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It is clear that transport infrastructures – and in particular airports and aeroplanes – remain favourite targets for terrorist groups. Their arsenal has become more diversified and smuggling techniques ever more unexpected. Non-metallic objects (plastics, ceramic, etc.) and liquid explosives pose a very high risk as they cannot be reliably detected with currently-deployed screening equipment.

To counter these threats security devices and methodologies have to be constantly upgraded. However this must not be done at the expense of citizens' privacy, personal dignity or health.

It is therefore key that when further developing the EU security policy framework decision-makers, under the leadership of the Spanish Presidency, aim at striking a proportionate balance between security and the respect of privacy.

To help the Spanish Presidency and EU decision-makers achieve this objective, ISCON Video Imaging (ISCON), an independent engineering firm specialised in developing advanced-image analysis technology for the security sector, has engineered body scanners building on thermo-conductive infra-red image analysis technology which are therefore able to detect any hidden objects regardless of their nature (explosives, narcotics, ceramic weapons, liquids) and size while preserving citizens' privacy, dignity and health.

Thermo conductive infra-red creates thermal imprints of the concealed object on the clothes of a passenger. These imprints are translated into high resolution images showing the location, size and shape of the object, thus enabling the operator to easily identify possible threats. Sensitive body parts are thus not disclosed and no photo realistic images of the body are produced. In addition, as citizens do not appear naked, the storage of their photos is less problematic. ISCON body scanners could be programmed to delete images automatically. The introduction of body scanners as a screening option would ensure passengers do not have to go through the intrusive physical search. Hence, the respect for privacy, human dignity, as well as the protection of personal data is thus fully guaranteed by ISCON infra-red imaging body scanners.

These body scanners also have no health impacts whatsoever, as the infra-red scanning technology does not emit any radiation. Infra-red imaging is also used for medical diagnosis in a variety of fields, ranging from oncology to respiratory disorders and surgery. ISCON body scanners are therefore not only safe for both passengers and crews but also for airport security personnel.

We are convinced our body scanners provide a proportionate response to the current and upcoming security threats faced by the aviation sector.

We call on the Spanish Presidency to make the policy debate on screening methods at European airports one of its top priorities and to ensure the rapid development of a regulatory framework authorising the deployment of body scanners. This will guarantee a high level of security for air passengers and crews is maintained.