



Resolution on peace and security

Adopted at the Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting of 15 April 2025

On the basis of its [Charter of Values](#) and the [Resolution Ensuring security: New impulse for peace needed](#), and in response to the European Council conclusions of 6 March and decisions taken by the Commission on 19 March, the ETUC reiterates its call for a just and lasting peace to be delivered together with Ukraine.

With its illegal and ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the Russian Federation has brought war back to Europe. At the same time, democracy and fundamental rights are coming under increasing attack from authoritarians around the world, amplified by the election of Donald Trump.

As mentioned in the International Labour Organisation's constitution preamble, there can be no universal and lasting peace without social justice. The trade union movement has always been a driving force for peace and social justice.

In the current rapidly changing scenario, the European Union is called upon to reinvigorate its peacemaking and peacekeeping role. The ETUC underscores the need to support international law based on multilateralism and diplomacy as means to resolve international disputes rather than military escalation, as well as on the refusal of war and aggression to conquer and occupy territories or change borders, and on the right to defence against aggression.

The issue of ensuring security in Europe in a context of rising threats and challenges is clear. As a political union, the EU must contribute to guarantee peace, the rule of law, human rights and social progress – including through coordinated and improved security policies. But we insist that our comprehensive collective European security encompasses far more than military preparedness. Security is not created by more and more money for more and more weapons, but by prioritizing diplomacy, conflict and crisis prevention and active engagement for new disarmament and arms control initiatives. Security means first and foremost strong democracy and social progress, better living and working conditions, not the status quo.

An EU security strategy must be embedded in an overarching peace strategy for the whole of Europe, as well as by renewed efforts to support peace in other conflict areas in the world. At the heart of this European peace strategy must be adherence to the multilateral international legal order and its principles. The European Union must stand up for these principles with a united and strong voice.

The ETUC highlights the following key trade union messages:

- **The EU must focus on a broader concept of security** that takes into account the necessity of social resilience, equality and economic security, and addresses threats to democracy and interference from hostile foreign governments or corporations, cybersecurity, misinformation, attacks against academic freedom as well as the effects of climate change, extreme natural disasters and global health risks. This necessarily includes guaranteeing EU's strategic autonomy and self-sufficiency in all areas related to its security, such as digital, health, food,



science, energy, water, industry and transport, etc, reinforcing public and emergency services and infrastructures and a strong industrial policy, severely harmed by old and new austerity measures. It is of paramount importance to ensure that enforcement authorities have the necessary resources to fight crime, including illicit financial flows, tax evasion and avoidance, as well to ensure the protection and well-being of police officers. It also necessary to guarantee the increase of development aid and promotion of social justice in third countries, sufficiently staffed embassies and network of diplomats, as well as a reinforcement of the EU's role in actively supporting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and in reinvigorating the arms control architecture in Europe and at international level.

- **The ETUC reiterates that funding for social objectives must be safeguarded from depletion by reallocation to defence or security initiatives and should instead be increased.** Redirecting cohesion funds to another purpose would be shortsighted not only economically - the cost of undermining regional cohesion will be higher in the long run – but also politically, threatening the sense of common purpose Europe needs more than ever. Reinforcing social inequalities would further fuel the far-right, thus undermining EU security. The ETUC opposes proposals to allow Member States to use resources from social cohesion policy programmes to increase defence spending.
- **EU fiscal rules must be fully suspended urgently to allow for the necessary investments** in quality jobs, industrial policy, just transition and climate action, public services, health and education, gender equality, security and other EU objectives. Additionally, in order to make EU fiscal rules future-proof the Commission should propose a revision of the stability and growth pact in order to allow for a privileged treatment of growth-enhancing public investments in the fiscal framework. The limited flexibility proposed by the European Commission in the ReArm Europe Plan through the activation of national escape clauses for defence spending does not guarantee against the risk of trade-off between defence and social spending and does not ensure support for all countries, including those with limited fiscal space.
An EU investment facility, financed through common debt and/or new EU own resources, must be established. The ETUC reiterates its call for actions to ensure fairer and more progressive taxation, particularly on corporate profits and wealthiest individuals, including an FTT and taxes on windfall profits.
- **The EU must work towards European integration**, in particular in EU foreign and defence policy, including by improving decision-making processes, overcoming fragmentation, promoting cooperation and interoperability of defence, intelligence and security infrastructures, by rationalising procurement and reducing duplications. Democratic processes must be respected and the necessary institutional reforms should be introduced in defence and other areas, included those defined in the Conference on the Future of Europe. Integration and **joint initiatives are a prerequisite for economies of scale, operational efficiency and savings**. Coordination and solidarity are necessary also to avoid competition between Member States and ensure a truly European approach, independently from the United States.
- **Strong social conditionalities must apply** to all public funds / state aid / support to member states and companies, including for security / defence, in order to preserve company locations and employment, ensure quality jobs, better employment and working conditions, collective bargaining, full respect of workers, trade union rights and collective agreements. Also tax and environmental conditionalities should apply. It is also important to ensure that extraordinary dividend payments following EU funding be banned, that the share of profit that is reinvested in the company and shared equitably with workers increase, and that any corporate profits are subject to fair taxation to prevent further wealth concentration. At the same time the Social Acquis Communautaire



must be preserved, reinforced and never derogated from under the imperative of increased military production. It is also important to ensure good working conditions and the full respect of the right to unionise for military, police and civilian personnel and first responders.

- **EU and national funding should support the development of industry in Europe and ensure that quality jobs are being protected and created in Europe, and in all Member States**, also to reduce the risk of external dependencies, in line with the approach to favour industry in Europe in the framework of the Clean Industrial Deal.
- **Social partners must be fully involved in the ongoing discussions**, as recognised in the Pact on European Social Dialogue, both in the defence industry and emergencies services sectors, and at cross-sector level more broadly, as these decisions have an impact on society as a whole. The Niinistö report recognises the important role that trade unions and social partners play in preparing for and managing emergency and crisis situations – a good example was the essential role played by social dialogue, collective bargaining and trade unions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Civil preparedness must include the societal capacity to resist manipulation, protect democratic values, including through robust and trusted democratic institutions, including those responsible for education, media, research, civil protection and the rule of law. The ETUC calls on the European Commission to ensure a consultation of social partners on the follow-up to the Niinistö Report and on Member States to include trade unions in their discussions on preparedness, as well as for trade unions to be included in peace and conflict prevention delegations. The Preparedness Union Strategy must support social partners to develop the workplace dimension of ensuring security and preparedness.

The ETUC reaffirms its solidarity with Ukrainian people and its support to working people and trade unions in Ukraine. It supports the European Union's assistance to the people of Ukraine, including our colleagues in trade unions.

The ETUC reiterates its condemnation of the use of force and human rights violations across the world, including the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and its solidarity to peoples, workers and trade unions in all conflict areas. The ETUC and its affiliates will continue to pursue social justice and respect for international law, dialogue, cooperation and multilateralism as the basis for universal and lasting peace. The ETUC remains also vigilant on the impact of defense and security initiatives on the youth.