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27th & 28th September 2023  
**Amsterdam, NL**

# Insights from Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange

## INTERVIEW WITH



**Arshad Ahmed,  
CISO - Africa Region at Mercedes Benz AG**



Mercedes-Benz

*"The Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange conference will give a platform to introduce the latest technology that can address the current threats in the security landscape as well as introduce the latest defensive tech to cyber executives to stay ahead of the game."*

**CISO Africa Region, Mercedes-Benz**



**Arshad Ahmed**  
CISO - Africa Region  
Mercedes-Benz AG

Coming to Amsterdam in September 2023, Automotive IQ are thrilled to introduce the Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, vehicle and product security teams, as well as IT and OT security teams, must remain flexible to address new challenges, standards, and regulatory obligations. These include advancements in cybersecurity technology, the mandatory compliance with ISO/SAE 21434, as well as increased regulations in Europe with R155/R156, and forthcoming regulations from China.

This September, industry leaders are invited to Amsterdam for the Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange—an exclusive event that offers CISOs, CIOs, Vehicle/Product

Security Officers, IT/OT Security Officers, and Global Managers from major OEM/Tier-1 companies an invaluable opportunity to enhance their knowledge, preparedness, and motivation.

Prior to the Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange, Automotive IQ interviewed Arshad Ahmed, CISO - Africa Region at Mercedes-Benz AG South Africa, to gain insights into his expectations from the exchange and to understand the specific challenges faced by Mercedes-Benz AG in the automotive cyber security space.

**Q: Arshad, it's our pleasure to be hosting you amongst several other CISOs at the Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange in Amsterdam this September. For the benefit of our readers, can you describe your responsibilities as CISO for Mercedes-Benz's Africa Region**

**Arshad**

I'm really looking forward to presenting at the conference and representing Mercedes Benz Africa. To tell you more about my role and responsibilities as CISO, I:

- Ensure that all applications that are managed by South Africa are secure and safe from intrusion
- Guarantee that the global policies, as well as local law, is adhered to cyber security standards and maintained
- Ensure that staff are aware of cyber security, and to conduct relevant and regular training
- Review security vulnerability reports to identify common threats and monitor resolution of threats
- Update management and the executive board on cyber security related topics

**Q: The Executive Exchange has been designed as a meeting-ground for senior level automotive decision-makers to not only network but to discuss solutions to today's greatest vehicle/product security and IT/OT security challenges.**

**In your opinion Arshad, what are the industry's greatest challenges and most pressing issues right now?**

**Arshad**

Firstly, getting the right cyber security talent is a challenge; having members of the team with the correct skills and knowledge has been a major challenge for us. In terms of technical challenges, ensuring that our applications are secure from data leaks and ransomware attacks is a constant threat or concern. The challenge for the vehicle itself, I would say, is ensuring that the vehicle is secure, particularly with the development of connected vehicles as this opens us up to the vehicles being accessible and hackable.

**Q: This is your first time working with Automotive IQ and first Exchange experience! What are you most looking forward to?**

**Arshad**

What I am really looking forward to, and what I think will be beneficial to me and Mercedes, is the opportunity to connect with others in the industry and generally collaborating with fellow cyber security specialists on issues that affect all automotive OEMs. What I think will also be beneficial is to engage with vendors to identify the latest technology that they have to offer that will help us resolve our issues.

**Q: An important part of the Executive Exchange are 1-2-1 meetings between OEMs and Solution Providers. These meetings are arranged based on each OEM's requirements, with you having your very own personalised itinerary and meeting schedule. Personally, what type of solution providers are you most interested in meeting?**

**Arshad**

I am most looking forward to collaborating with fellow cyber security specialists on issues that affect all automotive OEMS, since we are fighting the same battle and facing the same threat landscape it will be extremely beneficial to me to connect with fellow security specialists to see how they handled common threats, what technology they are implementing, as well as meeting solution providers to identify the latest technology that is available.

In areas such as security it's essential to keep ahead in the ever-changing environment and

engagements like this are fantastic opportunities to get exposure to the latest threats as well as solutions. I look forward to networking and meeting key players in this space.

**Q: Candidly, if I asked you to invite another 2 CISOs or senior automotive decision makers to the event, what would your elevator pitch to them look like? In other words, your top 3 reasons why they should attend the event?**

**Arshad**

Events like the Automotive IQ's are important for Cyber security specialists working in the automotive industry to connect and discuss common issues and challenges facing OEMS, the Automotive IQ conference gives a platform to introduce the latest technology that can address the current threats in the security landscape as well as introduce the latest defensive tech to cyber executives to stay ahead of the game.

**Join Arshad at the Automotive Cyber Security Executive Exchange conference, 27th & 28th September 2023, Amsterdam, NL.**

## **WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE TO ATTEND THE AUTOMOTIVE CYBER SECURITY EXECUTIVE EXCHANGE?**



**BY-INVITATION ONLY, CAPPED & QUALIFIED AUDIENCE**



**PRESENTATIONS, THINK-TANKS & VIP ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**



**PERSONALISED ITINERARY TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS**



**CURRENT, STRATEGIC & FUTURE-PROOF AGENDA**



**1-2-1 BUSINESS MEETINGS**



**2 NIGHTS FREE ACCOMMODATION AS WELL AS REFRESHMENTS THROUGHOUT THE EVENT**



**Steven Wicks, Online Content Manager at Automotive IQ**

**E: [enquire@automotive-iq.com](mailto:enquire@automotive-iq.com) | T: +44(0)20 7368 9300**