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EU SECURITY AND DEFENCE FOLLOWING THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE: A PUBLIC SECTOR UNION PERSPECTIVE

THESIS POINTS OF CESI'S EXPERT
COMMISSION 'DEFENCE'

The European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI) is a confederation of more than 40 national and European trade union organisations from over 20 European countries, with a total of more than 5 million individual members. CESI is a recognised European social partner organisation. Founded in 1990, CESI advocates improved employment conditions for workers in Europe and a strong social dimension in the EU. Most of CESI's members represent workers in different fields and levels of public administrations and services. As such, CESI also represents defence trade unions across Europe.

In political, economic and above all military terms, the world order may have changed profoundly and in a lasting manner since Vladimir Putin started the Russian military invasion of Ukraine on February 24 2022.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine shows Vladimir Putin's disrespect for international law and a contempt for the right of self-determination, freedom, and not least human life. It represents a threat to the peace, security and values of the entire EU. It has made clear: Our economic prosperity, our social wellbeing, the future of our children – It all starts with security, military security. Without it, our citizens, our businesses and jobs, our public services, our liberal democracy are at stake.

This means that for NATO and the EU, and for EU defence and security in particular, the consequences of the Russian aggression are far reaching.

- NATO is everything but obsolete, as former US-President Donald Trump suggested. Indeed, NATO's continued and functioning military deterrence infrastructure, including its nuclear arsenal, is vital to be maintained. It is the basis for non-aggression by Russia towards its territories.
- The election of former US-President Donald Trump has shown that the EU cannot entirely rely on the USA for its own defence at any time. Next to strengthened EU-NATO cooperation, the EU needs to much better develop its joint defence capabilities, including in research and development, military procurement, shared equipment and weapons, and joint operations.
- To this end, a Strategic Compass of the EU may provide a useful framework to steer the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and its Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to a fully-fledged European Defence Union (EDU), based on effective military, industrial and civilian cooperation.

- As the basis for transition to and implementation of the Strategic Compass, there must be an overall common understanding and mindset concerning the need for preparation of defence capabilities with all political actors. More than just military experts need to be integrated in the general outline of defence planning.
- The above will require increased military spending. It is imperative that, together, the armies of the Member States possess the necessary infrastructure in terms of staff levels, equipment, facilities, weapons and training to be operational and effective.
- However, it is vital that money spent in the military is spent wisely. Europe faces multiple challenges next to security and defence which require significant investment in other areas, above all for digitalisation, climate change mitigation and environmental protection, social protection and social fairness, as well as for performing public services for citizens and business – which need to be sufficiently resourced and resilient also to face unforeseeable major crises such as the Covid pandemic. Every Euro can only be spent once.
- Next to total available financial budgets, a more intelligent and smarter pooling of know-how, resources and capabilities can significantly step up innovation, capabilities and action potential in defence. This is what the European Defence Union (EDU) should focus on above all.
- Such pooling must not only take place among the EU Member States, but also with those directly concerned by it: civilian and military personnel in the armed forces and the unions which represent them. They often know best how work organisation can be rendered more effective, which operational shortcomings need to be addressed, and how new models of cooperation, coordination and joint deployment can be best put into practice on the ground. Their expertise must not be missed. To this end, they should be systematically consulted and heard in EU defence policy making just like in the national military structures they are employed in.