goal is to ensure comparability of certification processes in the long term. Consumers, commercial users of secure storage units and insurers are dependent on valid information," he stressed. This is the only way to build trust in the certification and the actual security level of tested safes. To this end, SECOTA as an independent, serious authority will regularly check how testing laboratories interpret the European standard EN 1143-1 and to what extent they achieve the industry benchmarks in their tests.

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**Background ESSA**

ESSA – The International Security Association based in Frankfurt is the leading international association of the security industry. At present, the ESSA has 124 members from 37 countries.

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**Legend:** Photo 251

First SECOTA comparison tests have been completed.

**Photo:** ESSA