
Determination of position

Adopted by the Board of CESI

The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is an association of free, independent European trade unions.

CESI is committed to the principle of democracy and is not tied to any particular ideology. It is in line with the principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (i.e. the European Convention on Human Rights). It defends the principles and aims listed in the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights and in the Council of Europe's European Social Charter.

1. The tasks of European trade unions – The role of CESI

An increasing number of decisions and laws are struck and adopted on an EU level that have a concrete impact on workers.

The expansion of the coordination and governance of economic, social and fiscal measures, as well as the establishment of (minimum) single standards, is having an increasing influence on employment conditions and the daily lives of workers in the member states.

In addition, globalisation and the digitalisation of the world of labour as well as new developments on the labour market imperatively call for regulations concerning labour relations, in order to protect workers on a supranational and international level.

Finally, precisely in these times of crisis, workers' rights are suffering from increased pressure.

That is why it is crucially important that trade unions should defend workers' interests on a European level.

The defence of its members' interests is the core of CESI's trade union work. Moreover, it is understood that trade unions have an increasing role to play as mediators between citizens and politicians must be given greater importance.

CESI supports European and national regulations that make good living and working conditions possible.

As a recognised social partner, CESI bears an influence on the establishment of binding agreements and is a partner in the dialogue on relevant issues.

2. Fundamental principles of CESI's trade union activities

CESI defends trade union pluralism as a core component of freedom and democracy. A single trade union with exclusive representative rights cannot represent the multi-faceted interests of society, and it would not respect the principles of diversity of opinion and freedom of association.

CESI views non-partisanship as a guiding principle. Interests are represented and defended independently from party-political influences and ideologies.

CESI defends a European social model based on solidarity and subsidiarity. In CESI's opinion, solidarity is a fundamental value in Europe.

CESI strictly adheres to ethical fundamental principles in its work. Objectivity, integrity, fairness, incorruptibility and transparency are the beacons of CESI's actions.

When fulfilling its duties, CESI implements the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality. CESI strives to ensure men and women fill leadership positions in the organisation equally.

CESI is a forward-looking trade union umbrella organisation. It promotes the development of its own youth organisation and its inclusion in internal decision-making processes.

CESI is open to trade unions that respect these fundamental principles.

3. Focus on 'public service'

CESI's particular strength lies in public service.

In free and democratic legal systems, states must provide the necessary framework to enable their citizens to pursue their personal development and guarantee their social security.

To achieve these aims, the states require efficient administrations with qualified, motivated staff, which requires that they be employed in sufficient numbers.

Public administrations are the guardians of fundamental rights and of the rule of law. They lay down framework conditions for growth, employment and investment. They are the guarantors of freedom, peace, democracy and prosperity.

The public services and its employees represent the rule of law. The employees in the public services guarantee the citizens' right to good administration. The trade unions which represent these employees therefore play an important role.

4. CESI's fundamental action strategies

The General Secretariat coordinates CESI's work and implements its decisions.

The results of this work are publicly disseminated by the CESI's competent mandate holders, especially at events, seminars, in positions and negotiations.

All members participate in CESI's tasks. Every member is adequately represented and listened to.

Participation in CESI's committees guarantees that the influence of the members is a reality, and this grants CESI expertise, competence and a unanimous voice.

CESI and its members are committed to mutual cooperation and support. They are complementary when implementing the political initiatives of trade unions and they pool their forces to deal with European and national players.

The members play an important role in the cohesion of CESI. They protect, promote and defend the aims of CESI.

Interests can only be sustainably represented and defended if trade unions cooperate on the national, European and international levels.

The foundations of such cooperation and of CESI's success are trust, information-sharing and communication.

CESI currently successfully participates in several sectoral social dialogues thanks to its representativeness and competence. This work must be continued and expanded.

CESI strives to push its interests forward alongside other partners, institutions such as civil society organisations and other trade unions in a constructive fashion.