
Position of the Trade 'Council Defence'

For a strong European Defence Union

Over the past years, the security backdrop in both Europe and across the globe has dramatically changed. People fear for their safety, including in part due to the annexation of Crimea and the unstable situation in eastern Ukraine. Areas of unrest and conflict in Africa, Asia, the Near and Middle East and – last not but not least – the refugee crisis have all reshaped European citizens' awareness of security policies.

CESI feels concerned that these developments will endanger the cohesion of the European Union in the short and medium term.

CESI is convinced that in the long term, it is fundamental that the nations and citizens of Europe should join hands to establish joint basic structures in order to plan and act together.

CESI is pushing for the dream of European unity, as set forth in the Rome Treaties over sixty years ago, to be implemented in a resolute fashion. This means that in the short term, Europe must act.

CESI demands that European heads of government should unflinchingly drive forward the process to set up a European Defence Union with the aim of creating a common European army, taking national structures into account.

To achieve this, all possibilities offered by a common policy must be made use of. A crucial element to do so is the Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defence (PESCO). Cooperation between the individual member states cannot blindside them to the common good for all. However, the expansion of the circle of participants must always remain a possibility. Common military structures should increase European countries' confidence in each other, beyond their military nature.

CESI supports the ideas underlying the Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence, as well as the participation to its further development.

CESI demands an intensification of short and medium-term armament cooperation projects, from which the member states will benefit proportionally in economic terms. Armament cooperation, however, is not an economic aim in itself. Any weaponry obtained by means of such cooperation must also be the object of

joint maintenance, training for the users, integration into common structures and usage in joint deployments. Joint armament projects should be cost-effective for the whole European Union.

CESI demands that in the short and medium-term, bilateral and multilateral structures be set up for the joint training of the forces. Training the users together will forge their trust in joint deployment missions.

For the medium term, CESI demands a White Paper on European Defence, based on a definition of the member states' common security interests for the set-up and deployment of the European armed forces.

CESI demands that parliamentary legitimation and control be required for the deployment of the European armed forces.

CESI demands that there be a principle of European citizen in uniform that is self-evident, meaning that as citizens, soldiers receive the backing of the inhabitants. This includes the implementation of freedom of association for all soldiers as well as the respect of all applicable European occupational safety and health regulations for them. Civilian and military personnel in armies should be entitled to the protection of their fundamental rights, as well as rights concerning freedoms and equality, as enshrined in the EU Charter.

CESI demands the establishment of a body that can act as an ombudsman and guardian of the respect of European fundamental rights for military and civilian employees in the armed forces, including the principle of civilians in uniform, and that must report regularly to the European Parliament. The Armed Forces Office of the Federal Republic of Germany can serve as a model in this context.

CESI is aware that security in Europe is not solely a question of joint armed forces.

Security in Europe also requires the will to set up joint security for the entire Union, in the sense of a "networked approach".

Moreover, it depends on the will to strengthen the security forces' capabilities and to build common security structures.

Security in Europe also requires the will to promote the resilience of civilians, by means of security-policy related information, education and media channels.

Finally, security in Europe depends on the will to make it clear that Europe is not merely a loose grouping of neighbouring states.

CESI and all its member organisations will strive to achieve that aim.