



Definition of CESI's position

Adopted by CESI's Presidium in its meeting
held on 18 September 2013.

Confédération Européenne des Syndicats Indépendants

European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions ★ Confederazione Europea dei Sindacati Indipendenti
Europäische Union unabhängiger Gewerkschaften ★ Confederación Europea de Sindicatos Independientes

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1. What does CESI stand for?

1.1 As an umbrella organisation of independent trade unions, CESI defends the interests of its member organisations on a European level in the public and the private sectors.

1.2 CESI's work rests on the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, personality, publicity and representativeness.

1.3 CESI stands for freedom and democracy, and therefore promotes independence from party politics and trade union pluralism.

Solidarity, subsidiarity and personality

1.4 The fact that the human dignity of all is inviolable is the foundation of CESI's philosophy. The most important goal of trade unions is solidarity. Solidarity is based on the social principle of human cohesion. The principle of a solidarity-based social safety network to buffer the weaknesses of any given society is one of the founding pillars of our trade unions.

1.5 However, solidarity goes hand in hand with the principle of subsidiarity. Here, subsidiarity means that responsibility for action should primarily lie on the lowest level. The subsidiarity principle applies to relations between citizens and state, intra-state hierarchies and to the relation between member states and Europe. Thus, in principle, action should take place on the level which is closest to the citizens.

1.6 CESI defends the European social model and vehemently demands its further development. CESI is aware of the limitations of this model. As a consequence, the responsibility for social policy should remain in the hands of the member states. Trade unions and the social partners should be involved in decisions relating to social policy on all levels.

1.7 Democracy and social pluralism require individual freedom and personal responsibility. Therefore, the respect of personality, that is, the respect of the self-determination and autonomy of every human being, should be granted.

1.8 Thus, CESI's objective is not only to protect workers, but also to help them successfully demand their rights be respected wherever they may need to do so.

1.9 For CESI, personality and subsidiarity do not mean that the state does not have to fulfil its duties. EU member states and their public administrations are the guarantors of

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peace, democracy and prosperity. They are the guardians of the fundamental rights and of the reign of the rule of law. They provide the framework conditions for growth, employment and investment in Europe's socio-economic order. As the sole body responsible for sovereign duties, the public sector has special obligations.

Party-political independence and trade union pluralism

1.10 CESI defends party-political independence. Workers can count on CESI defending their rights and freedoms independently of party-political and ideological viewpoints.

1.11 The political independence of CESI guarantees that the realisation of its values, the achievement of its goals and the defence of the trade unions' interests will not be influenced by political powers and will respect different ideologies.

1.12 In addition to political independence, trade union pluralism is of the highest importance. Political, social and trade union pluralism are fundamental characteristics of democracy. This is where the future lies. A single trade union with exclusive representative rights would not be able to represent the multi-faceted interests of society and would not respect the principles of diversity of opinion and freedom of association.

2. Achievement of trade unions' goals

2.1 Today, the crisis is putting pressure on the rights of workers, which are increasingly being reduced. This is also affecting the public sector who is the guarantor of social services. That is why it is more important than ever before to have a strong body to represent workers, especially on a European level.

Representation of interests vis-à-vis the EU institutions and the member states and their bodies

2.2 In Brussels, on a European level, decisions are made that are having an increasingly broad impact. Specifically, the broader coordination and management of economic, social and financial political measures and the determination of unique (minimum) standards are directly affecting workers' employment conditions in the member states.

2.3 Thus, the legal systems in the member states are being increasingly defined by the legislation and jurisdiction on the EU level. This is why CESI must follow up legislative initiatives on an EU level with a critical eye.

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2.4 This is particularly true of developments and initiatives that have a substantive influence on the working conditions of employees in the member states. Thus, it is crucial that an exchange about these developments and initiatives with the EU institutions take place.

2.5 As a result, it is important that the interests of CESI and its member organisations be represented on all levels, both on the national ones and the European one. Only thanks to such combined representation on both national and European levels is it possible to defend trade unions' interests in a sustainable fashion and push them forward.

2.6 The foundations of this task and of CESI's success are: trust, the sharing of information and communication.

Representation of interests in the various social dialogues

2.7 Social dialogue is especially important in order to effectively promote workers' interests.

2.8 CESI participates in several European social dialogues in a successful manner, thanks to its representativeness and competence. This work must be continued and expanded.

2.9 CESI must influence the agenda in the social dialogues and the decisions made to a greater extent. CESI aims to participate in more social dialogues.

Increase in lobbying and public relations

2.10 At the same time as increasing its presence in the social dialogues, CESI wants to strengthen its general lobbying work.

2.11 Amongst other activities, this should be done thanks to the participation of the President, Secretary General, CESI Vice-presidents, the Presidents and Vice-presidents of the CESI commissions and trade councils.

2.12 Efforts will be made to make use of synergy effects such as the establishment of common positions with other organisations and trade unions as well as common lobbying activities.

2.13 CESI's webpage is the public "face" of the organisation. It should also be the internal communication platform for its members. The members' information and collaboration between the trade unions will be improved thanks to this platform. To achieve this goal, a network with contact persons in the member organisations will be set up.

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3. Representation of CESI and its members

3.1 The aim of all CESI's activities is to support its members and represent their interests. Here, close attention is paid to the equal treatment of all member organisations, regardless of their size, and to their fair representation.

(1) 3.1 bis – As to the member organisations, they have the obligation to support the cohesion and representation of CESI's interests. Thus, they shall safeguard, promote and defend the objectives targeted by CESI.

Trade councils, commissions and other experts' committees' work

3.2 The collaboration of the member organisations of CESI in the experts' committees guarantees that they will bear influence on the results achieved, as well as ensuring the greatest possible level of independence for CESI. The results of their work are publicly disseminated by the responsible mandate holders, especially at events, seminars, in positions and social dialogues.

Organisation of symposia and conferences

3.3 CESI Europe Academy is responsible for the planning and organisation of symposia and conferences. The aim is to achieve greater flexibility thanks to increased participation of the member organisations in the planning and organisation of these events. To do so, additional resources must be tapped into, so that more events focussing on European issues may be proposed. Further plans include the organisation of common projects with individual member organisations and other partners.

Other CESI events

3.4 CESI will organise additional events on a regular basis. At these events, discussions on trade unions' work in the dialogue with the European institutions will take place, and the results will be integrated into trade unions' work. The subject matter of these events must be relevant issues at the time of the event. The aim is also to raise CESI's visibility, so it becomes better known as well as to make more contacts.

The strengthening of existing partnerships, the establishment of new ones and contacts with young people and their involvement

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3.5 Thanks to the strengthening of existing partnerships and the establishment of new ones, more contacts will be made. On one hand, this should take place via the promotion of activities for the benefit of member organisations with observer status; on the other, via the establishment of further contacts with other organisations, social partners and European and international institutions.

3.6 CESI will involve young people more in its trade union activities. It will also create youth committees to achieve this aim.

4. Publicity and representativeness

4.1 In order to ensure its demands are met on the various levels, CESI will expand its activities on both the European and national levels and publicise them.

4.2 To increase its level of representativeness, trade unions in Europe that are not yet linked to CESI will be identified and recruited to participate in CESI's work.

4.3 The aim is to firmly establish CESI's position as an active umbrella trade union organisation in the minds of the member organisations, the European institutions, the member states and their institutions, as well as in those of other European organisations and to present it as a meaningful, competent interlocutor.

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