

PRESS RELEASE

Banks: ABI, more technology increases branch security

The increasingly advanced defence monitoring and the installation of digital video-recording devices has led to a drop in bank robberies and the onsite identification of almost half the bank robbers.

More metal detectors, CCTV surveillance and biometric devices: technology in banks has increased and, in equal measure, also the security of the 30,000-plus branches in Italy. In 2008, in fact, bank robberies reduced by over 27% and this positive trend was confirmed in the first ten months of 2009 by a further 24% drop compared to the “hits” recorded for the same period in the previous year. Good news also in terms of combating the phenomenon: in 2008, thanks to the digital recording systems installed in 90% of bank branches, the police were able to identify almost half the robbers in branch holdups (46.8%). These are the key results of the last report on branch protection systems and services produced by OSSIF, ABI’s security research centre, based on figures from over 26,500 branches, equal to almost 80% of the total. The report – which analyses the banks’ crime-fighting systems and, in particular, the twelve different system types – provides a snapshot of a sector that is strongly committed to security. More and more often this also means more technology, as confirmed in the 800 million euro invested every year by Italian banks in technologically advanced systems for their branch surveillance and security, to control branch access, discourage thieves from entering, limit cash availability and police investigations support.

Among the systems analysed by the OSSIF, the most commonly used by Italian bank branches are anti-robbery systems. Specifically, alarm and video-recording systems are installed in 90% of branches. Video-recordings are used in 87.5% of branches (compared to 75.3% in 2008), and CCTV surveillance in 16.2% of cases (compared to 14.2% in 2008). Main entrance protection systems are also widely used (76.3%) as are counter staff protection devices (83%). For cash custody and handling in the branches, more than half (52.6%) are installed with simple timed compartments, 17.5% use a cash in/cash out system and 2.5% also use banknote tracking systems. With regard to branch access protection, the device most widely used is the metal detector (54.1%), whilst biometric devices are on the increase – now installed in 7.7% of branches (compared to 6% in 2008). Lastly, among the most common security services is “security transport” (65.2%), followed by “night-time and weekend emergency services” (55.1%), “counting” (26.9%), “automatic alarm signal forwarding” (21.3%) and “guard services” provided in 14.5% of branches with either 24-hour presence (12.4%) or at specific times (2.1%).

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