

**EUROPEAN SECURITY FORUM, BRUSSELS, 23 SEPTEMBER**  
**Philip Bowman, Chief Executive, Smiths Group plc**

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us for today's European Security Forum. I'm delighted to see such a broad range of political leaders, policy-makers, and industry colleagues here today.

This event also marks the formal opening of Smiths Detection's office in Brussels, which I expect to be part of a more sustained focus by the wider Smiths Group on the key role now played on the world stage by government institutions here.

Across our Group – which runs from port and border security to counter-terrorism applications, and from medical devices to engineering solutions for the energy sector – I place great value on the importance of developing strong and robust relationships with government decision-makers.

Today, we're starting as we mean to go on – by bringing industry, government and regulators together in a spirit of open debate and constructive challenge, in order to help shape a more secure and more prosperous future for the citizens of Europe.

That responsibility is a heavy one, and it rests with us all. We all have a role to play – not just in the occasionally rather esoteric reaches of developing a security strategy for Europe, but also in ensuring that we deliver a direct, measurable and practical impact to keep our people and our borders safe.

At Smiths Detection we saw a vivid example of that in June of this year, when one of our mobile HCV cargo scanners helped French authorities to seize their biggest ever haul of illegal drugs on a road in France – almost 700 kilos of cocaine, with a street value of almost €50m.

Every day, in literally hundreds of buildings, ports and airports across Europe, our X-ray machines are working to protect the public. And, as the leading investor in our field in R&D, we have steadily increased the proportion of funding we devote to developing cutting-edge technologies which protect our security.

Importantly, our aim is not to pursue security for security's sake. Our goal is to provide, wherever possible, security solutions that ease disruption, and that enhance people's freedom to go about their daily lives safely.

The balance between security and liberty is the hallmark of almost every debate on this issue. Getting that balance right requires constant commitment and vigilance – as well as a healthy dose of pragmatism and flexibility. Smiths, which started life more than 150 years ago as a watchmaker and was an early pioneer of speedometers, knows a bit about the delicacies of calibration and recalibration.

We would do well to remember this as we develop policies to safeguard Europe's future resilience. That means not being lulled into a false sense of security, so that we properly address the threats our societies face.

But just as importantly, it means being proportionate and restrained about the infringements we make on individuals' lives and liberties.

I am conscious that today's participants reflect a wide spectrum of views on Europe and its institutions. And I'm not just talking about the representatives of DG Transport and DG Enterprise who are here today!

For me, having worked and lived in many countries across the globe, one of the original European goals I prize the most is that of freedom of movement.

As Chief Executive of a company operating out of North America and in many Member States, new and old, and serving one hundred other countries around the world, I have cause to reflect on freedom of movement quite a lot. Usually in rather more airport lounges than I would choose to visit, and often in rather longer check-in queues than I would wish to spend my time.

Our freedom of movement as individuals continues to be constrained by the restrictions on screening for laptops and liquids which are part of check-in baggage.

***We all understand the compelling reasons why these restrictions were first introduced – and if we needed any reminder, the outcome of the Operation OVERT trial into the airline bomb plot provided it earlier this month.***

***But we are equally entitled to question how long they should be kept in place; and when, given the developments in screening technology we have seen in recent years, these restrictions will be lifted.***

***Smiths Detection has now developed the kit that we believe can securely screen laptops without first removing them from passengers' bags. Lifting the laptop restriction could make an early, practical improvement to the lives of the travelling public – perhaps halving the length of Europe's airport queues. That's why I believe we should be making faster progress on testing the technology to ensure it meets the right levels of security assurance and to allow it to be used.***

***Sometimes I wonder if the same energy and élan is always applied to relieving restrictions as is usually shown – for very good and understandable reasons – in imposing them.***

***With the April 2010 deadline fast approaching for reaching a screening solution that eliminates the need to remove liquids from carry-on baggage, it is fair to say that an injection of energy and élan is now more than necessary so that we can improve the passenger experience – and get Europe moving more freely, and queuing less frequently.***

On this issue as with longer-term policy debates, I look forward to Smiths helping to lead the debate, and to working with you to reach solutions that deliver the goal of maximum safety with minimal social disruption.

I am pleased to say that Magnus Ovilus and Caroline Persson are heading up our new office here, and I encourage you to build a relationship with them over the weeks and months ahead – as well as with Andrew Lappin who has responsibility for co-ordinating Government Affairs activity around the world and across all the diverse businesses that comprise Smiths Group.

Thank you.